



Policy Document:

Financial (Fees & Funding) Policy.



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Policy statement

We believe that we offer a level of service for which it is reasonable to recover our costs. We are a non-profit charity and as such only recover sufficient to cover the setting's overheads.

Aims

To operate a financial system which is both fair and reasonable and in line with market value, covering the costs of operating the Nursery and Centre as a whole.

Method

1. NURSERY

• Funded Children - 3-5 Year Olds

○ 15 Hours Nursery Education Funding

All children aged 3 and above are currently entitled to a maximum of 15 hours of funded child-care per week which can be split over a maximum of 2 settings. This funding is claimed on behalf of the parents from Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) based on the hours which Nursery can offer. There is no guarantee that a child will be able to have the full 15 hours at the Nursery; offered hours are dependent on the level of children attending and staffing so we ensure we keep to the set adult:child ratios. Priority is given to the rising 4's children who would be attending mainstream school in the next academic year.

The Meadows Nursery claims funding for a total of 38 weeks which covers the academic year and takes into account bank holidays and normal school holidays, and includes for staff development days during which funding cannot be claimed.

Funding is available for a child at 3 points in the year, Autumn, Spring and Summer term and is only available from the start of the term following the child's third birthday.

Funding can only be claimed at each of these 3 points per year and can only be amended up-to the deadline date as set by CCC. As such, should a parent wish to amend their child's hours midterm; and after the deadline date; there may be additional costs for extra hours above the funding claimed and will be due at the Centre's fee paying rates.

In the event a parent wishes to reduce their child's claimed funded hours, the transfer of funding to an alternative setting will only be considered if the correct notice period (as detailed below) has been given and under exceptional circumstances. This will be reviewed by The Meadows Centre Manager and Committee on a case-by-case basis. Refunds of funding cannot be issued direct to parents.

Nursery Education Funding (NEF) is spread over a minimum of 38 weeks per year up to a maximum of 50 weeks as long as the total hours claimed across all settings do not exceed 570 hours in total.

The maximum funding is 15 hours per week and follows Monday to Friday only. Any 'unused' funding does not roll over to the following weeks.

In the event of closures due to exceptional circumstances, some parents who claim their full 15 hours funding with The Meadows may be unable to have full use of their hours during affected weeks.

- **30 Hours Extended Entitlement**

Eligible children aged 3 and above will be entitled to an additional 15 hours of funded child-care per week which can be split between settings subject to restrictions placed by HM Government. There is no guarantee that a child will be able to have the full 30 hours at the Nursery; offered hours are dependent on the level of children attending and staffing so we ensure we keep to the set adult:child ratios. Priority is given to the rising 4's children who would be attending mainstream school in the next academic year.

The Meadows will offer the 30 hours extended entitlement at the Nursery only between 9am and 3pm (Monday to Friday) over the funded 38-week academic year.

In order to access the 30 hours free childcare, families will have to apply through the HMRC Childcare Services Childcare Choices website at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk. Once the HMRC has confirmed eligibility, the parent/carer will receive an eligibility code that must be provided to the Centre.

The Centre can only offer the 30 hours extended entitlement to parents once their eligibility code has been received and confirmed with the local authority.

Parents must reconfirm eligibility every three months. Should a parent/carer lose their eligibility the 30 hours free childcare they will receive a 'grace period' where the 30 hours free childcare will be kept for a short period. Once the 'grace period' has lapsed, the parent/carer may be entitled to the universal 15-hour entitlement.

Further information regarding eligibility can be found at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Under the extended entitlement scheme, the maximum funding is 30 hours per week and follows Monday to Friday only. Any 'unused' funding does not roll over to the following weeks.

In the event of closures due to exceptional circumstances, some parents who claim their full 30 hours funding; under the extended entitlement scheme; with The Meadows may be unable to have full use of their hours during affected weeks.

- **Funded Children – 2 Year Olds**

The Meadows offers children over the age of 2 free nursery education under the 2+ Childcare Funding Scheme in Cambridgeshire with availability being subject the level of children attending and staffing so we ensure we keep to the set adult:child ratios. There is no guarantee that on application for a FF2 place at The Meadows a place will be offered. Each case will be reviewed based on current numbers at that time.

For eligible children, funding is available for a maximum of 15 hours per week and is provided over 38 weeks of the academic year in line with the funding provision for 3–5-year-olds. Families are able to split this funding with a maximum of 2 FF2 settings or registered providers. Once a place is taken up eligible children will remain entitled to their place until their funding provision at 3 years old starts.

Note for ALL funded childcare:

Funding can only be claimed from CCC if the parent has completed and returned the CCC Funding Agreement to the Centre. Failure to do so will mean the Centre is unable to claim funding and the parent/carer will become liable for all associated childcare costs.

At The Meadows, funded hours can only be used for childcare within the Nursery.

- **Fee paying children**

Children who are not entitled to funding (due to their age or other eligibility criteria not being met) or have exceeded their funding allocation will be charged for the hours which have been agreed with the setting that their child can attend.

The Centre operates a monthly advance invoicing system for Nursery fees and other charges incurred. Payment of fees and other charges can be made daily, weekly or monthly using a variety of payment methods.

The lunchtime hour may be included in funded hours if funded hours permit, however for non-funded hours the lunchtime hour fee is the same as the fee for all other non-funded Nursery hours.

Any fees for non-funded hours at the Nursery must be paid in full, preferably in advance, on the first day of each month or on the first day of attendance.

For children not receiving the extended entitlement, those who exceeded their funded hours will be charged for the hours they attend which are in excess of funded hours. Parents will be billed for their agreed hours irrespective of attendance and refunds/credits will not be available for short-term sickness or holidays. In exceptional circumstances The Meadows Centre Manager in conjunction with the Committee reserves the right to review this on a case-by-case basis.

- **New Starters**

Any parents who wish to have their child's name added to the waiting list will be asked to fill in a registration form. Notification will be issued to parents half a term in advance of agreed starting date and all parents will be entitled to attend the Nursery for a free "taster" session with their child prior to their child starting at the Nursery.

- **Additional Events**

- **Christmas Concert, Graduation, etc.**

These events are an opportunity for the children to demonstrate their ability to perform and for parents to share in their success. The Meadows will schedule these dates within the academic calendar and out of fairness, will make every attempt to ensure the week day varies.

The Nursery may be open for half a day only for these events.

Children who normally attend on these sessions will still have funding claimed with all non-funded hours fees for these sessions being waived. Children who do not normally attend on these sessions will be invited with all non-funded hours fees being waived for the period of the event.

- **Parties.**
It is our policy to host parties on a normal Nursery day for which fees will be charged and funding claimed for those children who normally attend on that day. Any other children who do not normally attend on that day, are welcome to attend, and may be required to pay the usual session fee. In the interests of fairness, the Nursery will vary the weekday on which parties are held.

The Nursery will cover the costs of any entertainment, food and presents which are applicable for parties held within normal session times.

- **Other events.**
Each year the Committee may use the surplus funds from fundraising events to either partially or fully cover the costs of other events for the Nursery Children.

- **Emergency Closures**

In exceptional circumstances the Nursery may have to close. Where ever possible notice will be given to parents and information will be posted on our website. In the event of this occurring the Centre may offer a refund/credit for those closed sessions for any fees already charged.

- **Notice Period**

Should a parent wish to remove their child from the setting, a notice period of four calendar weeks must be given in writing.

In the event that insufficient notice is given, parents of fee-paying children will still be liable for their bill until the end of the notice period.

For funded children, transfers of funding to an alternative setting will only be considered if the correct notice period has been given. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis by The Meadows Centre Manager and Committee.

2. GENERAL

- **Early Years Pupil Premium**

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) is additional funding which the Nursery may receive to improve the education which the Nursery provides for disadvantaged 3- and 4-year-olds. Children will be assessed for EYPP by CCC from information submitted by the parent on the CCC Funding Agreement and information already held by CCC. The assessment is not, and cannot, be made by the Centre.

Should a child be eligible for EYPP, the Centre will receive an amount as set by CCC to enhance that child's education within the Nursery. Any EYPP monies received by the Centre will not be passed directly to the parent; however, the Nursery staff may consult with the child's parents to see how best the EYPP funds can be spent.

For further information, refer to the Centre's EYPP Policy document.

- **Disability Access Funding**

Disability Access Funding (DAF) is intended to help the Nursery meet the needs of pre-school children, aged 3 and 4 years old, who have special educational needs and disabilities and need additional adult support.

Awards of DAF are made to the Nursery to provide support for children with additional needs. Applications for these types of funding follow a strict procedure and are assessed by CCC's Area Resourcing Panel. All applications are made by the Centre Manager with input being sought from the SENCo, parents and any health care professionals involved with the child concerned.

If an application is successful, the Centre will receive a monetary amount from CCC, this money will be spent on providing additional adult support as detailed in the application to CCC. Any funding monies received by the Centre will not be passed directly to the parent.

- **Fees structure¹**

Nursery

Children aged 2 years - £4.50 per hour for **all** non-funded hours.

Children aged 3 years and over - £4.00 per hour for **all** non-funded hours.

The Meadows reserves the right to review the fees annually, with any increase usually being applied from the start of the September term. Notice will be issued to parents prior to this and will be advertised on the website, as well as by newsletter.

- **Non-collection of Children**

The Meadows reserves the right to make an additional charge for children who are not collected on time at the end of the session. Charges will be applied for repeated failure to collect on time.

- **Support for families and children in exceptional circumstances**

In keeping with the charitable aims of The Meadows Day Care Centre, The Centre Manager and Committee will consider the individual needs of families and children experiencing financial or other difficulties on a case-by-case basis. Support for families may include the setting offering free sessions or part sessions, fee payment plans or the waiving of fees if appropriate.

- **Payment Methods Accepted**

The Centre accepts the following methods of payment for fees:

- Cash or cheque – payment direct to the Centre staff via the Centre Office or ASC.
- Bank transfer - payment direct to the Centre's bank account.
 - A/c Name: The Meadows Day Care Centre
 - Sort code: 20-43-63
 - A/c Number: 03622460
 - Reference: The parent's Meadows account reference.
- PayPal - payment direct to the Centre's PayPal account.
 - Direct via PayPal – send payment to invoicing@meadowscare.org
 - Via The Meadows Day Care Centre website:
WWW.MEADOWSCARE.ORG/PAYPAL-PAYMENTS/
- Credit/Debit Card.
 - In person at the Centre Office.
 - Via a direct link on emailed invoices.
 - Via PayPal.
- Tax Free Childcare Scheme.

¹ All fees quoted are effective from 1 September 2023, are correct at time of publishing this policy document and may be subject to change.

- **Failed Payment Costs**

The Meadows reserves the right to recover costs associated with failed payments provided by parents, including any bank charges incurred.

- **Unpaid fees and other charges**

Should a parent not pay fees and other charges made by The Centre, the Centre will remind the parent of any outstanding amounts and request payment of any overdue amounts. It is hoped that most parents will settle outstanding accounts after verbal reminders, however should the need arise communications to the parent will be in writing (either by hard-copy or email).

Should a parent not settle their account sufficiently, The Centre reserves the right to withdraw the provision of all fee incurring Nursery childcare until sufficient payment is made. This withdrawal of childcare will be communicated to the parent.

The Centre reserves the right to charge interest on outstanding invoices and may seek to recover any outstanding amounts and any costs incurred through legal channels.