



**Clowns Nursery is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.**

*(Germ Term for Increased Infections That Relate to Malleable Play During Outbreaks of Infections)*

At Clowns we recognise that young children are susceptible to infections, many of which have the capacity to spread rapidly within a care provision or nursery school. These infections may include, but are not limited to, coughs, colds, chicken pox, COVID-19, hand foot and mouth and respiratory infections. All of these can be spread through the sharing of materials during malleable play.

This policy takes into account how we protect children, including consideration of infections such as those mentioned above.

Malleable play (messy play) typically refers to activities involving materials such as sand, water, mud, play dough, shaving foam, rice etc. At Clowns this definition extends to include any tools that children may share when doing an activity. These tools include, but are not limited to, glue spreaders, paint brushes, play dough cutters, spoons and scoops. Once a tool has been used by one child, it must be thoroughly cleaned or sanitised before another child can use it.

Malleable materials that are in use in the classrooms require a detailed risk assessment to be done as part of the activity planning process. This risk assessment should be carried out as a part of planning the daily activities within the class.

During a pandemic this risk assessment should consider whether the malleable materials (for messy play):

- can be handled by a group of the same children and that no one else outside the class bubble can come into contact with. This may need to be a small group of the children within a bubble (for example, six children) and then changing the material for the next small group within the bubble.
- can be used and cleaned – including being replaced or changed – in accordance with the manufacturers instructions, where applicable.

For more information regarding risk assessing for play, practitioners can refer to <http://www.playengland.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/managing-risk-in-play-provision.pdf>. Hard copies of the document are available for staff in the upstairs and main office policy folders.

#### **Procedure for use of malleable materials**

- A detailed, written risk assessment must be carried out as part of the activity planning process.
- All malleable materials **MUST**, where applicable, be used and cleaned in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.
- Practitioners **MUST** dispose of any malleable materials they feel are not suitable for reuse by another group.

In the event of a pandemic, practitioners must also follow the **Nursery System of Controls** and ensure that:

- Children wash their hands thoroughly before and after messy play
- Frequently touched surfaces, equipment, tools and resources for messy play are thoroughly cleaned and dried before they are used by a different group.

This policy is particularly important, especially when trying to minimise the risk of infectious diseases.