



# Little Acorns Preschool Fees Policy and Procedure



Together we learn and grow

**Reviewed September 2024**  
**Governor Approval pending for October 2024**

Little Acorns Preschool offers a high quality, safe and stimulating environment that provides a service that is good value for money.

## **Opening Times from 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024**

We operate 32.5 hours per week from Monday to Friday.

Morning session 8.50am-12pm

Afternoon Session 12pm-3.20pm

Children must attend a minimum of 2 sessions across 2 days per week.

## **Fees and Invoicing**

The cost per hour for children aged 3 and 4 years old at Preschool is £5.33. The cost per hour for children aged 2 years old at Preschool is £7.26. For 2-year-olds already at the setting, the 3-year-old cost per hour will come into place the half term after your child's third birthday.

Session fees are payable every half-term in arrears. An invoice will be given out at the end of the half term and will be payable within 14 days. If you have given notice, then a final Invoice will be given within the notice period and will be expected to be paid within 14 days.

Payments are to be made using the online parent payment system. If you have any queries concerning the invoice or payments, please speak to the Preschool Leader or Finance Officer in the School Office. If you do not have an online account, please contact the Office Manager.

Everything is treated as strictly confidential.

## **Procedure for Monitoring Payments in Arrears**

The Finance Officer will make regular checks for payments against parent accounts. Any accounts not paid in full will be sent a reminder invoice for monies owed. If a debt is not settled within 14 days, the procedure for non-payment of fees will be applied.

## **Procedure for Non-Payment of Fees**

If a debt remains after 14 days of a parent being issued with an invoice, they will be asked to commit to a regular payment plan to reduce their debt over a set time.

The following will be confirmed in discussion with the parent and then in writing:

- the overall amount due and what this covers
- the time scale of the payment plan (no more than 7 weeks from the confirmation letter being received by the parent must be allowed for the debt to be paid in full).
- dates for payments to be set up
- default procedure and what will happen if payments are missed

If a parent/carer defaults on the payment plan, or does not commit to one, the child will be restricted to early years entitlement (EYE) hours only until the debt is cleared (if the child is entitled to EYE). If the child is not entitled to EYE, the child's place will be withdrawn. This will be confirmed in writing.

Until any debt linked to non-payment of Preschool fees has been cleared by a parent, the Governors reserve the right to refuse participation in other chargeable services for their child, or any siblings at Wookey School.

If the debt is still not settled within the terms of the agreement, then a final reminder will be issued requesting payment within fourteen days and if no payment is received the debt will be sent to Somerset County Council for pursuance of the debt.

If the debt is not cleared within 7 weeks, we reserve the right to withdraw the child's place in Preschool.

### **Early Years Entitlement and 2-Year-Old Funding (universal)**

All parents of children aged three to four can access 15 hours of government funded childcare. It doesn't matter how much you earn or how many hours you work.

Currently, parents of two-year-olds can access 15 hours a week of funded childcare if they are in receipt of income support benefits, such as Universal Credit, and earn less than £15,400 a year. 570 hours are available from the funded period after your child's third birthday and then another 570 is given to them from the funded period after their fourth. You can use more than one childcare provider but you can only claim the maximum entitlement of hours per funding period in total. If you choose to use part or all of your entitlement in an alternative setting, we will charge you for the extra hours accessed at Little Acorns Preschool.

To claim the EYE funding the following information is required

- Child's legal documentation, birth certificate, passport.
- EYE funding parent declaration form – completed every term and signed by the parent/carer.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to produce the child's legal documentation without this we will charge normal session fees as we will be unable to claim the EYE funding.

Parents/carers are required to sign an agreement of understanding of the terms of funding, as set out in the registration form, before the child starts.

### **Early Years Extended Entitlement For Working Families**

The Government are extending funded childcare to support more parents returning to work after their parental leave ends.

Currently, parents who work more than 16 hours a week and earn less than £100,000 are entitled to 30 hours funded childcare a week for children aged three to four.

We're now expanding the scheme so that working parents of all children over the age of nine months are also entitled to 30 hours of government funded childcare. This is a transformational change that will make a difference to families across the country.

#### New and Upcoming changes regarding 30 hours free childcare:

From **April 2024**, working parents of two-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours of government funded childcare.

From **September 2024**, 15 hours of government funded childcare will be extended to all children from the age of nine months.

From **September 2025**, working parents of children under the age of five will be entitled to 30 hours government funded childcare per week.

This staggered approach will give childcare providers time to prepare for the changes, ensuring there are enough providers ready to meet demand.

To check your eligibility and for more information go to [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk) .

To claim the EYE Additional funding the following information is required

- Child's legal documentation, birth certificate, passport.
- EYE funding parent declaration form – completed every term and signed by the parent/carer.
- Eligibility code from registered parent (HMRC)
- Registering parents National Insurance number and consent to share NI with Somerset County Council EYE team)

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to produce the child's legal documentation without this we will charge normal session fees as we will be unable to claim the EYE funding.

#### **Grace period:**

If your circumstances change and you are no longer eligible for the additional hours the government have created a grace period.

For example, if you fall out of eligibility between the 1<sup>st</sup> of January and the 10<sup>th</sup> of February, you have until the 31<sup>st</sup> of March to become eligible or to provide Preschool with your 4 weeks notice to reduce your child's hours.

<b>Date Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation:</b>	<b>Grace Period End date:</b>
1 January – 10 February	31 March
11 February – 31 March	31 August
1 April – 26 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	31 December
1 September – 21 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	31 March

Parents/carers are required to sign an agreement of understanding of the terms of funding, as set out in the registration form, before the child starts.

### **Tax free Childcare**

Tax-Free Childcare and 30 hours free childcare are two separate government schemes, to help parents with the cost of childcare. You can apply for both through one online application – the childcare service.

To qualify for either scheme, over the next 3 months you and your partner (if you have one) must each expect to earn at least: £1,976 if you're aged 23 or over. If you or your partner have an expected adjusted net income over £100,000 in the current tax year, you will not be eligible. Please see [www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare](http://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare) for more information.

Parents can use Tax-Free Childcare alongside the 15 and 30 hours free childcare schemes in England, or any free childcare hours provided by the Scottish, Welsh or Northern Ireland governments.

Parents can't use Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as they receive childcare vouchers, Universal Credit or tax credits. However, 30 hours free childcare can be received alongside these schemes.

When you apply, you'll be considered for both these services through the same application. You'll only be asked to decide which support you want if you're on tax credits or using a childcare voucher or salary sacrifice scheme. You should check what help you could get with childcare costs, using the childcare calculator. This will help you decide which support is best for you.

For more information go to [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

If you are paying fees using Tax Free Childcare please can you let the Finance Officer know your TFC code, date and amount paid each time a payment is made. This will ensure your account is updated in a timely manner.

### **Childcare Vouchers**

We accept childcare vouchers. Please speak to the Finance Officer for further information.

## **Additional Services**

The cost of the session will include a drink of milk/water, plus snacks which are detailed in our healthy eating policy, which is available upon request. Parents should ensure that they provide all other consumables such as nappies, wet wipes and lunch (where applicable). If you would like your child to have a paid school dinner, then please speak with the Office Manager.

Parents/carers will be charged a £10 a term Admin fee. This will help towards the cost of staff completing the necessary and ongoing admin for your children to attend Preschool.

## **Absences**

For holidays, normal fees will be payable to keep the child's place available. Financially it's not sustainable for us to keep a place open and receive no fees during this period.

In case of short-term illness, full fees will be payable. For long term illness, individual circumstances may be discussed with the Preschool Leader to reach an agreement.

No charge will be made for inset days or bank holidays. In the case of severe weather or circumstances beyond our control forcing the closure of Preschool, fees will still be payable as we will still incur costs such as paying staff.

## **Changing sessions**

Where a parent wishes to change the booking of sessions for their child, we will do our best to accommodate your needs but it may not be possible as the sessions may be full. Please see our Preschool Leader for a discussion giving as much notice as possible.

## **Cancellation of Place**

Little Acorns Preschool may cancel a child's place for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of fees (see non-payment of fees procedure)
- Unsuitable behaviour – including but not limited to: threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff or children within the setting. This may result in us withdrawing a place for your child with immediate effect.

Parents may choose to remove their child from a session or from Preschool completely by giving 4 weeks' written notice to the Preschool Leader. If written notice is not received, four weeks' fees will be charged and/or EYE funding for the four weeks will be claimed.

Parents/carers are required to sign an agreement of understanding of the terms of funding, as set out in the registration form, before the child starts.

## **Late Collection Charges**

We appreciate that there may be times when parents are unavoidably late to collect their child and we try to accommodate this. However, staff have time allocated after a session to tidy up the activities and/or having meetings, which cannot be done when looking after children.

For parents who are late collecting their children by 5 minutes on more than 2 occasions per half term, will subsequently be charged at a rate of £5 for every 15 minutes beyond the stated finish time. For example (depending on your agreed finish time) you will be charged £5 for collecting your child between 12 midday and 12.15pm or 3.20pm and 3.35pm, you will be charged £10 if you collect your child between 12.15pm and 12.30pm or 3.35pm and 3.50pm. Invoices for late collection charges will be subject to our standard payment terms.

### **Notice to changes to the Fees Policy**

The fees policy will be reviewed at least annually (Next review: September 2025). If any changes to the policy occur, we will give 1 months' notice of changes and a new fees policy will be issued to all parents for their information.

If anyone has any queries regarding the fees policy, please contact the Finance Manager or see the Preschool Leader.