

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to staff to minimise the risk of transmission of infection via play equipment, and to ensure that toys provided by the hospital are safe, clean, and are able to be cleaned appropriately.

2. Scope

This guidance is particularly applicable to Play Specialists, Play Assistants, Volunteers, Nursing staff, and any other person who comes into contact with play equipment.

All toys must comply with the Government Safety of Toys and European Community Regulations

1. Care, maintenance, and cleaning of toys is the responsibility of all staff.
2. All toys must have British Standard Institute 5565 Regulation Mark and carry a European Community Mark.
3. Toys should always be checked for the age/ability and stage of development before being given to a child.
4. All damaged toys should be disposed of immediately.
5. Always adhere to warnings such as: Not suitable for children under 3 years of age.
6. It is the responsibility of the person supervising the child at play to assess the risk related to the users particularly the child under 3 years

Toys available for use within the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People and St John's Hospital must be made of materials which can be easily cleaned using a neutral detergent e.g., Hospec and warm water, detergent wipes, or hypochlorite solution. Damaged toys must be disposed of immediately.

Playrooms must be kept clean, tidy, and safe at all times

Times may be arranged for children with infection or suspected of having infection to spend time in the playroom after discussion with the Clinical and Infection Prevention and Control Team.

3. Preventing cross-transmission of organisms

As well as procedures below the most important way to prevent cross transmission of organisms is to encourage/assist children to carry out hand hygiene before and after handling toys.

Soft Toys, except a child's own favourite, e.g., Teddy, should not be available or displayed in the hospital.

Therapeutic (trauma) dolls are for individual patient use and the child is permitted to take the doll home on discharge.

Zaadi dolls and other preparation dolls used by staff to demonstrate and involve the children in procedures must be washed (neutral detergent and warm water or detergent wipe) after use by a child.

Computers, electronic games machines and multi-sensory equipment must be protected from dust, when not in use, and damp dusted after use with a detergent wipe. This includes computer tables/stands.

Play dough is stored in an airtight container and labelled with the preparation date for an individual child. It must be discarded when the child is discharged. Infected patients or those suspected of having infection are permitted to have play dough which will remain in their cubicle until the child's discharge, when it will be discarded.

Books which are visibly dirty or become contaminated with body fluids must be discarded and checked every month.

Therapeutic Doll/ Preparation Dolls must be washed, cleaned, and put into a bag with a sticky label stating date and name of person cleaning and then shelve in a cupboard after every use.

Sand for play used within the playroom is specifically bought in for the purpose and changed at the end of each session. Access to sand is permitted under the supervision of Play Specialists and only in the playroom.

Bubbles may be provided for individual patients, named if required and discarded if not taken home by the child.

Fibre optic lights are cleaned according to manufacturer's guidelines

Bubble tubes are cleaned according to manufacturer's guidelines

Children's artwork All children's artwork can be displayed but must be dated and removed after one month. Artwork displayed on walls for more than one month must be laminated or in a closed case.

3.1 Playing safely in Group Play/Therapy

Where children/patients may benefit from sharing toys/play equipment, staff have a responsibility to support safe play this may require a documented risk assessment. All toys/equipment must be cleaned at the end of all communal use sessions before placing back into storage. This should also be recorded/documentated.

3.2 Keeping the playroom clean

A 'playroom' means any area where play is offered and available within different areas.

- Large equipment, such as toy cookers other "home" corner equipment and garages, should be cleaned as per cleaning orders kept on the ward (see pages 4-7) or before if visibly dirty or contaminated with general purpose detergent and water, rinsed and dried.
- Toys on display, but not in use, should be cleaned as per cleaning orders kept on the ward (see appendix 1) to prevent accumulation of dust and must be cleaned before and after use by a child.
- Open storage of toys should, whenever possible, be kept to a minimum to prevent accumulation of dust.
- Play equipment stored on open shelving should be cleaned as per cleaning orders kept on the ward (see appendix 1). Box with a lid.

A written record should be kept of all regular cleaning schedules and checked regularly by the Play Service Co-ordinator or Infection Control Nurse Specialist. This is the responsibility of the play specialists when on duty. When the play specialist is absent this is the responsibility of the person in charge of the department or ward.

Toys should not be cleaned or stored in the sluice area. If there is no other facility where this can be done, a risk assessment must be done (see page 8), the sink area should be cleaned with neutral detergent and warm water rinsed and dried before the toys are washed.

Whenever possible, parents should be asked to assist staff by ensuring that toys are clean before being returned to the playroom.

Further help and advice is available from Play Specialists, Play Service Co-ordinator (Ext 50364), Play Specialist, St John's Hospital ext. 54398, Infection Control team, RHCYP ext. 2120 or Duty Nurse ext. 63373 (0131 536 3373), St John's Hospital: ext. 53073.

4. Stakeholder consultation

This guidance has been produced in consultation with:

- Play Service Co-ordinator. Bleep 9241 or Ext 50364
- Infection Control Nurse Specialist – RHCYP Ext. 21120
- Duty Nurse, Infection Prevention & Control Team, Mon –Fri 09:00 - 16:00, ext. 63373 (536 3373) or email: infectioncontrol@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk
- Infection Control Doctor or Duty Microbiologist/Virologist via switchboard

5. Monitoring and review

This guidance will be monitored and reviewed by the Play Service Co-ordinator, Charge Nurse, Children's Ward, St Johns Hospital, and the LUHD Infection Control Committee.

6. References

- Ayliffe, G A J; Lowbury, Geddes, AM and Williams, J D (1992)
- Control of Hospital Infection Third edition. London. Chapman & Hall Medical
- Suviste, Julie (1996) The Toy Trap Uncovered. Nursing Times March 6, Vol 92 No 10,56-60
- Guidelines for professional practice. National association of hospital play staff.
- Getting the right start: The national services framework for children, young people, and maternity services standards for hospital services. 2004
- Toy policy, courtesy of Great Ormond Street Hospital for sick children
- Friendly healthcare environments for children and young people - Department of Health (DH) 2003.
- Fleming K and Randle J 2006 Toy: Friend or Foe? A study of infection risk in a paediatric intensive care unit. Paediatric nursing vol. 18 issue 4 p14-18
- Mind the germs! Infection Control guidance for nurseries, playgroups and other childcare settings, Welsh Assembly Government 2006

APPENDIX 1

(Updated January 2023)

WARD/AREA _____

ITEMS TO BE CLEANED DAILY USING DETERGENT WIPES PROVIDED ON WARD/AREA. (All toys/games etc thought to be used by infected patients or which have had body fluid spillage will either be disposed of in an appropriate manner or cleaned using Chlorclean. If contaminated with blood, clean using blood spill pack or contact Local Infection Prevention and Control Team for advice. Please initial this sheet rather than just tick it.

Surface Cleaning :	Week Beg	Monday	Tuesday	Wedn'day	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Comments:
All surfaces, PC Consoles and general tidiness of playroom Floor hoovered/swept?									
All surfaces, PC Consoles and general tidiness of playroom Floor hoovered/swept?									
All surfaces, PC Consoles and general tidiness of playroom Floor hoovered/swept?									
All surfaces, PC Consoles and general tidiness of playroom Floor hoovered/swept?									

ITEMS TO BE CLEANED WEEKLY

Item	Week beginning	Week beginning	Week beginning	Week beginning	Week beginning
TV's, PC's and games consoles					
Large toys ie dolls house/garage etc					
Floor Mats (if applicable)					
Soft Play Area (please note this needs to be cleaned immediately if soiled/or spillage on it).					
Distraction/Reward Boxes					
All small toys including Lego, cars, trucks etc are checked inside (if they are able to be opened) and cleaned appropriately					

Weekly Playroom Checklist

	Dates				
Flooring, walls and ceilings are clean and intact					
Sink and blinds (if applicable) are clean and intact					
Toys on display and in storage boxes are clean and intact					
All cupboards are clean and tidy					
Sand (suitable for play use) and playdough are discarded after use					
If individual basins are used they are cleaned after use and washed and stored dry after every use					
Children wash their hands before and after activities in playroom					
Books are not soiled, torn or dirty					
Dressing-up clothing and dolls clothing is cleaned regularly in line with laundry policies.					
Eating and drinking is not allowed in the playroom					
Children with known or suspected infection are not allowed in the playroom (unless pre-organised and a full clean is done afterwards)					
All baby mobiles, toys and games used at the bedside are cleaned prior to being returned to the playroom or bagged and labelled appropriately					
There are no communal soft toys in use					
A copy of the cleaning schedule for the play area is available in the ward/dept					
Ward staff are aware of the infection risks associated with this area.					
Wooden toys/games/puzzles etc are checked for damage. If damaged found they are to be disposed of immediately and replaced with plastic (if possible)					
Floor mopped/cleaned					

