

**Fees and Payments April 2019**

**Policy statement**

Buckden Pre-school Playgroup is a registered charity and therefore relies heavily on the prompt payment of fees in order to function. Late payment of fees adversely affects our cash flow and increases our administration costs.

This policy sets out how we issue invoices, collect payments and deal with late payments to protect the financial position of the Pre-School and this also forms part of the terms and conditions that parents have signed upon registration.

**Procedures**

* Fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Any increases will come into effect from the start of the term following the review.
* To register a child in our Pre-school, parents/carers are asked to fill out a registration form and pay a voluntary registration fee of £15 which includes a Buckden Pre-School t-shirt for your child.
* Fees for attendance are charged at £4.15 per hour.
* Fees are payable for any hours a child attends which are not covered by Free Twos/ Early Years Funding, as detailed below.
* Invoices in respect of fees owing will be issued every half term.
* Late payment of fees will be subject to our procedures detailed below.

**Free Twos/Early Years Funding**

* We are registered on the ‘Free Twos’ funding scheme from Cambridgeshire County Council, for children aged between two and three. In order to receive this, parents/carers have to be in receipt of certain benefits.
* We are registered to receive Early Years Funding from Cambridgeshire County Council. Children are entitled to 15 hours per week of Early Years Funding from the start of the term after they are three.
* Some families may be able to get up to 30 hours free childcare (1,140 per year, which you can choose how you take). Eligible parents/carers sign up online to get a code to give to their childcare provider to reserve a place.
* At the end of each term, parents/carers who are eligible to claim Free Twos Funding or Early Years Funding will be required to fill in a contract, issued by Cambridgeshire County Council, to agree their chosen pattern of hours for the following term. This contract is binding throughout that term and no amendments to the amount of funded hours being claimed can be made.
* If a parent/carer wishes to, they may split their funding claim between two settings (e.g. us and a day nursery). They must declare this on their funding form.
* Any hours a child attends that are not covered by Free Twos/Early Years Funding will be charged for at the hourly rate stated above.
* If a child transfers to another setting, Buckden Pre-school Playgroup is under no obligation to transfer any Early Years Funding it has received for that child. This will be done at the discretion of the Committee.
* The 30 hours entitlement can be claimed from the term after your child’s third birthday. Terms start on 1 January, 1 April and 1 September.

**Sessions:**

* Pre-school sessions are term time only and follow the term times set by Buckden Church of England Primary Academy.
* Pre-school sessions are as follows:
* 9am – 12pm
* 9am – 1pm (including lunch club)
* 9am - 3pm (with lunch club 12 – 1pm)
* 12pm – 3pm (with lunch club 12 – 1pm)

**Late Collection**

* Regular late collection, which is anytime after the end of our session times, will not be tolerated and in this event, the late collection fee may be increased.
* The late collection of children will be charged at £5 for every 10 minutes.

**Attendance**

* Parents/carers must inform the Pre-school in writing of their preferred pattern of hours for each term in advance. If a contract for Free Twos/Early Years Funding has been filled in by parents/carers this will be used as the agreement for the pattern of hours.
* 30 days written notice is required for any change of hours. If less than 30 days written notice is given, fees will still be payable for the 30 day period.
* No changes can be made to claims for Free Twos/Early Years Funding until the following term.
* All changes must be made in writing or they will not be accepted by the Pre-school.
* Fees are still payable if a child is off sick or absent due to holiday.
* Exchanging days is not permitted. However, extra sessions can be arranged, where spaces are permitted.
* Termination of a child’s place by the parent or guardian, requires half a term’s written notice.

**Invoices and payment of fees**

* Fees are payable between the first 2 weeks of every half term in advance. An invoice will be issued at the start of each half term, stating how many chargeable hours per week the child attends, and the fee amount for that half term.
* Payments made by cheque should be made payable to ‘Buckden Pre-School Playgroup’.
* Payments can be made directly into the Pre-school bank account by bank transfer:

Account Name: Buckden Pre-School Playgroup Association

Sort Code: 08-92-99

Account number: 65619999

* We will issue a receipt for all payments made in cash.
* We endeavour to bank all fee payments within 14 days of them being paid.
* If a parent/carer is unable to pay their fees within these time periods then they must advise the Manager immediately and provide a genuine reason why they are unable to pay. In exceptional circumstances the Pre-school may agree to fees being paid by a payment plan.
* A payment plan is a plan agreed between the Pre-school and the parent/carer detailing the dates and amounts to be paid. If the plan is not adhered to by the parent/carer then the Pre-school will implement its procedures on late payment of fees.

**Late payment of fees**

* If parents/carers have not paid within 14 days, they will be issued with a written reminder to pay within 7 days.
* If payment is still outstanding after the further 7 days, the parents/ carers with overdue fees will be issued with a late payment fee. The late payment fee is15% of the amount stated on the invoice.
* If fees remain outstanding by the end of this 21 day period, the Pre-School also reserves the right to undertake any of the following actions as appropriate:
* Exclude the child from pre-school for their non-funded hours
* Pursue the matter in the small claims court

**Refunds**

* Refunds will not be made:
  + For absence through illness, holiday or other, apart from in exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the Committee.
  + Where a child leaves or their sessions are reduced after an invoice has been paid, except at the discretion of the Committee.
  + Where a child is part-funded and part-fee payer when the Pre-School closes a planned session.
* Refunds will be issued for exclusively non-funded children (i.e. 100% fee payer) when the Pre-school closes a planned session.

**Ad-hoc sessions**

* If a parent/carer wishes their child to stay for any extra hours as a one-off they will have to agree this with the Manager or Deputy Manager beforehand.
* We operate within strict ratios of adults to children and therefore we cannot always guarantee there will be spaces available.
* Payments for these extra hours will have to be made at the start of the session in question otherwise the child will not be allowed to stay.

**Further guidance**

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

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| This policy was adopted by |  | *(name of provider)* |
| On |  | *(date)* |
| Date to be reviewed |  | *(date)* |
| Signed on behalf of the provider |  | |
| Name of signatory |  | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) |  | |

**This policy will be reviewed annually.**