

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 waiting list administration fee (£50) 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 waiting list administration fee, in date order, subject to the priority criteria listed below.

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 waiting list administration 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 waiting list administration 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 waiting list administration 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).

Offer of Place

If a parent is offered a place for their child based on the intake specified on their application form and declines requesting to join the next intake's waiting list, this can be done. However, please be advised the place on the waiting list will be determined by the date of the request, rather than the date on the application form.

New Starter Deposit

On acceptance of a place and sessions agreed, a £200 New Starter Deposit (NSD) is payable to secure your child's place and sessions. A child accessing a FF2 place will be exempt from this deposit. For children who are fee paying, the deposit will be offset against the first term's fee invoice (based on a 3 term year). For children who are entitled to a government funded place (The Working Parent Entitlement or The Universal Entitlement), the deposit will be refunded by the end of half term or within six weeks, whichever is sooner. Once a place has been confirmed, a withdrawal requires one month's notice and failure to adhere to the notice period will result in the New Starter Deposit being retained.

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 2025, as agreed by the Committee of Trustees, will be:

September 2025 Fees	Per child
Hourly rate (for info only)	£9.50
Full Day	£57.00
Morning/Afternoon Session	£28.50

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. Any additional costs will be discussed and confirmed with parents prior to being invoiced.

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 Office 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 government funded hours 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 10 minutes of the session/day end, a late collection fee of £5 will be charged, and a further £10 every 15 minutes 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 term, in April, following their 2 nd /3 rd birthday

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

- The Universal Entitlement

This is available for all 3-to 4-year-olds. All children are eligible for this funding, the term after their 3rd birthday (based on a 3 term year). Those that we 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.

Please note that the funding can be split between 2 providers.

- The Working Parents Entitlement for 2, 3- and 4-Year-olds

We offer this entitlement for children that are eligible for the 30 hours free childcare, the term after their 2nd or 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 Universal Entitlement (15 hours of funding) and which provider receives the Extended Entitlement (15 hours of funding).

- Free for 2 (FF2)

We offer this entitlement which is 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

For those who meet the eligibility criteria, each child will be funded to:

- **The Universal Entitlement** - a maximum of 15 hours per week.
- **The Working Parent Entitlement for 2-, 3- and 4- year-olds** – a maximum of 30 hours per week.
- **FF2** – a maximum of 15 hours per week.

At The Children’s Workshop, our funding patterns are offered in the following formats.

The Children’s Workshop – Agreed Funding Patterns	
Working Parent Entitlement for 2-,3- and 4- Year Olds	
Full Day 9am – 3pm	6-hour funding blocks
The Universal Entitlement/FF2	
Morning Session 9am – 12pm	3-hour funding blocks
Afternoon Session 12pm – 3pm	3-hour funding blocks

Children attending non-funded days/sessions in addition to their funding 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 any additional session charges or additional charges that you have agreed to.

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 one month's notice must be given in writing to the Office Manager when withdrawing a child from the preschool or for a reduction to sessions. Failure to give notice will result in one month's fees being charged. It must be noted that if only accessing funded hours, these 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 Manager 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 Manager.

This policy was adopted following a review by:	Committee of Trustees
Date:	<hr/> March 2025
Date to be reviewed:	<hr/> February 2026
Signed on behalf of the Committee of Trustees:	<hr/> 
Name of signatory:	<hr/> Andrew Scrace
Role of signatory:	<hr/> Chair of Trustees