

Results and feedback from Parent Questionnaire about Childcare Online Booking system

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have received 66 responses to our questionnaire about our new booking system - many thanks if you were one of those people who took the time to take the survey.

We wanted to share with you the results of the survey, and also to answer some of the recurring comments / requests provided.

Firstly, we received comments from parents using all eleven of our childcare settings, so we have a representative sample from across the board - thank you!

The average score for the ease of registering on the system was 3 out of 5. There were a few comments about the passwords provided by the system being clumsy and parents not being able to reset these to a more memorable one. Please note that passwords can be reset - To reset your password please follow the instructions below:

- *If you can't remember your password when you login, please enter your username (your email address) and then press the "reset" button. The system will then email you a randomly generated password.*
- *Please use this to log in to your account.*
- *To then reset your password, click on the "edit" button by the "User Account Details" and scroll down the form to the "add new password" box. Please enter your new password in both boxes.*
- *Please note that your new password must contain one digit, one lowercase character, one uppercase character and at be at least 8 characters in length.*
- *Click on the Update button to save your new password.*

Comments were also made on the amount of information required when registering a child.

Unfortunately this information is standard across all childcare settings - the booking system is used by many other childcare companies across the UK, and the registration form is the same for everyone. Much of the information is required by OFSTED, and once entered, we will not need to collect this information again as it is saved on the system.

The average score for the ease of making a booking was 3 out of 5. The majority of comments were about the ease of booking classes on the system.

Classes are arranged for a set number of weeks in advance. Davidson Roberts agrees to pay the class provider for a set number of sessions. We then offer this set of classes for parents to book online. Classes have to be booked and paid for as a whole block (much as you would have to pay for a set of after school ballet or swimming lessons). Parents are not able to "pick and choose" the days they would like their child to attend, as in the past we have ended up with just a couple of children in the class, but have still had to pay the class provider for running the class - therefore incurring a loss and putting the future of other extracurricular classes in jeopardy. We are reviewing the best way to book classes going forward.

Almost 50% of respondents had spoken to someone at our Head Office to sort out booking issues, and the average score for this interaction was 3 out of 5.

We did receive some positive responses in reply to the question “What do you like about the booking system?” These included “flexibility”; “straightforward”; “easy to book”; “speed and simplicity”; “quicker to book”; “can instantly book a session myself and know it’s done”; “has all the kids details saved”; “ability to view and book online in my own time”; “that you can pay online”; “flexibility to increase/decrease my sessions”.

These are some of the reasons we moved to the new booking system so it is good to hear that it is meeting our needs!

We did receive several comments to the question “what can we improve on the booking system?” Some of these are below - with our comments / responses to these.

“Having room to accommodate children in an emergency instead of turning them away as they aren’t booked and paid for.”

In an emergency situation if you need your child to attend one of our clubs at short notice, please contact the club manager directly. Your child needs to be registered on the online system (as we need all their information to hand when they attend a club) and if there is a space at the club, they will accept your child. You will receive an invoice for the session via PayPal (this can be paid with a debit or credit card). We have never turned away a registered child from attending a club, unless the club is already full.

“Make bookings appear in your account once you have made them. Try using the system yourself as a customer”.

Once you have made a booking you can easily see this by clicking on the “summary” tab at the top of your dashboard. This will display the sessions booked, by child, by week.

Prior to launching the Childcare online Booking site, it was vigorously tested by all the Head Office staff. The booking site was not developed for us - it was developed and launched in January 2016 specifically for childcare providers, and is used by many schools and clubs across the UK. To date, it has over 24,539 registered parents, 39,604 registered children and has processed over 248,724 bookings. We believe that this is proof of its suitability for our needs.

“You now have to book and pay at the same time, instead of booking for a year and paying monthly. This means there is no guarantee of a place unless you book and pay months in advance.”

Unfortunately one of the main reasons for moving to the online booking system was the high level of unpaid invoices and debt the company as a whole was carrying. The “book now, pay now” system was introduced as a way of minimising future debt and gives all children equal access to our sessions. We are currently investigating a way of “pre-booking” spaces for children whose parents need to book a year upfront, and will be able to send an update about this in the near future. For reassurance, no one has lost a space or not been able to book the sessions they have wanted at an Out of School Club to date.

“It would be nice to have the opportunity to book last minute requests.”

All of our sessions are available to book up to midday the day before.

“I can’t cancel or amend a booking.”

To cancel any sessions booked in error or not needed, please click on the “Summary” tab at the top of your dashboard. This will bring up a list of all sessions booked, with a “cancel” or “cancel and refund” button on the right hand side of each one. A refund will be credited to your account if you cancel a session 7 or more days in advance. This credit can be used against future bookings. Again, this is a part of the system that has been necessary due to some parents making large bookings (for example, every day during the summer holidays), and then cancelling these bit by bit a day or so beforehand. This obviously prevents other children from attending the club on that day, and means we as a business make a loss. Holding a credit on a parents account has reduced this activity.

For parents who have paid with childcare vouchers, the credit system offers a way of safeguarding their money, as we are not able to refund childcare vouchers back to the voucher company, or provide a cash refund in their place.

We hope that this message has answered some of your queries about the booking system, and reassured you of the reasons for the change, and that we are committed to this system moving forward.

If you have any other comments about the system, please feel free to email info@schoolsout-cambs.co.uk.

Best Wishes,

The Davidson Roberts Administration Team