



SICKNESS AND ILLNESS POLICY

Policy Date: 01/09/2026

Review Date: 01/09/2027

This policy reflects the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026, current UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) health-protection guidance for children and young people's settings (updated July 2026), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and KCSIE 2026 as supplementary safeguarding good-practice guidance.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Parents/carers must tell staff about relevant illness or symptoms when their child arrives, including vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, diagnosed infection or any significant change in health. Children who are unwell should remain at home where they are not well enough to participate safely and comfortably in normal nursery activities.

Ringle Rainbow Nursery follows current UKHSA public-health exclusion guidance. Where no public-health exclusion period applies, a child does not need to be excluded solely because of a diagnosis if they are otherwise well enough to attend. The nursery may still ask a parent/carer to collect a child who becomes too unwell to participate or whose needs cannot be safely met in the setting.

Children with mild respiratory symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat or slight cough who are otherwise well and do not have a high temperature may usually attend. Children with more significant respiratory symptoms, for example a high temperature, should remain away until they are well enough to return.

CHILDREN WHO BECOME UNWELL AT NURSERY

If a child becomes unwell during the nursery day, their parent/carer will be contacted and asked to collect them as soon as reasonably possible. Until collection, the child will be kept comfortable, appropriately supervised and away from others where this is necessary and practicable.

A child's temperature may be checked and recorded where clinically relevant. A high temperature is treated as one indicator of illness rather than the sole basis for diagnosis. Staff will monitor the child's overall presentation and seek urgent medical help where symptoms indicate an emergency.

Emergency services will be called where a child has severe breathing difficulty, a seizure, a non-blanching rash, severe allergic reaction, loss of consciousness, rapid deterioration or another life-threatening presentation. Parents/carers will be informed immediately.

Medication, including paracetamol such as Calpol, will only be administered in accordance with the nursery's Medication Policy and EYFS requirements. The nursery will not rely on ad-hoc verbal permission as a substitute for the required parental consent and medication records.

PUBLIC HEALTH EXCLUSION PERIODS

The nursery will use the current UKHSA public-health exclusion table rather than applying a blanket 48-hour exclusion to all infections or all courses of antibiotics. Starting antibiotics does not, by itself, require a child to remain away for 48 hours; the exclusion period depends on the particular infection and the child's wellbeing.

Illness / infection	Minimum public health exclusion period
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Antibiotics (general)	The child must remain at home for the first 48 hours after first dose of antibiotics has been given. The child can return once they are well again.
Chickenpox	Stay away until 5 days after the rash first appears.
Conjunctivitis	No exclusion required.
COVID-19	Stay away if symptoms are more than mild, for example a high temperature. Return when well enough in line with current UKHSA guidance.
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Stay away until 2 days (48 hours) after diarrhoea and vomiting have stopped.
Hand, foot and mouth disease	No exclusion required.
Head lice (nits)	No exclusion required.
Impetigo	Stay away until all blisters have formed scabs or 2 days after starting antibiotics.
Measles	Stay away until 4 days after the rash started. Contact the local Health Protection Team.
Mumps	Stay away until 5 days after onset of swelling.
Respiratory infections / RSV	Stay away if symptoms are more than mild, for example a high temperature. Return when well enough.
Ringworm	Stay away until treatment has started.
Rubella (German measles)	Stay away until 5 days after the rash started.
Scabies	For children aged 5 and under: stay away until 24 hours after the first treatment.
Scarlet fever / Group A strep	Stay away until 24 hours after starting antibiotics.
Threadworms	No exclusion required.
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Stay away until antibiotics have been taken for 2 days, or for 21 days from onset of symptoms if no antibiotics are taken.

This table is based on UKHSA public health exclusion guidance updated 9 July 2026. UKHSA guidance may change; the current official exclusion table will take precedence where it differs from this policy.

MENINGITIS / MENINGOCOCCAL DISEASE

Suspected meningitis or septicaemia is a medical emergency. If a child develops concerning symptoms, including a non-blanching rash with signs of serious illness, staff will call 999 and follow emergency first-aid/hospitalisation procedures. The nursery will contact the local Health Protection Team where required and follow its advice. A child diagnosed with meningitis should remain away until they no longer have symptoms or until advised that it is safe to return.

OUTBREAKS, INFECTIOUS DISEASE AND NOTIFICATIONS

Parents/carers must inform the nursery of diagnosed infectious diseases so appropriate precautions can be taken. The Nursery Manager will monitor patterns of illness and contact the local Health Protection Team when UKHSA guidance requires this or when specialist advice is needed.

During an outbreak, measures may include strengthened cleaning, hand and respiratory hygiene, ventilation, temporary changes to activities where cross-infection risk is increased, and targeted communication with families.



Doctors and other registered medical practitioners have statutory duties to notify specified diseases to the proper officer; the nursery will cooperate with UKHSA/local public-health arrangements and act on advice received.

The nursery will make any notification to Ofsted required by the EYFS, including notification of food poisoning affecting two or more children cared for on the premises, within the required timescale.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND BODY FLUIDS

- Staff will use appropriate single-use gloves and aprons where there is a risk of contact with blood, vomit, urine, faeces or other bodily fluids.
- Soiled clothing will be contained securely and returned to parents/carers for cleaning as appropriate.
- Blood and bodily-fluid spillages will be cleaned and disinfected safely using the nursery's infection-control procedures.
- Frequently touched surfaces, toys and equipment will be cleaned appropriately and cleaning may be increased during outbreaks.
- Good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene will be promoted throughout the nursery.

ALLERGIES AND ANAPHYLAXIS

Parents/carers must provide accurate and current information about known allergies, intolerances and prescribed emergency treatment before or as soon as a child starts. Allergy information will be recorded and shared with staff who need it to keep the child safe.

For a child with a significant allergy, the nursery will complete an allergy risk assessment and, where appropriate, an individual healthcare/allergy action plan setting out the allergen, symptoms, emergency treatment, medication, control measures and review arrangements.

Ringle Rainbow Nursery will retain its allergy-card system for mealtimes. Relevant allergy/dietary cards will identify the child and their requirements and will be available to staff serving food. Food for children with allergies will be managed to minimise cross-contact risk.

The nursery is nut aware and parents/carers are asked not to bring nuts or nut products into the setting. This does not create a guarantee of a completely allergen-free environment, so individual risk controls remain necessary.

If a child has a suspected severe allergic reaction/anaphylaxis, trained staff will administer prescribed emergency medication in accordance with the child's plan and call 999. Parents/carers will be informed immediately. Emergency medication such as adrenaline auto-injectors and inhalers will remain immediately accessible to authorised staff.

Staff responsible for administering specialist or invasive treatment must be appropriately trained and competent in accordance with the child's individual needs and the nursery's Medication Policy.

HOSPITALISATION

If a child requires hospital treatment, parents/emergency contacts will be informed immediately. Where a parent/carer cannot arrive before the ambulance leaves and staffing permits, an appropriate senior member of staff will accompany the child and remain until the parent/carer arrives.



Relevant emergency health information, including allergy/medical information and medication details, will be made available to healthcare professionals. Confidential information will only be shared to the extent necessary for the child's care and safety.

SAFEGUARDING AND ATTENDANCE

Patterns of illness, frequent or prolonged absence, unexplained injuries, persistent fatigue, failure to seek necessary medical attention or other health-related information may indicate a safeguarding concern. Staff must remain professionally curious and report concerns promptly.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Jack Nash. Deputy DSLs are Charlotte Baldock and Penny Reidy. Concerns will be recorded factually and managed in accordance with the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, EYFS 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

Illness-related absence will be recorded and monitored. Where an absence becomes prolonged, repeated, unexplained or otherwise concerning, the nursery will follow its attendance and safeguarding procedures rather than assuming the absence is solely illness-related.

RECORDING, CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION SHARING

Relevant illness, temperature, accident/incident, medication and exclusion information will be recorded securely on BabysDays or other approved nursery records as appropriate. Health information is confidential and will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the nursery's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy.

Where a child's health, allergy or dietary needs change, relevant information will be shared with staff and, where necessary for safe food provision, with the nursery's catering provider Zebedees.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Nursery Manager will monitor this policy and current UKHSA exclusion guidance. Where official public-health advice changes before the annual review date, the nursery will follow the current official guidance and amend this policy as necessary.

By: P Reidy