



Cotton Tails Nurseries Ltd

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Cotton Tails Too: 14 Leach Green Lane,
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Cotton Tails: 1110 Bristol Road South, Northfield,
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Cotton Tails at Hagley: 69-71 Kidderminster
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Manager: Beth Hemmings
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21.03.20

Coronavirus (COVID -19)

Dear Parents,

Its clear that our letter yesterday has raised even more questions. For those of you who are unclear about the 'Key Working' guidance we have attached it to this for transparency. It is of course available widely online on official government sites. As stated yesterday we know we need to add more measures for infection control hence detailing our intention to look at group sizes and stop outside visitors (including parents) into the building.

We have gauged that our Parents (those who still need childcare) are confused about what we outlined, and we apologise if this did not read clearly so we have added extra clarity. **Our staff are currently being bombarded even at home about this, we kindly urge you to let our staff have their weekend, at home with their own families** and direct your questions via email to your nursery manager. We will then get back to you in turn as soon as is physically possible w/c 23.03.20. To be clear the contacts for each setting are:

Cotton Tails Northfield: Michelle Young northfield@cottontailsdaynursery.co.uk

Cotton Tails Too Rubery: Lisa Daniels rubery@cottontailsdaynursery.co.uk

Happy Days Nursery Quinton: Rachel Jarrett happydays@cottontailsdaynursery.co.uk

Cotton Tails Hagley: Beth Hemmings hagley@cottontailsdaynursery.co.uk

Area Manager Lynda Noon or Owner Nicola Cotton on: office@cottontailsdaynursery.co.uk

Our terms and conditions are that to leave your child's place OR change their sessions a one-month notice period is required. These terms and conditions are in place and remain in place as we rely on our cash flow to pay staff salaries, our utility costs and usual business overheads. So even aside from this crisis we have to operate a system and structure, hence the notice period. This is what we outlined yesterday and have then added in blue text what this means.

To be clear our position at this time is:

- If you need to remain at your usual pattern of attendance you will be expected to continue to pay your fees in advance. *Fees are paid in advance, therefore payment made on 26.02.20 covered fees for March, payment due next week 26.03.20 will cover April fees.*
- If you are a frontline professional and need additional time as you are working additional shifts, please let us know so we can invoice for that accordingly. *A separate invoice will be raised for exact additional days/sessions used. This means usual standing order figures apply then separate cost paid cash, card (accepted at Hagley and Northfield sites) or direct bank payment for your extra hours.*
- If you need some level of childcare but not your usual pattern of days please let us know and fees will be adjusted accordingly, we will aim to look at this as per each individual family, this will take time but aim to turn around any fee adjustments within 48hrs. *We have asked for forms to be back by Wednesday 25th, hopefully then to send revised figures out by the end of the week – however with the one-month notice period to change sessions, your payment due on 26.03.20 will remain unchanged. If we do not have our usual cash flow at the end of this month, quite simply our staff will not be paid on 01.04.20. If we have no workforce, we won't even be able to offer a skeleton service for Key Workers we will be forced to close. If you have amended you permanent sessions your new figures will be out for the start of w/c 30.03.20, meaning you will have time to amend you payment instructions for 26.04.20 onwards, we know that many parents use the tax free childcare system or employer vouchers so this will need time to be processed.*
- If your child is in receipt of Early Years Entitlement (2yr olds, 3yr olds and 4yr olds) we are advised at the moment that this will continue to be paid. If the Local Authority make a U-turn on this decision, we will let you know, however we feel this is highly unlikely. Therefore, if you receive this funding your child's place for those hours claimed per week will be secure, however if you are using time outside of those funded hours our usual terms of wrap around prices will be applied as normal. If you need your child to only attend for their funded time only, we can amend your fee structure to only incorporate meal charges. We cannot claim any additional funding only what has already been submitted. *Where funding is in place for your child the one month notice to change is still required due to the headcount system, if the child is not on the register as normal during this period the funding will be cut anyway and the Local Authority will not pay us.*
- If you need to relinquish your place, we kindly ask you to instruct us of your one-month notice period. We know many households will have been affected by job losses subsequently meaning you cannot keep your child's place. *Fees paid therefore on 26.03.20 will be your final payment, you will be given an accurate final last bill as soon as possible.*
- If you have relinquished your place, we will honour these places until 31.08.20, therefore should the situation improve, and you need your child to return either partially or fully before this date then no return booking fee will be requested. *We cannot secure places after this time as we will begin a new academic year and already have advance bookings for some places (obviously hoping and assuming we have a business still running).*

We will have to monitor fees very closely, as anyone with fee arrears will not be able to attend. We almost certainly will be sending staff home each day due to a steep decrease in child attendance.

Thank you to those parents who have contacted us with kind words of support and understanding so far. We hope to be still operating and in business on the other side of this crisis and offering the same levels of hours to our staff team. Sadly we will have to reduce our staff working hours and roles in the coming months.

Yours Sincerely,



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

Government Guidelines detailed below.

As a country, we all need to do what we can to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

That is why the government has given clear guidance on [self-isolation](#), [household isolation](#) and [social distancing](#).

And the most recent scientific advice on how to further limit the spread of COVID-19 is clear. If children can stay safely at home, they should, to limit the chance of the virus spreading.

That is why the government has asked parents to keep their children at home, wherever possible, and asked schools to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that schools, all childcare settings (including early years settings, childminders and providers of childcare for school-age children), colleges and other educational establishments, remain safe places for children. But the fewer children making the journey to school, and the fewer children in educational settings, the lower the risk that the virus can spread and infect vulnerable individuals in wider society.

Schools, and all childcare providers, are therefore being asked to continue to provide care for a limited number of children - children who are vulnerable, and children whose parents are critical to the Covid-19 response and cannot be safely cared for at home.

Vulnerable children include children who are supported by social care, those with safeguarding and welfare needs, including child in need plans, on child protection plans, 'looked after' children, young carers, disabled children and those with [education, health and care \(EHC\) plans](#).

We know that schools will also want to support other children facing social difficulties, and we will support head teachers to do so.

Parents whose work is critical to the COVID-19 response include those who work in health and social care and in other key sectors outlined below. Many parents working in these sectors may be able to ensure their child is kept at home. And every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

Please, therefore, follow these key principles:

1. If it is at all possible for children to be at home, then they should be.
2. If a child needs specialist support, is vulnerable or has a parent who is a critical worker, then educational provision will be available for them.

3. Parents should not rely for childcare upon those who are advised to be in the stringent social distancing category such as grandparents, friends, or family members with underlying conditions.
4. Parents should also do everything they can to ensure children are not mixing socially in a way which can continue to spread the virus. They should observe the same social distancing principles as adults.
5. Residential special schools, boarding schools and special settings continue to care for children wherever possible.

If your work is critical to the COVID-19 response, or you work in one of the critical sectors listed below, and you cannot keep your child safe at home then your children will be prioritised for education provision:

Health and social care

This includes but is not limited to doctors, nurses, midwives, paramedics, social workers, care workers, and other frontline health and social care staff including volunteers; the support and specialist staff required to maintain the UK's health and social care sector; those working as part of the health and social care supply chain, including producers and distributors of medicines and medical and personal protective equipment.

Education and childcare

This includes childcare, support and teaching staff, social workers and those specialist education professionals who must remain active during the COVID-19 response to deliver this approach.

Key public services

This includes those essential to the running of the justice system, religious staff, charities and workers delivering key frontline services, those responsible for the management of the deceased, and journalists and broadcasters who are providing public service broadcasting.

Local and national government

This only includes those administrative occupations essential to the effective delivery of the COVID-19 response, or delivering essential public services, such as the payment of benefits, including in government agencies and arms length bodies.

Food and other necessary goods

This includes those involved in food production, processing, distribution, sale and delivery, as well as those essential to the provision of other key goods (for example hygienic and veterinary medicines).

Public safety and national security

This includes police and support staff, Ministry of Defence civilians, contractor and armed forces personnel (those critical to the delivery of key defence and national security outputs and essential to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic), fire and rescue service employees (including support staff), National Crime Agency staff, those maintaining border security, prison and probation staff and other national security roles, including those overseas.

Transport

This includes those who will keep the air, water, road and rail passenger and freight transport modes operating during the COVID-19 response, including those working on transport systems through which supply chains pass.

Utilities, communication and financial services

This includes staff needed for essential financial services provision (including but not limited to workers in banks, building societies and financial market infrastructure), the oil, gas, electricity and water sectors (including sewerage), information technology and data infrastructure sector and primary industry supplies to continue during the COVID-19 response, as well as key staff working in the civil nuclear, chemicals, telecommunications (including but not limited to network operations, field engineering, call centre staff, IT and data infrastructure, 999 and 111 critical services), postal services and delivery, payments providers and waste disposal sectors.

If workers think they fall within the critical categories above, they should confirm with their employer that, based on their business continuity arrangements, their specific role is necessary for the continuation of this essential public service.

If your school is closed, then please [contact your local authority](#), who will seek to redirect you to a local school in your area that your child, or children, can attend.

We are grateful for the work of teachers and workers in educational settings for continuing to provide for the children of the other critical workers of our country. It is an essential part of our national effort to combat this disease.