



# Little Forest Folk

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## Fee and Funding Policy

1. This policy was reviewed and approved by Little Forest Folk.
2. This policy is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, for Spring 2026 term onwards.
3. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Fee and Funded Sheet and the nursery terms and conditions and will be reviewed periodically with reference also to the Local Authority guidelines.
4. Fees are due no later than the 12th of each month.
5. All fees are payable monthly in advance by Standing order/BACS/Tax Free Childcare/Childcare Voucher
6. Dependent on your child's start date you may be required to pay your first month's fees by BACS or debit card to ensure payment is received on or before your child starts Nursery. This will also be the case if you are paying by Childcare Vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare, if your first scheduled payment will not arrive before your child starts Nursery and/or the 12th of the month.
7. Failure to pay your invoice by the 12<sup>th</sup> of each month may incur a late payment charge of £5 per day. Continued failure to pay by the 12<sup>th</sup> of each month will result in termination of the child's unfunded place. Funded sessions only can continue to be accessed for the remainder of that term.
8. If Tax Free Childcare or Childcare Vouchers are used to part or fully pay the invoice, these must be received no later than the 1st of the month. Please be mindful when setting the date for payment, that these payments will take 3-5 days from the date of payment, to clear in our account.
9. The Nursery uses a calculation based on cost of session x number of sessions x 51 weeks divided by 12 months to ensure a regular monthly fee is payable. Fees will be charged per session attended for the month when the child starts Nursery (if this date is not the 1st of the month), leaves Nursery (if this date is not the end of the month) or has a booking pattern change within the month. (Any families on honoured sessional term-time place will be invoiced termly, for all sessions scheduled to attend in the upcoming term).
10. You are not permitted to 'swap' sessions if your child is unable to attend for any reason. Subject to availability, you may be able to book a chargeable additional session, but your current booking pattern will remain fully chargeable.
11. Monthly invoices will be issued at least five working days prior to the 12th of each month. Any query relating to an invoice must be raised within five working days of issue. Queries raised after this time will be dealt with, but if the resolution of a query results in an invoice reduction or increase this will be reflected in a debit or credit adjustment being made in the following month and a replacement invoice will not be issued.
12. If fees are funded by your employer, a university or College grant or any other third party, the Nursery will hold the parent responsible for all outstanding fees. You will also need to complete additional paperwork which will be provided to you by the Finance Team.
13. From time to time the Nursery may offer discounts or incentives to parents – these are non-contractual and do not form part of the terms and conditions and can be withdrawn at any time without notice, as will be the case should invoices not be paid according to our terms and conditions. Proof of eligibility may be required with the discount being applied to the month the eligibility is provided and going forward. These discounts can be a sibling discount, with no child eligible for more than one discount.
14. Whilst all best efforts are made to ensure the accuracy of invoicing including the allocation of funded hours, if an error is identified, this will be immediately rectified and any additional fees that are subsequently due will be payable within 14 days.

15. Non-funded sessional nursery fees are inclusive of the items below, although fuller details are included on your fee and funding sheet. For details of fees and charges once your child becomes eligible for Early Years Funding, please refer to points 18 onwards of this policy.

- Food consumables – all meals, snacks, and refreshments
- Other consumables – e.g. sun cream, barrier cream, and wipes
- All extra-curricular activities, unless these are exceptional e.g. local visits, trips and walk and forest school activities. Please see your nursery manager for exact details of what is being provided.
- On occasion an exceptional extracurricular activity may be arranged, for example a trip to the Panto or Zoo. This would be separately charged for, and all parents have the option to choose if they wish their child to attend or not.

16. The start and end times and charges for each session can be found on our current Fee and Funding Sheet. Please ask the Admin Team for a copy of this document and our Terms and Conditions if you have not already received them and these are available on our website. We reserve the right to review our fees at any time, subject to our usual notice period included in our terms and conditions, and to review our offer of the 15 and 30 hours funding each term, in line with any Local Authority changes, again subject to our usual notice period.

17. Fees are reviewed annually. Annual increases to fees may be applied each year. Parents will be informed at least 30 days before any price increase becomes effective.

18. Additional charges include:

<b>Registration Fee</b> Non-refundable Not charged for children accessing only the funded hours	£200 including 1 set of waterproofs
<b>Deposit</b> Charged for privately paid for hours only Refundable when the child leaves or if a child moved to accessing only funded hours. No deposits are taken for children accessing only funded hours. Should a deposit have been taken prior to the child accessing only funded hours, the deposit will be refunded by the end of half term or within 6 weeks whichever is sooner from when the child moved to only funded hours. Please refer to our Terms and Conditions for full details	£450
<b>Nursery Outings</b> If they incur additional travel or other expenses	As and when they take place
<b>Some extra-curricular activities not including forest school activities</b> If not covered in the usual fees. You will be invited to participate in these and have the right to not attend	As and when they take place
<b>Unfunded Childcare Fees</b> for children accessing funded entitlement hours	See our Monthly Funded Charges Sheet

## EARLY YEARS FUNDING

19. All Early Years Funding is granted to only cover term time – this is equivalent to 38 weeks of the year. For any honoured sessional term time only families registered before 1st January 2026 any weeks that fall within term time but in addition to the funded 38 weeks will be charged at full cost.

20. “15 hours” of funding equates to 15 hours x 38 weeks = 570 hours per year, which we stretch over 51 weeks, giving a maximum of 11.18 hours per week, or 47.5 hours per month which will be displayed on your invoice at zero cost. We run two funded sessions a day, each 3.725hours long, and three funded sessions are required to access your full 11.18 hours.

21. “30 hours” of funding equates to 30 hours x 38 weeks = 1,140 hours per year, which we stretch over 51 weeks, giving a maximum of 22.35 hours per week, or 95.0 hours per month which will be displayed on your invoice at zero cost. We run two funded sessions a day, each 3.725hours long, and six funded sessions are required to access your full 22.35 hours. If you only attend two days per week, the maximum funding that can be claimed is 14.90hours, or 4 sessions of 3.725hour per session.

22. All 3- and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to the Universal Entitlement of 15 hours funded childcare per week (during term time only), from the term following their third birthday.

23. Eligible working parents and carers of children aged 3-4 can get an additional 15 hours of funded childcare, bringing the total support they can get up to the maximum 30 hours / 1,140 hours per year.

24. From September 2025, eligible working parents and carers can access a maximum of 30 hours funded childcare from the term after their child turns 9 months old subject to certain criteria.

25. Families who are in receipt of additional government support such as Universal Credit may be eligible for 15 hours funding, from the term after their child's second birthday regardless of their working family status. Applications are made directly to the Local Authority. Should a family also be entitled to the working family funding, they should first apply to the Local Authority for their 15 hours funding for families who are in receipt of additional government support and then utilise their working family entitlement through HMRC for their remaining 15 hours taking them to a maximum of 30 hours. Both forms of funding can be applied for at the same time, there is no need to wait for the additional support funding confirmation before applying for working family funding. Parents must have obtained both eligibility codes by the relevant termly cut off dates and supply these codes on the parental declaration form. Please be aware that the Nursery cannot apply for either of these codes on your behalf.

26. No child can access more than 1,140 funded hours per year, or 30 hours x 38 weeks of the year.

27. Please refer to <https://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk/> for more information

#### **HOW THE EARLY YEARS FUNDING PROCESS WORKS:**

28. The Admin Team will ask you to complete a claim form online and will then submit this information to the Local Authority prior to the headcount date to ensure that all funding is received. The Local Authority may require specific information from the parents and failure to provide this may result in the Nursery being unable to claim the funding.

29. If the nursery is unable to claim the funding, the parent would be wholly responsible for any fees incurred at the standard rates. Payment is received from the Local Authority on a termly basis – Autumn, Spring and Summer. Dates and weeks vary throughout the year; however, this information is readily available from the Admin Team or your Local Authority. Generally, a child must be in attendance during headcount for funding to be claimed. If a child attends and then leaves prior to headcount, funding for the term cannot always be claimed, but please ask your Admin Team to discuss this further with the Local Authority. If a child starts after the headcount, receipt of funding will be on an individual basis and will need to be agreed separately between the local authority, the previous setting attended, the parent or carer, and ourselves.

30. The Nursery applies the 38-weeks funding over a 51-week period, because we are open throughout the year, and this ensures a regular monthly fee is payable. The child will still benefit from the same total number of funded hours, usually 570 or 1,140 hours per year, 47.5 or 95 hours per month. Our funded sessions run daily from 10.33-14.16, and 14.16-18.00. To access your full 1,140 hours, a child needs to attend on three days, from 10.33-18.00 (two funded sessions per day). A child accessing 570 hours needs to attend on two days, one from 10.33-18.00 (two funded sessions) and another from 14.16-18.00 (one funded session).

31. Some families may wish to split their funded hours with other providers, which we are happy to do. Please be aware that whole funded sessions must be used with us i.e. 10.33-14.16 or 14.16-18.00. Please talk to the Admin Team for further details.

32. Our funding terms are

- Autumn: September – December (47.5/95 x 4 months)
- Spring: January – April (47.5/95 x 4 months)
- Summer: May - August (47.5/95 x 4 months)
- Total Year: September – August (47.5/95 x 12 months = 570/1,140 hours)

33. Please note if your child first becomes eligible for funding in the summer term, your May invoice will be the first invoice to reflect your free funded hours if your local authority does not pay their providers funding on a "stretched" basis. If they pay providers funding on a 'stretched basis', matching the way we stretch the funded hours equally through the year on our invoices, then funding will run from the first month we receive this in the summer term, usually April. If a child leaves part way through the term, it may result in a parent accessing more hours than are available to claim. In these circumstances, the parent will be charged for these additional accessed hours at the appropriate hourly rate.

34. Early Years Pupil Premium and Disability Access Fund may be available for some children, Please ask Nursery Manager to contact the Local Authority if you feel this could be applicable for your child.

#### **FOR WORKING PARENTS:**

35. Parents applying for the working parent entitlements for children from 9 months to 4 years **must** apply for the funding the term prior to their child being able to access it. The application is through the HMRC website. We advise you to apply in good time as eligibility codes must be obtained by the parent no later than:

- 31<sup>st</sup> August for a 1<sup>st</sup> September start
- 31<sup>st</sup> December for 1<sup>st</sup> January start
- 31<sup>st</sup> March for 1<sup>st</sup> of April start

36. It is not possible to apply for and access funding in the same term. Failure to obtain your eligibility code the term prior to your child's start will result in funding not being accessed until the following term, providing the code is still valid.

37. Working parents **must** reconfirm their eligibility every 13 weeks, not doing so could result in the nursery not being able to claim the funding. It is the parents' responsibility and not ours.

38. Our funded sessions run daily from 10.33-14.16, and 14.16-18.00. To access the full 1,140 hours, a child needs to attend on three days, from 10.33-18.00 (two funded sessions). A child accessing 570 hours needs to attend on two days, one from 10.33-18.00 (two funded sessions) and another from 14.16-18.00 (one funded session).

#### **FUNDING FOR FAMILIES WHO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AGED 2 YEARS:**

39. Families who are in receipt of additional government support such as Universal Credit may be eligible for 15 funded hours (during term time only), from the term after their child's second birthday regardless of their working family status. Applications are made directly to the Local Authority, please discuss with the Admin Team who will supply you with the local authority website details.

40. All our funded sessions run daily from 10.33-14.16, and 14.16-18.00. To access 570 hours a child needs to attend on two days, one from 10.33-18.00 (two funded sessions) and another from 14.16-18.00 (one funded session).

41. Funding for 2-year-olds for families who received additional government support covers all costs including food, other consumables, and other additional activities. There is no additional voluntary charge from parents when accessing this funding for the session times above.

42. The Nursery reserves the right to change the allocated days of any funded sessions each term, subject to our usual notice period included in our terms and conditions.

43. The nationally prescribed dates for eligible 2-year-olds to access 15 hours of 2-year-old funding are as follows:

<b>A child born on or between:</b>	<b>Will become eligible for a funded place from:</b>
1 April and 31 August	In the term which begins after 1 September following their second birthday
1 September and 31 December	In the term which begins after 1 January following their second birthday
1 January and 31 March	In the term which begins after 1 April following their second birthday

#### **FUNDING FOR CHILDREN AGED 9 MONTHS AND OVER**

44. Our funded sessions run daily from 10.33-14.16, and 14.16-18.00. To access the full 1,140 hours, a child needs to attend on three days, from 10.33-18.00. A child accessing 570 hours needs to attend on two days, one from 10.33-18.00 and another from 14.16-18.00.

45. Some families may wish to split their funded hours with other providers, which we are happy to do. Please be aware that whole funded sessions must be used with us i.e. 10.33-14.16 or 14.16-18.00. Please talk to the Admin Team for further details.

46. The Department for Education's Operational Guidance for the delivery of the 30 Hours Funding says: "Government funding is intended to deliver 15 to 30 hours a week of funded, high-quality flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours, or additional activities."

47. As the funding from the government does not include any payment towards food and snacks, other consumables, or any of the additional services we provide in the funded session, we ask for a voluntary contribution from our parents who access their funding with us to cover these unfunded costs. As an alternative option as a parent you can refuse to pay for these items that the Government does not fund, but that we provide but will need to provide these yourself.

48. We reserve the right to review how we deliver both our funded sessions each term subject to our usual notice period included in our terms and conditions.

49. In order for us to provide you with the highest quality childcare, and to ensure we are able to continue to offer the fully funded hours to families, once your child becomes eligible for either the Universal or Working Family entitlement, charges for

hours attended outside the funding entitlement are charged at our advertised unfunded hourly rate. Full details of the cost of unfunded attendance can be found on our Funded Charges Fee Sheet. Please see our website for these or alternatively ask the Admin Team for a copy if you have not yet received this.

50. Your funded entitlement hours will be displayed on your invoices as free at the point of delivery (£0.00)

51. Any food, other consumable items or additional activity charges made will be detailed separately on your invoice unless your child is attending an honoured place ( registered before 1st January 2026) Please see our funded fee sheet for charges. This policy is effective from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

52. Access to all working parent Early Years funding stops at the end of the term before your child is due to start Reception Class at their new school. However, as we stretch the funding equally over the year, your full monthly funding will be applied to your August invoice.

53. The Nursery reserves the right to change the allocated days of any funded sessions each term, subject to our usual notice period included in our terms and conditions.

54.. The nationally prescribed dates for determining eligibility for both the universal (15 hours) and Working Family entitlement (15 hours) are as follows: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

A child born on or between:	Eligibility Codes obtained by	Earliest +9 months working family start	Return to work by	Earliest 2-year-old (additional government support) and 3/4-year-old (universal) start
1 January and 31 March	31 December	1 January following year from birth	31 January following year from birth	Summer term once 3
1 April and 30 June	31 March following year from birth	1 April following year from birth	30 April following year from birth	Autumn term once 3
1 July and 30 November	31 August following year from birth	1 September following year from birth	30 September following year from birth	Autumn term once 3
1 December and 31 December	31 December following year from birth	1 January two years following birth	31 January two years following birth	Spring term once 3

55. The following terms and conditions will also govern the basis upon which we agree to provide the funded entitlement childcare services:

- The provision of funded entitlement is subject to Government funding and will be reviewed every term in line with any Local Authority changes.
- Parents who have a current positive determination of eligibility from HMRC for the working family entitlement must ensure they notify the Nursery of their unique eligibility code at least 6 weeks before the start of the term in which parents wish to commence their funded hours. Failure to do so may result in the Nursery being unable to claim working family entitlement on their behalf and the full unfunded sessional price will be charged to the parents.
- Parents are required to renew their code with HMRC every 3 months. If a parent stops being eligible for the working family entitlement, the child will enter a grace period until at least the end of the current term. If during this grace period, eligibility cannot be redetermined, this will result in the termination of the child's funding and fees will be charged as per the Nursery's fee structure.
- Depending on when a parent applies originally for funding, they may need to reconfirm their eligibility before they start accessing the funded place. Not doing so would result in you not being able to apply for funding, and so full fees would be payable.
- Parents wishing the Nursery to make a claim for the universal funded hours (3 and 4 year olds only) on their behalf must also notify the Admin Team via email [office@littleforestfolk.com](mailto:office@littleforestfolk.com) of their intention to use these funded hours at the Nursery, at least 6 weeks before the term in which the claim will commence.
- Completion, by the parent, of the Local Authority parent declaration form.
- Failure to pay non-funded fees will lead to the exclusion of the child. This does not impact on funded hours as they will be honoured for the current term.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING WORKING FAMILY FUNDING ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION**

57. You can check if you are eligible for the Working Family entitlement or find further information about the funding and other help available with childcare costs, by visiting the government's Childcare Choices website at [www.beststartinlife.gov.uk](https://www.beststartinlife.gov.uk). To secure your funded place, you must obtain your eligibility code by the end of the month prior to the start of the new term i.e., for the Spring Term – 31st December; Summer Term – 31st March; Autumn Term – 31st August. This is even if the local authority school term dates do not align to these dates.

HMRC rules dictate that if you do not obtain your eligibility code by this date, you will not be entitled to the working family funding until the following term. Whilst we will make best efforts to remind parents to apply for the funding, this remains wholly the responsibility of the parent, and the Nursery does not accept any responsibility for parents not able to access the working family funding because they have not obtained their unique eligibility code from HMRC on time. It is also the parents' responsibility to renew the funding code every 13 weeks, and the Nursery does not accept any responsibility for fees incurred because of a parent failing to renew their eligibility code. You must notify us immediately if you become aware that you have fallen out of eligibility.

58. Please note that whilst HMRC rules dictate that you must obtain your eligibility code by the end of the month prior to the new term (as referenced above). In order for us to facilitate the effective administration of the funded hours, we must have your eligibility code at least 6 weeks before the start of the term in which you wish to begin accessing the Funded hours. If you only wish to access the Universal Entitlement of 15 hours, you must also notify the Admin Team at least 6 weeks before the start of the term in which you wish to begin accessing these funded hours i.e. for the Spring term, 20th November, Summer term 19th February and Autumn term, 21st July.

59. If you fall out of eligibility for the Working Parent Entitlement or fail to reconfirm your details in time you will no longer be eligible for the working family and will fall into the grace period. You are unable to start at a new provider during the grace period. Once the grace period is over, children accessing a 3- and 4-year-old funded place will only be eligible for the universal funded hours. All other children will be moved to our private fee rate for the hours that they access, and your invoice will reflect the new fee. If you wish to move provider mid-term, please note that our normal notice period of 30 days is still enforced. Once we receive the formal notice in writing, we will inform the Local Authority and work with them regarding transfer of funding if applicable.

60. You can use tax free childcare or universal credit support with childcare costs alongside the funded hours.

**This document should be read in conjunction with our Nursery Terms and Conditions, and our current Fee and Funding Charges Sheets. We reserve the right to update this policy, subject to Local Authority guidelines and changes in the Nursery operating procedures.**