

7.1 Admissions, Fee Structure and Payments Policy

Policy statement

We seek to make our preschool accessible to children and families that reflect the local community. We aim to ensure that any member of our community has access to the preschool through open, fair and clearly communicated procedures.

Please ensure that prior to applying for a place, you are aware of and have read this policy.

Our approach

We ensure that our preschool is widely advertised in places accessible to the whole community.

We describe our preschool and its practices in terms of how it treats each child and their family, having regard to their needs arising from their gender, special educational needs, disabilities, social background, religion, and ethnicity or from English being a newly acquired additional language.

We describe our preschool and its practices in terms of how it enables children and/or parents with disabilities to take part in the life of the preschool.

Admissions

In order for your child to secure a place on our waiting list, a completed application form together with payment of our non-refundable registration fee (£30) is required. Your child's name will not feature on the waiting list until we are in receipt of both. A child accessing a Free For 2 (FF2) place will be exempt from this fee. The waiting list is sorted by receipt of registration fee, in date order.

We have 2 intakes per year. Our main intake is at the start of the academic year in September and we have a smaller intake in January. For our September intake, we aim to offer places in early Spring. In order to avoid disappointment, we suggest that application forms and registration fees are submitted by the 31st January preceding this. For our January intake, we aim to offer places in mid-Autumn. In order to avoid disappointment, we suggest that application forms and registration fees are submitted by 31st July preceding this. Forms received after either of these deadlines will be added to the waiting list and processed after the initial admissions process has been completed.

Children must do a minimum of 3 sessions per week. One session is equivalent to one morning or afternoon. Sessions are allocated first to children already attending the preschool then on a first come, first serve basis.

Places are offered in order of the waiting list under the following criteria, which are in order of priority:

1. Looked after children or previously looked after children.
2. Children with Medical, Health, Social or Special Access Reasons.
3. Siblings of children currently attending the preschool, children of a current serving Committee Member or children of The Children's Workshop staff.
4. Children of Lady Boswell's School staff.
5. Children on the waiting list sorted by receipt of registration fee (in date order) and age eligibility (children must be at least 2 years old at the time of starting).

In-year admissions

If there are places still available after the September and January intake, sessions will first be offered to children already attending the preschool and then will be allocated to children on the waiting list according to the above criteria, on a termly basis (based on a 3 term year).

New Starter Deposit

On acceptance of a place and sessions agreed, a £100 New Starter Deposit (NSD) is payable to secure your child's place and sessions. This deposit will be offset against the first term's fee invoice (based on a 3 term year). The deposit will not be refunded if the child does not take up the place. A child accessing a FF2 place will be exempt from this deposit.

Fees

Fees are reviewed annually or in the event of any changes to the Code of Practice. Any changes to current fees will be advised in writing, at least one term (based on a 3 term year) in advance. The fees from September 2024, as agreed by the Committee of Trustees, will be:

September 2024 Fees	Per child
Hourly rate (for info only)	£8.86
Full Day	£55.38
Morning Session	£28.80
Afternoon Session	£26.58

Our fee structure is inclusive of drinks and snacks (we provide milk and toast/dairy free spread at snack time with a request for children to bring in a piece of fruit). We are open for 38 weeks per year, closing on Bank Holidays. There is no charge for Bank Holidays. Our fees do not include any outings, celebrations or entertainment that is in addition to our usual session activities.

Invoicing

We invoice termly (based on a 3 term year) for our fees. Invoices will be sent out before each term starts: at the start of the Autumn term (early September), Spring term (early January) and Summer term (early-mid April). At least half of the payment (Instalment 1) is due by the end of the second week of the preschool term. The other half (Instalment 2) is due by the last Friday of the half term holiday.

Penalties

Any instalment not received within 2 weeks of the due date will incur a £10.00 late payment fee per week. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please speak in confidence to the Manager, to explore alternative payment plans. If without negotiation, fees are not settled, we are left with no alternative but to withdraw your child's place and if necessary, take legal action to recover the amount owed. Children in receipt of Free Early Education (FEE) will be unable to access any additional fee-paying hours until outstanding fees are settled.

Children must be collected promptly at the end of a session/day. Should a parent fail to collect their child within 15 minutes of the session/day end, a late collection fee of £5 will be charged, and a further £10 per every half hour thereafter.

Illness, Absence and Early Collection

No refund or swapping sessions around will be given in the event of a child's absence for any reason. Discounts will not be available for children collected prior to the session end time.

Preschool Closure

Should the preschool be unable to open due to bad weather or for any other unforeseen circumstances, no refunds will be given.

Government Funding

A child is eligible for funding at the start of the term after their second (if eligible) and third birthday in line with the Department for Education date ranges:

A child born on or before	Eligible for FEE Funding
1 st April and 31 st August	Start of the Autumn term, in September, following their 2 nd /3 rd birthday
1 st September and 31 st December	Start of the Spring term, in January, following their 2 nd /3 rd birthday
1 st January and 31 st March	Start of the Summer, in April, following their 2 nd /3 rd birthday

We are registered for and can offer the following types of funding:

- Universal Entitlement (15 hours)

Universal 15 hours Free Early Education funding (FEE) is available for 3-to 4-year-olds. All children are eligible for this funding, the term after their 3rd birthday (based on a 3 term year). These hours will be delivered as per the formats detailed below.

- Working Parents Entitlement for 3- and 4-Year-olds (30 hours)

We can offer a maximum of 5 places in total, on a first come first served basis, for children that are eligible for the 30 hours free childcare, the term after their 3rd birthday. Eligibility criteria is available on the Kent County Council website, see link: [Free childcare - Kent County Council](#). Those that are eligible can claim up to 30 hours of funding per week over 38 weeks of the year. These hours will be delivered as per the formats detailed below.

Please note that this funding can be split between several providers up to a maximum of 30 hours. Parents must choose which provider receives the FEE 15 hours funding and which provider receives the Extended Entitlement funding.

- Working Parents Entitlement for 2-Year-Olds (15 hours)

We can offer a maximum of 5 places (combined with the allocation of our Free for 2 (FF2)) in total, on a first come first served basis, for children that are eligible for this funding. Eligibility criteria is available on the Kent County Council website, see link: [Free childcare - Kent County Council](#). Those that are eligible can claim up to 15 hours of funding per week over 38 weeks of the year. These hours will be delivered as per the formats detailed below. In order to access this funding, we have a 4-session minimum requirement.

- Free for 2 (FF2)

We can offer a maximum of 5 places (combined with the allocation of our Working Parents Entitlement for 2-year-olds) in total, on a first come first served basis, for the FF2 free childcare (aimed at families receiving additional forms of government support). Eligibility criteria is available on the Kent County Council website, see link: [Free childcare - Kent County Council](#). Those that are eligible can claim up to 15 hours of funding per week over 38 weeks of the year. These hours will be delivered as per the formats detailed below.

Claiming Funding

Each child will be funded to a maximum of 15 hours per week over a minimum of 3 sessions (unless in receipt of 30 hours) or a minimum of 4 sessions for children accessing the Working Parents Entitlement for 2-Year-Olds. At The Children’s Workshop, funded hours are offered in the following formats.

Full Day 9am – 3.15pm	6 hours free, parent charged for 15 minutes
Morning Session 9am – 12.15pm	3 hours free, parent charged for 15 minutes
Afternoon Session 12.15pm – 3.15pm	3 hours free

Children attending non-funded days/sessions in addition to their FEE will be charged at our fees as shown in the table on page 2. Parents will be invoiced in the usual way showing how many free hours your child is receiving in that period and what the additional charges are.

Please note that the FEE funding can be split between 2 providers up to a maximum of 15 hours (unless in receipt of 30 hours).

Early Years Vouchers

The Early Years Childcare Voucher scheme has been closed to new entrants since October 2018 but remains open for anyone already benefiting from the scheme. The Children’s Workshop is registered to accept ‘Early Years Vouchers’ if an employer still offers them as part of the remuneration package. Please click [HERE](#) to see the latest status on this voucher scheme. If you have Childcare vouchers, they can be set up to pay the full fee invoice when received (this is our preference). Some companies only let you set up the vouchers as monthly payments. In this instance, the monthly payments will be deducted from the invoice, but the full invoice amount must be settled by the end of the term before the next invoice is issued.

Tax-free Childcare

This is a government incentive to help parents with the cost of childcare. Parents can open an online account which they can pay into to cover the cost of childcare. This is done through the government website (www.gov.uk). For every £8 paid to your provider, the government will top up an additional £2. For more information, please see the government website. As with the Early Years Vouchers, this account must be used to pay the full invoice.

Notice Period/Reduction to Sessions

Please note that half a term’s notice (6 weeks, based on a 3 term year) must be given in writing to the Office Administrator when withdrawing a child from the preschool or for a reduction to sessions. Failure to give notice will result in one term’s fees being charged. It must be noted that if only accessing FEE funded hours, FEE funded hours cannot then be claimed at a new preschool in the event of leaving mid-term, unless it is in another county.

Amendments and Increases to Sessions

If parents would like to amend a child's sessions, please email the Office Administrator with your request. If your request cannot be accommodated, we will add you to a waiting list for your session choices and notify you as soon as the session(s) become(s) available.

Parents are given the opportunity to increase sessions each term (based on a 3 term year). Sessions will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

For an increase to sessions after the KCC 'Headcount Week' (usually the 2nd week of term when confirmed hours for children are submitted to KCC), funding cannot be claimed for those sessions (unless the child is in receipt of the FF2 funding) and the parent will be liable for the fees incurred.

Ad hoc extra sessions can be added on a first come first served basis if there are spaces available. To request an ad hoc extra session, please email the Office Administrator.

This policy was adopted following a review by:	Committee of Trustees
Date:	<hr/> March 2024
Date to be reviewed:	<hr/> March 2025
Signed on behalf of the Committee of Trustees:	<hr/> 
Name of signatory:	<hr/> Andrew Scrace
Role of signatory:	<hr/> Chair of Trustees