

## Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Information and Records

Little Explorers Nursery acknowledges, Providers must maintain records and obtain and share information to ensure the safe and efficient management of the setting, and to help ensure the needs of all children are met.



## 60.0 Charging policy

*Updated: August 2024    Review date: March 2025*

### Little Explorers Nursery Policy statement

We provide a high quality childcare service to families and the local community. Little Explorers Nursery fees are set to enable the quality of childcare to be maintained at a high level for learning and wellbeing. This policy is written in line with our Terms and Conditions.

### Settling in sessions

As part of our commitment to raising standards and meeting your child's needs and wellbeing, we offer your child a minimum of three free 2 hour settling sessions, which allows your child to settle into our setting with the security of having a parent(s)/carer(s) with them. These sessions take place once your child has enrolled, and will be offered just before your Child starts with us with their 'booked' in sessions. Please note that these are the minimum settle in sessions which are free of charge, however, if your child requires additional settling in sessions we will work with you in order to provide this in line with the needs of individual children.

### Government funding

Government funding is intended to cover the cost of 15 or 30 hours a week of government funded, high quality, flexible childcare only. Please note if you claim two-year-old 15 hours or three-year-old 30 hours funding this needs to be renewed and your code updated every term, namely before August 31<sup>st</sup>, December 31<sup>st</sup>, and March 31<sup>st</sup>. **Government funding is not intended to cover the cost of meals, snacks, consumables, sundries, additional hours or additional services including, but not limited to; Forest School activities, cooking activities, animal care activities, as some examples.**

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### **Two year old funding**

A Government initiative entitles some two year olds to Government funded childcare within a nursery setting, **from the term after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday**. Most eligible families will automatically receive a letter direct from Norfolk County Council informing them that they can claim up to 15 hours. Otherwise, if you are working parents, you can check online each term to see if you are eligible. If you think you may be eligible and have not received confirmation from Norfolk County Council; please inform the setting and contact Norfolk County Council directly. Parent(s)/carer(s) who wish to use hours for wrap around care that incorporate breakfast, lunch or tea are asked to provide their own meal or they can opt to be charged for this.

Little Explorers Forest School Nursery accepts children with Government 2-year-old funding. We offer the 15 hours per week, term time only. Government funded sessions are available from 8.00 am until 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday. Government funded hours **cannot** be used over the school holidays.

Please visit Norfolk County Council link below for full information;

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/childcare-and-early-learning/free-childcare-and-learning/free-childcare-for-2-year-olds>

**(If you need to claim funding before your Child's reaches the term after their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday, you will need to be working and have a valid code for the 9+ month funding)** Please be aware we can only take Children once they have reached their 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday due to our registration and insurance and not before this age.

### **Three year old funding**

A Government initiative entitles all three year olds to government funded childcare, **from the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday**. Families can claim up to 30 hours per week (term time only), which if needed can be split between one or two eligible settings.

If families require more than either 15 or 30 hours of childcare the additional hours can be privately paid for.

Government funded hours **cannot** be used over the school holidays.

The cut off dates for the school terms are –

31<sup>st</sup> August – for birthdays from 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> August, funding begins in September.

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31<sup>st</sup> December – for birthdays from 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December, funding begins in January

31<sup>st</sup> March – for birthdays from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> March, funding begins in April.

Government funded sessions are available from 8.00am until 4.00pm, Monday to Friday, term time only.

Please visit Norfolk County Council link below for full information;

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/childcare-and-early-learning/free-childcare-and-learning/free-childcare-for-all-3-and-4-year-olds>

## **Payment Terms & Conditions:**

Our terms and conditions are as set out below;

Please note that the Nursery costs that are charged by invoice to Parents/Carers are to cover the child's sessions, **this reserves and holds the space for your child whether or not the child actually attends setting (for example, if they are poorly or on holiday).**

The Setting has to cover the costs of the running of Nursery including paying Staff wages, therefore, the Nursery bases staff ratio on how many spaces are taken, this is to ensure the Setting always has enough staff on site at all times. This also includes trips and any other event like Sports day. Payment for all Trips, Party's, Sports days Payment is still required for your child's session as staff ratio's still apply. Please note Non-payment of fees places the Nursery into debt and could lead to reduced resources for the nursery.

Therefore, we require you to book your child in on a monthly basis in advance. By signing our conditions at registration, you are agreeing to book and pay for your child in the month before your session begins. Once we have received your completed booking form, we will then be able to raise an invoice for you to pay, securing your child's place. Please note if places are limited, we will work on a first come, first served basis to make it fair. Fees **Must** be paid before the Child attends their session in advance, they will be non-refundable, unless in unforeseen circumstances. If a Parent/Carer believes they are claiming funded hours and the setting cannot confirm this in advance, the setting will invoice the Parent/Carer which needs to be paid. Once the setting is able to access the government funding the invoiced money will be returned to the Parents/Carers immediately.

By taking up a place with us you are in agreement too Little Explorers Forest School Nursery terms and conditions; and in addition to the above terms and conditions you are confirming you are eligible to claim my funded government hours from the date your child starts at Little Explorers Forest School Nursery.

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In the event there is a problem with the Government funded codes; Parents/Carers will be charged for the hours they have asked for and reserved if the Government funded hours are incorrect. Therefore, if there is a discrepancy with the Parent/Carer claiming their child's hours, the Parent/Carer will have to pay on time and Little Explorers Nursery will credit back the Parent/Carer once the discrepancy has been resolved. This includes situations where a Parent/Carer fails to secure a Funding code within the government set timeframe each Term.

We will issue the invoices on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and require them to be paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If payment is not received a late warning will be given on the 16<sup>th</sup> of each month and then non-payment by 17<sup>th</sup> of the month will result in a late fee charge will be added. If full payment is not received by 31<sup>st</sup> of each month the child will not be allowed to attend until payment has been received. Little Explorers Forest School Nursery reserves the right to withdraw your child's place at our setting if payment is not received.

Little Explorers Forest School Nursery reserves the right to implement no further services or additional child care when they are in debt to the Setting. For example, the Nursery will not offer any further child care hours over the Government funded hours being claimed. The Nursery will not take on any further administration requests from the Parent/Carer whilst they are in debt to the Setting as these are chargeable and all debts need to be paid in full prior to further charges being issued. *(Unless it is a Safeguarding concern or would cause harm to the child).*

## **Little Explorers Forest School Nursery Fees**

We aim to provide a service that will be self-sustaining. Therefore, fees and self-sustainability will be reviewed annually or sooner if unexpected costs of running the Nursery arises. Updated charges and policy will be shared with Parents/Carers on the increase implemented with a minimum of a full month's prior notice to Parents/Carers.

Little Explorers Nursery is closed on all bank holidays, plus one or two deep cleaning days during the summer holidays. If these affect your childcare periods, you will receive a discount in your monthly invoice.

Additional hours and services will be charged at the current hourly rate where hours are not Government funded as part of the Early Education offer by the Local Authority.

Please note we will **not** charge you for summer days or sessions to hold your place when we are closed. Charges for additional services such as trips will be agreed in advance with families.

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### Current fees

The following charges apply when taking a government funded or private place –

- *Cost of breakfast: £2.50 per week*
- *Cost of all Consumables and sundries; include dry snack items, non-essential PPE, and covers a wide range of other snacks, cooking activities, woodwork activities, forest school activities. Costs are as follows;*
  - *For one child attending 15 hours or below per week: Cost £20.00 per month.*
  - *For one child attending 15 hours or above per week: Cost £30.00 per month.*

The above charges are voluntary, however, if you choose to opt out of paying fees, families will be asked to contribute towards the consumables which will be agreed between families and management, for example, parents may be asked to provide ingredients or resources to cover their child's participation in these activities. It may be possible to waive or reduce these costs in extreme circumstances, please discuss this with Gillian Lee if you are wanting to discuss fee arrangements.

***The free entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the Government funded entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for additional hours, services, meals or consumables.***

**Little Explorers Forest School Nursery,  
private or additional hours and consumables are charged at the following costs:**

	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Times</b>
<b>Nursery childcare for all aged children</b>	<b>£24.00 per session</b>	<b>3 hours set sessions from 9.00am-12.00pm or 12.00pm-3.00pm</b>
<b>Additional Hour(s)</b>	<b>£10.50 per hour</b>	<b>Cost is for a full hour(s) charged before 9.00am or after 3.00pm</b>

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Consumable costs £20.00/£30.00 per month	Non-Government Funded hours	Invoiced Monthly
Consumable costs £20.00/£30.00 per month	Fully Government Funded hours	Invoiced Quarterly

### Invoices and payment methods

Payment will **Must** be paid in advance of accessing Childcare services. Invoices will be processed and issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. These will need to be paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to childcare services being received. The invoice will include all sessions booked for the month, funded or non-funded. Additional sessions required, which have not been processed on the current invoice will be added to your next month's invoice. Parents/Carers are expected to pay their invoice within 15 days of date issued. If no payment has been received and no arrangements have been agreed, you could lose your Child's space. If you have any issues making full payment, please speak to one of the Management team.

All services invoiced must be paid for; non-payment of fees can lead to your child losing their space within the Nursery. Please note; any additional hours over the funded Government hours being claimed, and if money is owed, your child will not be allowed to attend these additional hours until debts have been paid.

These are the following additional charges which are applied:

- Registration Fee £50.00.

The Registration Fee monies are for staff's time and resources in setting up and putting in place your child's paperwork in folders and creating all the items they will be part of in nursery such as, photographs, birthday wall, snack pictures, reading book journal etc.,

- Returnable deposit fee to secure a childcare place £60.00.

We ask for a deposit fee to hold your child's place which secures your child's place from being given to someone else. The Deposit will be returned back to you in the form of a credit on your first invoice which is generally the month of your child starting nursery. Usually this is within a month or two from the Deposited being paid. *Please note if you pay the deposit fee, and for any circumstances, your child cannot start with the nursery and no longer needs their place, the deposit fee is non-returnable.*

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- [Late payments charge £50.00.](#)

The late fee payment is charged to cover staff wages. When you are late collecting your child it leads to staff working longer hours and impacts on nursery costs.

- [Admin & Other Service payments charge £50.00.](#)

Admin and other service payment charge is to cover staff wages. So if an additional service is required like a report, copies of any paperwork which is not directly to support the child's education and wellbeing, this will be chargeable at £50.00.

### Method of payment:

- We accept bank transfer payments
- Cash for small amounts only, under £25.00 or in exceptional circumstances when a family have no other means of paying.
- We accept Tax-free Childcare payments; found on [<https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>]
- Please note we no longer accept cheque payments.

The government funded entitlement is offered with no charge to the Parents/Carers for the educational hours. Parents will not be charged a "top-up" fee to recoup the difference between the amount received from the Local Authority and the current hourly rate.

A registration fee of £50.00 is charged once a childcare place has been offered. This is voluntary for those families whose child(ren) only access the government funded entitlement.

We accept payment by cash, bank transfer and Tax-free Childcare. For further information, please speak to the Childcare Provider or Management staff.

### **LATE PAYMENT OF FEES/debt collection**

**Please note there is a charge for late payments.**

**Our procedures are;**

1. If invoices are not paid by the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) of the month – We will remind you by email on (16<sup>th</sup>) of the month.
2. If we have not received payment within 24 hours of the email being sent – We will add a late fee of £50.00 to your invoice.

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3. If invoices are not paid by the thirty first (31<sup>st</sup>) of the month – We will inform you of none receipt and we will reserve the right to withdraw your child's place from the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month until payment has been received.
4. Continuous late delayed payments after the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month will result in late payment charges without further warning.
5. Long term or Part-payment will result in services being withdrawn. And your child will not be able to access any other childcare services until full payment is received like additional childcare hours.
6. Only as a last result will we take Parents/Carers to the small claims court for non-payment, if all other options have been exhausted.

### **Session changes and/or cancellation of place**

If parents wish to change the sessions their child attends, it is advised that you discuss this with the Childcare Provider. **Changes are subject to availability and require a four weeks' notice period in writing.** Little Explorers will endeavour to facilitate every family's needs. However, on occasions of non-availability, we would put you on a waiting list and offer you the changes as soon as there is availability. If you require it sooner, and we are able to offer it, then an invoice will be raised and asked to be paid within 7 days.

If you no longer require all or any of your sessions four weeks' notice in writing must be given to cancel any booked sessions. Parent(s)/carer(s) will be charged for the full notice period even if the child is not attending.

### **Illness and holiday**

Full fees are payable at all times, including 'Days not attended,' due to circumstances like; family holidays, appointments and sickness. We are also unable to offer session swaps.

### **Late collection and Early drop off fees**

Children must be collected promptly at the end of their booked session. Please be aware when you are late or too early this could place the nursery in an illegal position, where we do not have enough staff in ratio or may not be insured. Additionally, when late collections are made, this places our staff in a position where they are then late to collect their own children and receive charges. Therefore, if you need later sessions these MUST be booked in advance.



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### **CHILD SESSIONS ARRIVAL AND COLLECTIONS CHARGES:**

Early drop off with your child arriving at nursery before their start time - will be charged at our hourly rate.

Late collection of your child from nursery after the following times - fees will be charged as follows:

Up to 5 minutes	Rare or exceptional circumstances	No charge
10 minutes and over	Any circumstances	£20
20 minutes and over	Any circumstances	£40
Frequent lateness	Any circumstances	£40

### **Unavoidable closure of the Nursery**

If Little Explorers Nursery closes due to unforeseen circumstances, we will take reasonable steps to inform parents. In cases of bad weather, please listen to local radio school closures or check the Norfolk County Council's website. Any private monies for services not provided will be credited to your accounts to use at your discretion.

### **Fees Reviewed**

Our fees are reviewed usually annually in **February** and the increase will come in on April 1<sup>st</sup> in line with minimum wage increases. However, we reserve the right to increase at other times of the year if the nursery needs to increase the income to secure the sustainability of the setting. Families will be given at least 6 weeks' notice in writing to inform them of changes and are given the opportunity to discuss their options and make arrangements.

Guidance:-

- Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2024)
- Early Years Entitlements: Operation Guidance For Local Authorities and Providers (2024)

Little Explorers Forest

School Nursery

This policy was adopted by

On

Date to be reviewed

18.08.2024

31.03.2025



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*G. Lee*

Signed by provider

Name of signatory

Gillian Lee, B.A. Hons

Role of signatory

Childcare Provider & Forest School Leader

Staff Signature/Printed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Signature/Printed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, published April 2017, p.5]**

***1. Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.***