



Cotton Tails Nurseries Ltd

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Coronavirus (COVID -19)

Dear Parents,

We are writing to you because we value the health and well-being of our children, staff and families. As you are aware, there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and deaths in the UK. We are not aware of any confirmed cases in our local community or schools. The information we receive has been changing daily (in some cases hourly) hence us waiting until now to issue a formal letter, rather than repeated, generic information.

We want you to know that our settings are working with local authority, government and public health agencies on prevention and management in the event an outbreak in our community. Our company follows local and national health care expert guidance and recommendations. We are sharing this information in the sake of transparency, so you are aware and can help reduce the spread of infection. The best ways to reduce the risk of getting this or **any** viral respiratory infection include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces
- Stay at home away from others if you are sick
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, then throw the tissue in the bin and wash your hands
- Do not bring your child to the setting or go to work if you or they have cold or flu-like symptoms (elevated temperature, fever, cough, shortness of breath).

The Department for Education has established a helpline for us in the sector and members of the public, for the most current advice you can use: 0800 046 8687 available 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday or alternatively you can email coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

We are checking updates regularly and will act accordingly as the government action plan progresses through its varying stages.

What have we done so far?

We have increased our usual cleaning routines and deep cleaning routines, we have put in place increased hand washing opportunities for the children and for those who are old enough to understand, we are doing this alongside simple discussion to educate them further on the importance of personal hygiene. Extra hand gel has been made available in entrances (for staff, parents and visitors) and also for the children. We must insist that this is being used on entry to the building, we note that many parents are still not. Should you physically want to wash your hands as you enter the staff can guide you to the appropriate place. Our staff have also been issued with a letter of advice, as well as daily discussions from their Manager as to their role in personal hygiene (their own and that of the children).

Will we be open?

It is our intention that we will remain open as normal whilst at this level. We will endeavour to maintain our usual hours of business and same level of service. We will only close if we reach a stage of lockdown advised by the government. In that instance the whole country will experience conditions that are being seen in other countries at the moment. We understand that the decision to voluntarily shut would have a huge impact on working families, many of whom are in front line services such as the NHS.

We may experience issues with staffing levels should schools be forced to close, many of our staff have children in school which will have an obvious knock on effect. Likewise, should any members of our own staff team become ill. If we need to prioritise admissions, then we will issue a criterion for this. As you know we are governed by ratios to Safeguard the children and the staff, if we cannot meet these, we are legally obliged to inform you of this. In this instance we will keep you informed at our earliest opportunity. It is now that we stress more than ever how important it is for us to have the most up to date contact information for you (work/mobile/home numbers). You can also keep in touch with us via Facebook, our app and the website. Updates will be shared there as soon as physically possible. It could be that dramatic changes by the government take place not inside our usual business hours (evenings / weekend). If that is the case and we have not updated Social Media or our own Website, please call ahead to the nursery before leaving home.

For your information our website is www.cottontailsdaynursery.co.uk

Will we be charged?

Our terms and conditions (extract provided) state clearly our position in this circumstance. We are seeking regular updates from our insurers and bodies supporting the private nursery sector regarding the financial implications of a forced closure. As you can imagine our staff team are very anxious about this, ultimately the nation as a whole are, the impact to the economy as well as Public Health is overwhelming.

2.7 In the event of a pandemic or act of god, the nursery owner reserves the right to charge should the setting need to be closed. If nursery fees can be recovered from our insurers, parents will be reimbursed in full.

Travel restrictions?

With Easter fast approaching we are away many families may have travel plans. We have to request that we know where you are travelling to and from. We will implement the government advice on this with immediate effect, in relation to high risk areas. This may mean self-isolation for your entire family on your return for 14 days. We will expect complete honesty and co-operation with this.

Illness and Infection Policy

As you can imagine we are feeling extremely cautious in relation to any illness and infection at the moment. Our need to be more vigilant and make exclusion needs to be met with support and understanding.

We always try to have exclusion as a last resort (apart from mandatory exclusions for illnesses outlined in our policy) however we can often be met with challenge if we request a child to be collected. The winter bug season is notoriously hard for us because we have to battle with rapid spread of seasonal coughs and colds, and what is best for the child. It is always our thought that a child who is reliant on Calpol or other medication to get through the day should not be in nursery and is best cared for at home. With the Coronavirus COVID-19 now a factor we will have to be making exclusions for temperatures (exceeding the recommended limit 37.4) and a new continuous cough. The recommended 7-day exclusion will be applied.

If you have been in contact with anyone with the virus, we would expect without hesitation to be informed so we can engage a critical incident plan. Likewise, should any of our employees become infected or in contact with and infected person we will be honest and transparent about this. The necessary lockdown and critical incident procedures would have to be immediately implemented.

Other Challenges

Currently we are ok and well stocked for food and other supplies. But as you know this is causing a problem. Should we find that restrictions are placed on food purchases we may of course need to make short term changes to our menu's. At the moment we have no issues with hygiene supplies but would communicate this with you should we experience problems that are going to affect the hygiene in the nurseries.

At this moment in time we want to operate as normally as possible, however in the coming weeks if advice changes and we feel we need to restrict events/workshops or even the amount of human traffic through the nursery (when dropping and collecting your child) we will notify you of this as soon as possible.

Yours Sincerely,



Lynda Noon (Area Manager) for and on behalf of Nicola Cotton (Proprietor)