

**KID EASE NOTICE RE COVID-19 [CORONAVIRUS]**  
**Update Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Many Things & Many Thanks**

At the close of the most tumultuous fortnight, many decisions have been taken, altered and then retaken as a result of the unprecedented, daily upset to our everyday lives.

After much consideration and consultation with my colleagues, parents, Early Years professionals and the sector in general, yesterday we made the very difficult decision to suspend our childcare service and close all five Kid Ease nurseries until the Government confirms we are permitted to re-open. At the moment, we do not know when that might be, and we will be reviewing this on a weekly basis.

As indicated earlier this week I am now in a position to update you all on a number of topics which I hope will provide answers to the many questions my colleagues and I have been asked over the past couple of weeks.

There is no magic resolution to the situation we are confronted with, and whilst the vast majority of you have been super supportive of our collective efforts, I know not everyone has agreed with some of our decisions. There is no precedent to the events that have unfolded during the past fortnight. Decisions have had to be taken based on our best knowledge, best intention and ultimately with reasonableness and fairness. Whatever we decide, whatever we do, we will not satisfy everyone. However, I do hope the majority of you will agree and acknowledge our decisions. I urge you to please read this document in full before making any judgements or reaching conclusions.

These are the topics I would like to address today, although I will continue to update you regularly over the forthcoming weeks.

- March Fees
- April & May Fees
- Outstanding Fees
- Parental Consent Forms For 2-, 3- and 4-year old funding
- New Children
- Leavers
- Staying in Touch

**March Fees**

The Government's enforced closure of private nurseries is an unprecedented occurrence and there are no ready-made solutions within the sector to the issues this shut down has created. As per our terms and conditions, March's fees remain payable in full, principally because our March costs have already been incurred.

**April & May Fees**

Many other nurseries across the country are still charging parents during the shutdown, either partially or in full, but we have decided not to do that. We will suspend all nursery fees from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 until we reopen, at which time, we will reinstate children onto their pre-closure booking patterns. From 1<sup>st</sup> April, you will not receive an invoice.

During the past fortnight my colleagues and I have been busy mitigating our variable costs. Some of you have asked if you can either continue to pay your fees in full or pay a retention fee to support your nursery during the closure which has been thoughtful and very much appreciated. We know that some of you might not be in a position to do so as we appreciate that everyone's financial circumstances differ and some of you are unable to work.

What we have decided to do is seek a voluntary contribution from parents to the ongoing costs during our temporary closure. We are proposing a minimum of 10% of your March invoice in lieu of April's fees, and again in May if the nurseries have still not reopened by then. If you are able to do this you can make payments by debit card through our website, by BACS or your tax-free childcare account, using your "child's name + April" [or in May "your child's name + May"] as a reference. This will greatly assist us in retaining places ahead of your child restarting.

### **Outstanding Fees**

Can I please urge you all to ensure your accounts are fully paid and up to date by the 31<sup>st</sup> March. It is even more important now than ever before. The managers will be in the nurseries until the end of the month so please contact them directly or of course you can make payments by debit card through our website, by BACS or your tax-free childcare account.

### **Parental Consent Forms**

Parental consent forms for the summer term funding for 2-, 3- and 4-year olds will be made available for you to download from our website in the next few days. I know many of you have already completed these with your nursery. The Early Years Departments at KCC and NCC have indicated that they will need these returned to them as soon as the nurseries reopen so you can access your funded places immediately we reopen. So if you have yet to complete your form, please download a copy, complete as far as possible and either post to our Head Office address or else scan and email to [info@kidease.co.uk](mailto:info@kidease.co.uk) so that I can collate on behalf of the managers whilst they are on furlough.

### **New Children**

Our nurseries have a lot of new children due to start nursery over the next few weeks. It is unfortunate that these start dates will have to be delayed, but please rest assured that we will reopen as soon as we are allowed, and my colleagues and I look forward to welcoming you and your children to Kid Ease.

### **Leavers**

It is customary to have a few leavers each month. To those parents whose children are sadly leaving during our temporary closure I would like to thank you for choosing Kid Ease and send our thanks and best wishes to your children and your family. We are sorry we have been unable to say goodbye properly. We will of course process deposit returns in line with our terms and conditions. Thank you!

### **Staying in Touch**

Today is rather surreal. But it's not 'goodbye'; the French have a far more appropriate term – à bientôt. We'll see you soon! Over the forthcoming weeks I plan to update you with developments. The nurseries will be closed and so my colleagues will not have access to phones or email. Head Office will operate a pared down service and so if you have any urgent matters please do email [info@kidease.co.uk](mailto:info@kidease.co.uk) during this time and please note that it might take a few days for a response.

### **And Finally...**

Please be assured we are doing everything we can to ensure the viability of each of our nurseries and I am certain the decisions we have taken will be successful. Many of you have told me your child is already missing their friends at nursery, our staff and the many wonderful and varied activities they enjoy every day. Over the next few days and beyond, we will be posting ideas and fun activities you can enjoy with your child on Facebook so please look out for these, and there are other ways your child can stay in touch with her / his friends from nursery, e.g. FaceTime, Skype, etc.

In the meantime, thank you for your support for our magnificent staff and the tough decisions we have had to take.

Please take care, look after yourselves and I look forward to welcoming you all back once this truly awful pandemic is over.

Best wishes

Ian Atkey  
Managing Director