

Dear Parents,

The UK Government has recently made significant announcements, with phased changes planned across the country based on progress under the new Covid Alert System.

Specifically, the [Department for Education](#) makes the following statement: "the transmission rate of coronavirus (COVID-19) has decreased. We therefore anticipate, with further progress, that we may be able, from the week commencing 1 June, to welcome back more children to early years, school and further education settings. We will only do this provided that the 5 key tests set by government justify the changes at the time"

We know these changes, the way it affects or is implemented within the nursery, not to mention the financial timing or impact of the changes will raise questions which we have tried to address below.

The FAQ's cover our new Virus & Infection Control Policy, the Nursery Return Policy and the financial support structure we have detailed, before finally the Covid-19 Nursery Policy measures.

Thank You

Q1. Why do you need a Virus & Infection Control Policy?

Nursery space and equipment are cleaned on a daily basis, including anti-bacterial treatment of surfaces daily and sterilisation weekly, using procedures which have always made up our cleaning routine and contracts.

Since we became aware of Coronavirus, it has become evident that the basis for these routines held a new importance and, that it was worth emphasising in a dedicated policy how effective this can be against all viruses or infections.

Q2. Does this mean you have now removed the Enhanced Hygiene Procedures?

No, far from it. Many of those additional protections have now been included in a more robust Virus & Infection Control Policy, whilst a broad set of strict procedures have been built into the Covid-19 Nursery Policy, under which we will monitor and control how we re-open.

Q3. If the Government advice allows you to re-open, can't I simply bring my child back in June?

Unfortunately, the length of time and scale of change away from nursery along with much of anyone's normal routine being disrupted as well, will make returning to nursery a very big step for almost all children.

We will need to do this in phases, which will allow us to assess each group of children and their reaction to being back at nursery before we then allow the next group of children to return. This also allows us on a steadily increasing basis, to implement all new procedures designed to ensure we maintain the safest environment for the children and the staff team, plus their wider families.

Even if Coronavirus disappeared, the children would still need a carefully managed return to nursery.

Q4. I have asked to come back in the second week of June, but you have now allocated me the third week of June. Why has that happened, and can I change it?

Whilst we are asking for your preference, based around work commitments and personal circumstances, we may still have too many children to resettle in any one period. Where this happens, we will do our very best to make minimal changes from your first choice, but the teams input into the children's requirements and likely response to a return will all be a factor.

Please be understanding. We will of course take feedback and discuss any issues, but there is a huge amount of work in a short time, to achieve the best for all returning children.

Q5. Can we now reschedule parents' evenings or at least help the children settle?

Unfortunately, our Covid-19 Nursery Policy details all specific policies and procedures required to address the current Coronavirus outbreak, which will remain in force until the UK is declared as Covid Alert Level 2.

Our policy states No Non-Operational visitors are allowed within the nursery, in order to protect the children and staff. This is limited to staff and any essential deliveries and maintenance requirements, with most of these occurring out of hours or through non-contact in any event.

Q6. Why aren't you taking children off site during the day anymore?

Whilst the Government advice is that virus transmission outside is reduced, we have taken the difficult decision to limit all risk of contact, given the many variables outside the nursery environment, including unknown levels of hygiene outside our direct control at parks and other facilities.

Whilst this type of activity is normally a significant part of both our daily routine and nursery ethos, all children will still have maximum access to the terrace garden during each day.

Q7. I have not been given a date to return to work yet, so how do I answer the survey?

We know there are lots of variables, which makes this a difficult task for all involved, but we ask that you provide your best answer based on what you know now.

If you provide a realistic, earliest date you would need to return given everything you know about your own personal or work circumstances, we will do our best to support as many of those requests as possible.

Q8. I think my employer is planning a gradual return during July, so how will that affect nursery?

You have the opportunity within the survey, to state your preference or understanding of a need to return later, either in July or August at the moment. This means we can reassess your specific date to return at a later point, potentially using a further survey of specific weeks and your circumstances for those months.

This will also be influenced by the progress made by all children returning to nursery during June, plus of course any Government guidelines and the Covid Alert Level at the time.

Q9. You've said nursery fees will now be charged from the week we are allocated to return in June, but my account should still be in credit from the April payment?

This is absolutely the case, with all unused sessions being credited during April and May, through the alleviations to our [Childcare Terms & Conditions](#). We will continue to issue invoices in the normal way, even if sessions are shown as credited for the weeks in June you could not attend.

Following your circumstances and preferences as much as possible, we will then credit sessions in June before your allocated week to return, whilst your account balance will likely cover any costs incurred.

This will continue to be the case, with invoices being issued detailing sessions billed, sessions credited and the value of credit on account towards each invoice.

Q10. When will you issue the June invoices, so I know what my account balance is?

Unfortunately, given the incredibly unusual circumstances we are all facing and the flexibility we have tried hard to offer in terms of nursery fees, no system (including Famly) was designed to automate the level of credits we are allocating.

This means your monthly sessions are being drawn down in manual reports before being allocated to your account, which is also a manual process on June 1st, being the first day we can clear down the May accounts.

In the meantime, the Balance Tab on Famly will show your current balance.

Q11. I can see I am in credit, but the Famly system told me my Direct Debit would be taken last month?

As explained in question 10, no one envisaged a scenario or a level of credits issued in the Famly system, so there is no current method to stop this message for the Famly Direct Debits.

If your account is in credit though, there is no balance that will be taken by Direct Debit, despite the message being sent anyway.

Q12. What do you mean you are treating July as a normal month, when I can't return to work yet?

Simply following Government and specifically Department for Education guidance, which has stated a return to normal operation for childcare settings under the EYFS, pending final confirmation that Coronavirus transmission remains under control.

We understand that it is simply not possible to return all at once, which is what has driven our phased return throughout June, to protect the best interests of the children and provide a degree of flexibility for all parents as work commitments become clear.

Without a further change from the Government, we anticipate July being available to us without imposed restrictions, save for our own Covid-19 Nursery Policy to maintain a safe environment.

Q13. What if the Government do impose a further delay to the June 1st reopening?

We have always known this is a possibility and would ask that you understand we are operating promptly, with all information available to us at that time.

Our current intention is to simply slip the processes within our Nursery Return Policy by the same duration as any Government imposed delay. For example, a delay from Government to June 29th, will mean July will represent a month of phased return for the children, with normal operation expected from August 3rd.

Q14. Under Step 2 of the Financial Support Structure in July, why would I be expected to pay 50% of my nursery fees, even though I am not returning to work until September?

The Government have restated that they believe childcare environments to continue to be safe environments and, that from June 1st Early Years operators will be able to re-open, however we have explained that it is not that simple and great care must be taken to re-settle all attending children.

On that basis, we have continued to take the most flexible position we can afford to take, in order to support all of our families during the current circumstances. That is why we are seeking your input on when you will require a return to childcare and, we will be crediting June sessions you can't use during the phased return.

We don't believe it is as simple as July being normal either and so, we have put the 50% discount in place where you are not able to attend for July and August, in order to offer you as much flexibility as we can but beginning to make progress to normal operations and all associated costs we incur.

Q15. I'm still not sure how all of the credits and financial support will work?

For example:

A parent who normally pays £100 a week for their childcare place, will have paid £400 for their April invoice, which was then credited before the May invoice was sent, but there may have been a small amount due in May depending how the days you attend fell in the month.

This parent will now remain £400 in credit going into June, where we cannot start them back at nursery until the 3rd week in June, which means at the end of June we will apply a further £200 credit leaving them £200 in credit going into July having paid just £200 for half of June.

Q16. What do you mean by visitors clear of symptoms?

The symptoms currently stated by the [NHS Guidance](#) that mean you should self-isolate for at least 7 days, are symptoms we cannot accept at nursery under any circumstances for any period of time.

Q17. What will you do if an Adult or a Child shows symptoms highlighted by [NHS Guidance](#) at nursery?

In the case of a child showing symptoms, we will follow the staff procedures set out in the Children's Sickness Policy, Virus & Infection Control Policy and our Covid-19 Nursery Policy.



Coronavirus

Nursery Return FAQ's

This will mean the child is segregated in a calm area until they can be collected from nursery, with all toys, resources and surfaces will be cleaned behind them. Staff in these circumstances will be permitted to wear Facial PPE which we have provided. The exclusion or waiting policy is replaced by current [NHS Guidance](#). Please ensure all contact details are up to date on Family and that you maintain contact throughout the day.

In the case of an adult, they will immediately be isolated from all children and other staff, with arrangements made from them to leave as soon as possible. Again, [NHS Guidance](#) on exclusion or self-isolation strictly applies, as will the Virus & Infection Control Policy and the Covid-19 Nursery Policy. In the event of a staff member, ratio may be impacted and children may also need to be sent home if additional cover cannot be achieved.

These symptoms as set out in the current [NHS Guidance](#) do not have to be displayed together or for a specified length of time. We will enforce collection and isolation requirements without exception.

The Government have also made clear, from June onwards Staff and Children attending a Childcare Setting, will be able to request priority testing online which will be required before a return to nursery.

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-coronavirus-test>

Q18. What happens to my sessions and my invoice if I have to remove my child?

As detailed under clause 3.6 of our [Childcare Terms & Conditions](#), nursery fees apply normally and no refunds are due during this time. We ask that you notify us as soon as is practicable, through the Family system, if your child is unwell and will not be attending nursery.

You can mark them as sick for the dates required and any notes, which will help release staff time.

Q19. What happens if my child is recovering at home, can they return to nursery?

Our Children's Sickness Policy requires all symptoms to have been clear for 48 hours before returning to nursery, however [NHS Guidance](#) will override this policy and is currently longer.

This policy will also be applied in the case of Adult symptoms.

Q20. What do you mean by any person self-isolating at the same home as a child?

Where a parent or guardian, spouse or partner, sibling, relative or any other individual who resides at the same home as the child, is self-isolating for any reason including current [NHS Guidance](#) or a positive Covid-19 test result, that child **must not** attend nursery.

This will remain the case until all people involved are clear of any condition or requirement to self-isolate under [NHS Guidance](#) published at that time.

Q21. What to do after a positive test or contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid-19?

You must notify us immediately if any adult or child that attends or visits Nursery, either tests positive for Covid-19 or discovers that at any time they have been in direct contact with any individual who has tested positive for Covid-19.

You **MUST NOT** attend Nursery in this case, but contact us using the Family system with the following information:

- Who has tested positive and when?
- Who has had contact with that person and when?
- When did the last person have contact at the Nursery?

Q22. What do you mean by if staffing support becomes restrictive?

In order to ensure the health and wellbeing of all children and staff remains the priority, the current exclusion and self-isolation guidance will be applied strictly and without exceptions. This clearly means, at some point we may need to send staff home for at least 7 days or whatever period is recommended through current [NHS Guidance](#).

This position will of course reduce staff availability even where staff agency support is available, which we restrict to certain childcare rooms. These are standards we will not compromise during challenging times.

There may be times when you are turned away or delayed at nursery during drop off, whilst staff numbers are confirmed during a rapidly changing situation. Please be patient with the team if this is the case.

We will always require a Senior Staff Member (Manager or Room Lead) on site when children are present.

Q23. Will I be turned away from Nursery?

We will only turn your child away from Nursery if they have symptoms which mean they should be excluded for self-isolation, our staff numbers have been restricted or we are dealing with a suspected condition.

In the event that we know staff numbers will be insufficient on any one day, we will notify you all through a Family post, seeking volunteers to keep their child home on the affected days. If you have the options to be flexible and assist here, please let us know promptly.

If insufficient volunteers come forward in time, we will nominate children who will need to be denied access to Nursery on that day, starting with children with the lowest attendance on the assumption there may be more flexibility in these cases. We appreciate assumptions may feel discriminatory, but these will be forced situations and the team will need to start somewhere when volunteers are insufficient.

Where children are denied access to nursery, they will be marked as a day off on Family with a "Denied Access" note, with a Credit amount equal to that session added to your account. We will also maintain a record of children denied access and where possible, will avoid denying them access on a further occasion.