**Fees Payment Policy**

(for implementation from September 2021)

**Definitions**

1. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions have been used:
	1. Education sessions: these are sessions which run 08.30-11.30am and 12.30-3.30pm. Most children attending these sessions will be funded, but we also accept children on a fee basis.
	2. Lunch: the lunch hour is 11.30-12.30 and is normally fee based.
	3. Wrap Around: this is before and after school care (8.00-8.30am and 3.30-4.00pm) and is fee based.
2. Only children enrolled on education provision can access lunch and/or wrap around sessions.
3. This policy should be read in conjunction with our admissions policy, which provides additional information on the pattern of attendance we expect from children.

**Principles**

1. This policy outlines our fee structure, how we collect fees and our expectations of our fee paying parents/carers.
2. At Gill Blowers Nursery School, we have highly qualified staff who provide education and childcare services to children aged 2 to 5. We are committed to helping all families to access our service according to our admissions criteria and providing high quality education and care. This will include support to access 15 hour funding for 2, 3 and 4 year old places, 30 hours for working parents, and free school meals for those who are eligible. Whilst we endeavour to keep our fees as low as reasonably practicable, they reflect the fact that the School provides a high quality, safe and stimulating environment and the need to ensure continued excellent standards and sustainability.
3. Fees are paid for a place, not attendance.

**Rates**

1. Our hourly rate is outlined below. Two year olds are charged slightly more per hour because pupil:staff ratios are lower (fewer children for each member of staff), which reflects government policy and funding. Table 1 below outlines when a child becomes eligible for the 3 and 4 year old funding rate according to the time of the year in which they were born.
	1. £5.50per hour for children who are 2 years olds and for the term in which they turn 3.
	2. £4.80 per hour for three and four year olds, commencing the term after a child turns 3, as follows:

**Table 1: Term after a child turns 3**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Birthday** | **Charged at the 3/4 year old rate** |
| 1 Jan to 31 March | After Easter holidays |
| 1 April to 30 Aug | After Summer holidays |
| 1 Sept to 31 Dec | After Christmas holidays |

1. Whilst fees are charged by the hour, children can only attend for sessions (i.e. part sessions cannot be booked an hour at a time). For education sessions, late drop off or early collection will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and by prior arrangement. There is more flexibility around drop off and pick up times for wrap around sessions; however, the entire slot will be charged for. Table 2 below outlines the sessions that can be booked, the cost of each session and the location at which such sessions are available.
2. Wrap around fees include a light breakfast (cereal) for the morning session and a light snack (e.g. fruit) for the after school session.
3. Sessions cannot be swapped. Extra ad-hoc sessions can be provided subject to availability and by prior arrangement, and will be charged at the normal rate. An administration charge of £5.00 will be applied for additional sessions (not lunch slots) for each request (there can be a number of additional sessions per request for the £5.00 administration charge).
4. Fees commence from the agreed start date. During the settling in period, it might be appropriate for children to commence on an incremental basis. However, fees will be charged at the normal amount to cover the cost of the place. Funded education sessions will be subject to a charge in the case of children found to be subsequently ineligible, or for children who attend more than their funded entitlement sessions

**Table 2: Sessions**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Time slot** | **Description** | **Hours** | **Fee 2y old** | **Fee 3/4y old** | **Location** |
| 8.00-8.30am | Breakfast wrap around | 0.5 | £2.75 | £2.40 | Mossdale only |
| 8.30-11.30am | Morning education session (funded for most children) | 3.0 | £16.50 | £14.40 | Mossdale and Leabank |
| Lunch | Includes a hot school dinner | 1.0 | £5.00 | £5.00 | Mossdale and Leabank |
| 12.30-3.30pm | Afternoon education session (funded for most children) | 3.0 | £16.50 | £14.40 | Mossdale and Leabank |
| 3.30-4.00pm | After school wrap around | 0.5 | £2.75 | £2.40 | Mossdale only |

**Lunch**

1. Lunchtime costs £5.00 and includes the cost of a hot school dinner. If you think your child might be eligible for Free School Meals, please let a member of staff know.

**Snacks**

1. Healthy snacks are provided to children in the morning and afternoon sessions. Parents/carers are asked to provide a voluntary donation of £5 per half term.

**Payment and invoicing**

1. A payment plan will be agreed when children commence paid for education or care. Parents will pay in advance on a half-termly, monthly (every 4 weeks) or weekly basis by prior arrangement. Normally, one invoice will be issued for each child every half term, with payment dates clearly marked. Fees can be paid by standing order, direct debit, cash, cheque, or childcare vouchers (or a combination). Invoices will include a payment deadline.
2. Funded provision (15 hours or 30 hours) will not be invoiced. Thirty hours funding will be subject to parents/carers providing a unique 30 hours funding code, which needs to be renewed every three months.

**Outstanding payments**

1. Payment due date will be provided on the invoice and a written reminder will be given within two weeks of late payment. After a further week of non-payment, if you have not contacted us to discuss this matter further, your child’s place could be withdrawn. Further non-payment could result in your child’s place being withdrawn (or the withdrawal of non-funded provision for those children who are part funded part fee-paying). All costs incurred in the collection of unpaid fees, including administration costs and costs from using solicitors or debt collection agencies where needed, will be recoverable in full from the parent/carer.
2. If there are any concerns about fees, or payment of fees, parents/carers are requested to talk to a member of the administration team to arrange a payment plan as soon as possible and therefore potentially avoid incurring a late payment charge or amassing significant debt.

**Late collection of your child from school**

1. Following the first instance of late collection, parents will be written to and reminded that any further unreasonable late collections will be charged at a rate of £1 per minute.

**Notice**

1. We plan our staffing levels and set our budget well in advance. In order to operate, we therefore need notice of changes to numbers of children and thus our expenditure and income. In the case of paid for provision, four weeks written notice is required of a child leaving the setting or reducing their sessions, otherwise fees in lieu of notice will be charged.
2. Parents/carers must inform us of any non-attendance due to illness or any other reason even though payment will still be taken. Non-attendance will be charged as normal. For illnesses of more than one consecutive week, fees are payable for the first week of absence, with subsequent days then being charged at half rate, up to a maximum of two further weeks. In the event of long-term illness, parents/carers should discuss with staff the preferred approach.

**Closure days**

1. Fees will not be charged for closure days.

**Help with childcare costs**

1. There are several ways in which you might be able to get help paying your childcare costs, in addition to the free 2-year old funding, 15 hours and 30 hours funding for 3 and 4 years old. There may be support with childcare vouchers, working tax credits and tax free childcare. You can refer to: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk), or [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) or speak to a member of staff.

**Fee review**

1. The School Governing Body will review fees when necessary. In doing so, it will take account of affordability, financial sustainability and other relevant local factors. Parents will be given as much notice as reasonably possible of any changes, and we would not normally expect to change the hourly rate part way through the academic year (i.e. any changes would normally be implemented in September). The cost of the school dinner might change mid-year subject to any increases imposed by Luton Council.