

20th March 2020

Dear Parents,

Covid-19 Update – Parent Communication

We hope our letter reaches you, your loved ones and families/friends in good health. It has been a long and hard journey for some and we really hope none of our parents' families been very ill with the virus.

We want to thank you for your patience and understanding, as we endeavour to ensure we keep our parents' families up to date as best we can whilst navigating the evolving news and subsequent announcements. We appreciate this communication has taken some time to reach you, however we are pleased to be able to offer some answers to queries parents have raised.

Government advice is evolving, and we are working together to digest, interpret and plan accordingly. Where new advice is provided or as we see, advice changes, we will endeavor to keep you updated as soon as practicable. Our fantastic teams working across sites provide a much needed service for our families, and decisions are being made to ensure we can continue to do that safely and effectively during this crisis.

What we have done.

- Bertram has an established Crisis Management Plan which has been 'activated' with key team members tracking changing Government advice daily and making important decisions as a result.
- We have ensured our teams follow advice by self-isolating appropriately
- Hand sanitiser or gel stations have been set up at all sites for anyone entering or leaving the site to use.
- Compulsory health surveys have been implemented for anyone entering sites to ensure any risks are identified.
- All extracurricular activities have been cancelled to reduce the number of visitors entering the nursery and reducing the amount of travel for the wider community.
- Sand & Water play stations have been suspended to avoid any transfer risk.
- Any vulnerable employees have met with management to discuss and encourage them to make the right decisions around working.
- Only parents who currently attend nursery can access site. We have suspended all new parents from viewing sites to reduce risk and reduce the amount of travel for the wider community.
- More recently, our Regional Management teams continue to work in partnership with all our Local Authorities to identify key locations and key workers who will require childcare during this crisis.

As a childcare provider we are in the difficult position, with an obligation to our own families but also the wider community. We want our parents to know we are doing our utmost to alter the way we operate currently to mitigate risk and to provide essential childcare.

Will my nursery stay open?

- Government and local authority advice states clearly there is an 'essential' requirement for some childcare for **Key Workers**, during this crisis.
- During the week commencing Monday 23rd March, some of our sites may close, in line with government instruction, while others will remain open.

- The decision to close sites will be made together with the Local Authority, only where there is no significant demand for **Key Workers** in that geographical area.
- Sites which will remain open will be selected together with Local Authorities based on **Key Worker** demand. We ask that you bear with us while we collate this data and work with our local authorities before confirming what sites will remain open and which will close.
- Until we confirm what sites will close, our nurseries will remain open for **Key Workers**.
- From Monday 23rd March, any families who **do not** fall under **Key Worker** definitions should not attend nursery.

Who is a key worker?

- The list of parents who would qualify as a key worker is broad, due to the number of jobs that in some way impact essential services. The Government have today released an updated list of who they identify as Key Workers, which can be viewed using the link below;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

- Parents who deem themselves to be a key worker, following Government information (as per link above), will be able to access childcare at any of our open sites.
- Where possible we do encourage parents to not utilise this service if not essential for them.

Do I still need to pay my fees?

- If you choose to remove your child from nursery and do not use the service from Monday 23rd March 2020 you will not be charged for nursery fees. Your child's place will remain secure and your account will remain on hold until you re-use the service when normal fees will apply again.
- Of our sites that will remain open, and utilised by emergency key workers, normal charges will apply to ensure we can continue to run our service with the teams needed to safely and appropriately care for your child/children.
- We will be asking that fees be paid on the day the session is used or in advance.
- If your place is fully funded this would apply as normal, however any hours required on top of funded hours will be chargeable.

What are the next steps?

- We will continue to confirm what sites will remain open and what sites will close, however with immediate effect sites will remain open for parents who deem themselves Key Workers.
- Central staff are currently being re-deployed to where possible work from home to ensure we are following Government advice to reduce travel.
- Essential staff will remain in open sites where available.
- Our company throughout this crisis will support our staff and are always available for them.



Each of our nurseries are unique and special in their own right. Our staff work incredibly hard and put your children at the heart of what they do. We want to support and retain our families, and our teams and ensure we will be ready to open to a full complement of services when we are authorised to do so again, in the weeks/months to come. Whilst we will not be charging fees, should you wish to contribute fees in any way during the period we are closed please feel free to do so. This will be a very difficult time for all and we are not immune as a business.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. Throughout this crisis we will be available by phone (0800 111 4954), email (enquiries@bertramuk.com) or through social media. Please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Stay safe, take care of each other and know we are all in this together.

Yours Sincerely,

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