

CHILDCARE CENTRES TO OPEN THEIR DOORS AS OF TOMORROW

As part of an agreement reached by the Malta Chamber of SMEs and the Childcare Centre Providers Association, with the Ministry for Education, that has positively concluded discussions related to the re-opening of the sector, Malta and Gozo's Childcare Centres will be ready to re-open their doors and re-start operating as of tomorrow.

The reopening of this sector is deemed as a very important step towards normality. Childcare centres represent a very successful public-private-partnership and an essential support structure that was always instrumental in increasing the levels of female participation in the workforce. This support service will be now be once again restarted in order to assist working parents in getting back to their routines. Childcare is an important pillar in economic recovery.

Discussions were held with the Ministry for Education and the Health Authorities to agree on the health protocol that would upgrade the standards for the sector in times of Covid.

It should be noted that Childcare centres already had very strict protocols to follow in terms of dealing with kids being sick and also rigorous cleaning regimes. These will remain in place and intensified as necessary in addition to social distancing measures that will also be implemented with higher child to area ratios to follow and also maintaining clusters (group of kids and their carer) and avoid their interaction with other clusters in the same centre. Centre employees will also be required to wear masks or visors.

ABOUT MALTA CHAMBER OF SMES

Malta Chamber of SMEs (Formerly known as GRTU) is the largest social partner in Malta representing over 7,000 SMEs from over 90 different sectors. The SME Chamber has been established for over 70 years and its aim is of safeguarding the interest of businesses at large.

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Kids will not be wearing masks or visors themselves but hand washing and wiping of belongings will be increased as part of the routine hygiene regime.

Parents are asked for their full understanding in appreciating the importance of their cooperation for the protocol to work and keep the illness away.

We thank the authorities, especially the Minister for Education, the Hon Owen Bonnici, and the Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Dr Francis Fabri, for their support and cooperation during these times. The Ministry was instrumental in enabling direct dialogue with the health authorities, which dialogue enable for a sensible protocol that also took into consideration the needs of the industry by finding alternative solutions, while fully conforming to health priorities. Such a good practice should be implemented for other sectors yet to open.

Notes:

The Childcare Centre Providers Association (CCPA) is an official independent association representing the interests of childcare centre providers. The CCPA is associated under the social partner umbrella of the Malta Chamber of SMEs.

Children attending childcare centres are in pre-school age of 0-3 years old.

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