



## Childcare provision in Nottinghamshire Factsheet

### Information for parents and carers about closures of childcare settings

Many parents use childcare services for their children under the age of 5. As with schools, childcare providers have been asked to close as of today. They will however stay open for vulnerable children and parents who are in critical jobs.

We understand there is anxiety and confusion about these closures, so we have prepared this factsheet to help you understand what can and can't be provided.

Information from the Department of Education for parents and carers regarding closures is also available from [Closure of educational settings: information for parents and carers - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers)

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### 1. Why has the government made the decision to close schools and childcare provision?

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 and childcare providers to remain open only for those children who absolutely need to attend.

It is important to underline that schools, 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 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.

#### 2. Who can still access Childcare?

The government announced the list of parents who are classed as **Critical Workers** in light of the guidance on school closures.

In summary, schools and education settings (Including Childminders) are expected to provide usual care for parents working in:

- Health and social care
- Education and childcare
- Key public services
- Local and national government
- Food and other necessary goods
- Public safety and national security
- Transport
- Utilities, communication and financial services

A full list of job roles is available here: [Guidance for schools, childcare providers, colleges and local authorities in England on maintaining educational provision - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/guidance-for-schools-childcare-providers-colleges-and-local-authorities-in-england-on-maintaining-educational-provision)

At least one parent needs to be in a critical role and some early years settings will ask you for evidence so that they can prioritise places for parents in critical roles above others.

Childcare provision will also continue to be provided for **vulnerable children**. These include:

- Children known to Social Care
- Children with Education and Healthcare Plans (EHCP)
- Young Carers
- Disabled Children

If you have a 2 year old who is taking a funded place in a childcare setting, in some cases, where there is space and staff capacity, your childcare setting may continue to provide childcare. Please ask your childcare setting to explore if this is possible. It may not always be appropriate e.g. staff levels have been reduced because of members of staff in social isolation. This is optional for childcare providers, so please don't be disappointed if this isn't possible.

Nottinghamshire County Council is working with local childcare providers to continue to support vulnerable children and children of critical workers.

### **3. If only one parent or carer is a critical worker, can I send my children in to school?**

Children with at least one parent or carer who are identified as critical workers by the government can send their children to school if required.

### **4. What age groups does this cover?**

The changes cover children at registered childcare providers (including nurseries and childminders and schools). This is for both state-funded and independent schools.

### **5. Will it be mandatory for registered childcare providers to remain open in some form?**

Government has asked registered childcare providers (schools, nurseries, childminders, preschools) to remain open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children.

Some may be unable to do so especially if they are experiencing severe staff shortages. If your childcare provider has closed, this may mean that your child may need to go to a different registered childcare provider during this closure period.

### **6. How long will schools and childcare provision be closed for?**

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, schools, colleges and childcare providers will be closed to the majority of children until further notice.

### **7. Will registered childcare providers be open over Easter holidays for holiday clubs and childcare?**

Where possible, we would encourage childcare providers, schools and colleges to continue to look after critical workers' children and vulnerable children throughout the Easter holidays.

### **8. I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - can you guarantee that my child will attend their usual childcare provider?**

We are expecting the majority of settings to stay open for the children of critical workers and vulnerable children so they can continue to attend their usual provider, but we acknowledge this will be impossible for some - such as small rural schools or child minders if they have been asked to self-isolate.

Where a setting is unable to stay open, they will work with the council and other local childcare providers to find an alternative setting for their children.

### **9. I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child - how will my child get to childcare if the only provision open is not nearby?**

We want to enable children to attend the best setting for them, and the Government announced that provide transport arrangements will be funded to support you to take them to an alternative provision if this is not local to you.

### **10. I am a critical worker or have a vulnerable child but I don't want to send my child in to school or childcare, do I have to?**

Many parents working in these critical sectors will be able to ensure their child is kept at home. Every child who can be safely cared for at home should be.

This is an offer to parents and carers and there is no requirement for parents and carers to send their children to school if they do not need or wish to do so. We encourage you wherever possible to keep your children at home.

If you have a social worker, they will work with you to assess the best option for your child.

### **11. Why is my nursery telling me that they will continue to charge me during corona virus-related closures?**

The government acknowledges that in many cases, the insurance that early years providers have will not cover them for income lost during COVID-19-related closures.

That is one of the reasons why it announced on 17 March that government would not claw back early years entitlements funding from local authorities during closures, or where children are withdrawn because of COVID-19. This funding is only available for children in receipt of funded childcare for 15 to 30 hours per week. This protects a significant proportion of early years providers' income. However, we appreciate that in many cases fee paying parents are critical to keep childcare settings afloat so you will continue to be charged for your childcare place

In addition, the government has set out a range of support for businesses to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on them. This includes a business rate holiday for all private childcare providers for one year from 1 April. Local authorities will be fully compensated for the cost of this. Furthermore, staff employed in the early years sector will continue to receive 80% of their salary if they are unable to work.

In light of these steps taken already, we are asking providers to be reasonable and balanced in their dealings with parents. The government is urgently keeping what further support businesses may require under close review.

### **12. Will there be reduced childcare fees for parents who pay for their childcare?**

The Council understands that a very small number of childcare providers are offering a discount to fee paying parents, however this is not required by Government and is at the discretion of the childcare provider.

In the majority of cases, childcare providers will continue to charge parents at their usual rates.

### **13. If I get funded childcare, will that continue, or will I have to pay? Does this change if my child has to move to a different childcare provider on a temporary basis?**

If you currently receive funded childcare, parents will not have to pay extra apart from the usual charges to pay for meals etc.

If you have a critical role or your child is considered 'vulnerable', and you need to relocate to a different childcare provider than your usual one, the council is asking Childcare providers not to charge the parent for this place. Instead, we are asking that funding from the vacant places where children are staying at home. If this is not possible i.e. not having enough funded spaces, a parent may be directed to a different childcare provider.

If you need to find alternative childcare, please ask your current childcare provider in the first instance as they already have good links with neighbouring services.

You can also check the Notts Help Yourself website which is being updated on a daily basis with information about closures and which settings remain open.

[Childcare | Notts Help Yourself](#)

## Talking to Children about Coronavirus

- **Early Years Alliance advice** <https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/how-talk-children-about-coronavirus>
- **Hand washing activity** <pic.twitter.com/45XFemg5Jo>
- **PACEY activities** <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/coronavirus/supporting-children-in-your-setting-coronavirus/>
- **Covibook** – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing during the pandemic: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>
- **Place2Be** – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>
- **Young Minds** - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- **Amaze - information pack for parents** <https://amazesussex.org.uk/faqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove/>

### For more information:

The latest Guidance for parents regarding closures of schools and childcare provision  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers/closure-of-educational-settings-information-for-parents-and-carers>

Practical Local Information for Parents and Carers

[https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/parent\\_zone.page](https://www.nottshelpyourself.org.uk/kb5/nottinghamshire/directory/parent_zone.page)

### Early Childhood Services

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