



Long Sutton County Primary **School**

Nursery Fees Policy

Created by CFO September 2024	
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1. Statement of Intent

Our school aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary school.

We aim to:

provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary school.

Our aim for the children is: *Be a Star*

This was developed with the children as a key theme for everything that the children do. It is central to our teaching and expectations of behaviour both in the way that the children interact with other children and adults.

Our four school values are:

Strength

Teamwork

Ambition

Respect

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to nursery fees such as working tax credits and free childcare entitlement.

This policy has been established to provide transparent fee information, set procedures for the payment of fees and create a framework for dealing with non-payment in a swift and fair manner.

Parents should be aware of, and given access to, this policy and the nursery's procedures. It will be included on the nursery's website and made available to view at the nursery on request.

2. Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016 (as amended)
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guidance'
- DfE (2024) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2024) September 2024 early education and childcare entitlements expansion'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following trust policies:

- KAT Debt Recovery Policy
- School's Nursery Admissions Policy

This policy is subject to amendment if government policy changes on entitlements.

3. Fees

Parents will be charged for the care provided outside of the following entitlements to free childcare:

- **Working parents entitlement** – this entitlement is available for working parents of children from the term after they turn nine months until they start school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year.
- **Universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds** – all three and four year olds are eligible for this entitlement from the term after they turn three through to starting school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year and can be combined with the working parents entitlement to make up 30 hours.
- **NB** – these benefits and thresholds are subject to change dependent on government policy.

The charges will be as follows:

- £4.50 per additional hour
- £2.25 for lunch time supervision and £2.50 for each lunch provided

Parents will book the required sessions for each week at least **one week** in advance and make payment at the time of booking. Additional sessions may be booked as part of an increase in total sessions and agreed long-term. In rare circumstances it might be possible for infrequent additional bookings when space allows, but this is in exceptional circumstances and only if spaces and ratios allow for it.

The free childcare offer cannot be used to pay for meals, other consumables, e.g. nappies or sun cream, additional hours or additional activities, e.g. trips. The nursery may charge a fee for these additions. If parents choose to pay for these, it will be an arrangement between the parent and the nursery.

Parents will not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a '30 hours' place.

4. Universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds

All children aged three and four will be eligible to receive 570 hours free childcare per year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year. These hours are usually taken as 15 hours a week.

'15 hours' free childcare is available from the term following a child's third birthday.

Parents will be required to complete a Parent Declaration form and submit it to the nursery to ensure the nursery can claim their 15/30 hour entitlements.

5. Working Parent Entitlements

Three- and four-year-olds

Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, children of working parents of three and four year olds will be entitled to the 30-hour entitlement. The working parent entitlement takes account of the universal entitlement and offers eligible parents an additional 15 hours of early years provision per week.

Eligibility

Parents will be eligible to claim the working parent entitlement if their child has attained the relevant age, is under the compulsory school age, and the parents:

- Are seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
- Are in qualifying paid work and earn the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage rate over the forthcoming quarter.

Parents will be treated as though they meet the minimum income requirement if they are on certain forms of family leave from work or are in receipt of certain forms of statutory pay in connection with sickness or parenting. If one parent in a couple household is in receipt of, or could be entitled to, specific benefits related to caring, incapacity for work, or limited capacity to work, they will be treated as though they are in paid work and therefore eligible.

Parents that are newly self-employed will not be required to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months to qualify for the working parent entitlement.

Any parent whose income exceeds £100,000 will not be eligible for the working parent entitlement.

Children in foster care will be entitled to free early years provision under the working parent entitlement if the child has attained the age of three, is under the compulsory school age and the criteria set out below are met:

- The LA is satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision-making
- In single foster parent families, the foster parent holds additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer
- In two-foster-parent families, both partners hold additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer or one partner is working and the other has a limited capability for work and work-related activity

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlements upon reconfirmation, a place will continue to be funded for the child for a limited 'grace period.'

6. Payment Information

Payments must be made in advance at the time of booking for all non-funded sessions that parents have booked for their child. If no payment is received, then the place is not guaranteed. Lunches will only be provided where the parent has pre-paid through the school's lunch ordering system.

Payments can be made by through MCAS, bank transfer or vouchers. Cash will not be accepted as payment. To obtain the bank details for a transfer please approach the nursery manager.

Payment will be required when a child is on holiday or absent due to illness, as the nursery must hold the child's place during this period and staff rotas are already set to ensure appropriate ratios.

If a child is absent for a long period due to illness, the nursery will decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether fees will need to be paid for the period. The nursery's decision is final. Please note that there is no guarantee any place will be held during any periods of non-payment.

Late payments will incur a £10 fine for each week payments are overdue. Parents can avoid this by ensuring the advance payment of any places. If payments are not received, then it will not be possible to make future bookings until the debt is cleared to avoid increasing the amount owed to the school.

One month's notice will be required to withdraw your child fully from the nursery. If no notice is provided then the nursery reserves the right to charge a month's fees direct from the parent.

7. Late Collection

Staffing ratios will be maintained at all times. If a child is collected late, this can lead to staff needing to stay beyond the end of their shift. This incurs a cost which will be passed on to the parents at £5.00 for the first 15 minutes and a further £1.00 for each subsequent five-minute period. This will need to be paid as soon as required by the nursery. Non-payment may prevent future places from being booked. Habitual late collection may also result in a place being withdrawn.

These costs may be waived in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the lead practitioner.

8. Difficulty with Payments

The nursery will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.

The nursery understands that parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties will contact the lead practitioner as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

A child's place will be appropriately withdrawn if it is deemed that it will only worsen the debt owed.

9. Debt Collection

The school has a duty to ensure the nursery receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including nursery fees. Places will be withdrawn if necessary to prevent the amount owed from increasing.

The school will not write off any debt until all avenues of collection have been explored.

A full record will be kept of debts owed to the nursery for seven years. This will include all letters requesting money, reminders and invoices.

If necessary, the trust will initiate legal action to recover debts.

All debts will be managed in accordance with the trust KAT Debt Recovery Policy.

10. Roles and Responsibilities regarding Debt Collection

The lead practitioner and trust will ensure that:

- The trust policy on debt collection is followed.
- The nursery place will be withdrawn to ensure that the debt does not increase further.
- Evidence of the steps taken by the nursery in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of any contact including letters and phone calls.
- The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
- The level of outstanding debt can be determined at any time.

The trust will:

- Prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery.
- Record all approved action in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Adhere to privacy arrangements.
- At its discretion, delegate its responsibilities under this policy to a suitable individual.

11. Debt Recovery Process

Please refer to the trust KAT Debt Recovery Policy.

12. The Waiving of Debts

The waiving of debts will be at the discretion of the CEO and trustees and in line with DfE regulations.

A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship or if all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and it is believed it would not be cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.

13. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the CFO.