**The content of this letter explains why the admissions application you made to the setting of your choice for your child/ren is currently on hold.**

Dear Parent/Carer,

These are very challenging times and I would like to thank all of you for your patience and continued support. I am sure my colleagues in settings will join me in saying that we hope you and your family are keeping safe and well.

You will have read about/heard the First Minister’s statement relating to the re-opening of Early Learning and Childcare settings from August. Until lockdown we had been on track to deliver 1140 hours of early learning and childcare (ELC) for all 3 – 5 year olds by August 2020. I am very disappointed to be saying that this is now unachievable.

There are many factors that setting staff will need to consider as part of planning for the academic year 2020/21.

These include;

* **Safe social distancing measures;**

To keep your child as safe as possible they will be part of a small group (bubble). Your child will be in the same bubble each time they attend their setting.

* **The availability of staff due to those who may be shielding or self isolating**;

Setting leads need to ensure that ratios of adults to children meet legal requirements and keep children safe

* **Having staggered drop off and collections times**

It is important that contact for children and adults is minimised as they come and go from the setting

* **The frequency of cleaning**

It is essential that thorough deep cleaning is completed after and between each session

The application you submitted to us on behalf of your child/ren was based on the availability of 1140 hours of funded ELC. We need to ask you about your requirements again as you may have decided that you do not wish your child to attend a setting in the current circumstances, or your personal situation/plans may have changed.

If you click on the following link <https://bit.ly/2zzPefN> you will be taken to a simple questionnaire which, once completed will enable us to assess the demand for places in each setting.

**Please could you complete it and submit your responses by midnight on Tuesday 2nd June**.

When we have gathered the information from all parents we will be able to provide each of you with greater detail about what session we can offer. This offer will be for the Autumn term, August to Christmas break 2020. The number of available sessions may increase as we move through the school terms and if rules on social distancing are relaxed. However, we are not able to guarantee that at present.

There will be a continued focus on working in partnership with the independent sector to deliver any split placements due to the need to reduce cross-contamination and limit the number of settings that children attend.

If you are a Key Worker please complete the section in the questionnaire that refers to your Key Worker status as this will help us to meet your needs during this period.

Please do not contact settings directly as staff will not be able to discuss your individual needs at this point. If you have any questions please add them to this section in the questionnaire or send them to the Early Years Team at the e mail address below. We may not be able to answer your questions immediately but will come back to you with answers as soon as we can.

[earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

We really appreciate your patience at this time as we aim to ensure that your child/ren are warmly welcomed, safe and happy in our settings when they return/start in August.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



Julia Matthew

Quality Improvement Manager (Early Years)