

Policy on Fees

Link to policy and legislation:

- Registration and Admissions Policy
- Settling in policy and procedure

What this policy covers:

1. Paying the Deposit and Settling in
2. Non- payment of fees, Arrears and late payment charges
3. Giving notice to withdraw a child
4. Schedule for paying the nursery fees
5. Childcare Vouchers
6. Nursery holidays and closure and fees during a child absence
7. Receipts for payment of fees
8. Financial support for childcare
9. Free Early Education Entitlement (F E E E)

Elephant and Castle Day Nursery understands the cost of childcare may seem expensive to Parents / Carers. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating service for children is not cheap. In order to ensure continued high standards and sustainability of the setting we ask Parents and Carers to comply with this policy in respect of the fees' payment.

In addition, we aim to ensure that:

- We help Parents /Carers to pay all fees due by offering an agreed payment system.
- When Parents/Carers register a child, the Manager will ask them to confirm which payment option they will take and check to ensure they have understood it.
- Parents/Carers are familiar with the payment system early on; fees will be detailed in the Parent/ Carer Pack which all parents / carers receive at their first visit (further copies are available on the nursery website).
- Parents/ Carers are informed that the level of fees will be solely set by the Nursery Director, *Mrs Mioara Istrate* and reviewed periodically in the light of the nursery's financial position, its future development plans and of any other broader or social considerations deemed relevant.
- Parents /Carers are informed that fees are payable only **in advance**, either weekly or calendar monthly.

1. Deposit and Settling in

- Once you have been offered a place at the Nursery, you will be required to sign a Parent/Carer Contract and to pay a Deposit to secure the place.
- The Deposit level is **one– week fees**. The payment can be made only by Cash. The Deposit amount is set at differential rates depending on children's age range fees and the full - time or part - time individual attendance.

- This deposit is held on the parent/ carer account and will be refunded to the parent / carer in full when they decide to leave, (provided that the child's final fees have been paid in full and any outstanding charges have been settled and subject to the correct withdrawal: two – week's written notice being given).
- In the case of the **non - payment** of the fees for one week, the deposit will be used to cover the Nursery fees and a **Notice of Withdrawal** of the place will be immediately issued by the Nursery Director.

Settling In

- Parents and Carers will not be charged during the Settling in period, which lasts up to 5 days for one hour a day between 10.00 to 11.00 a.m.

2. Non - payment of fees, Arrears and late payment charges

- All fees not received by the first **Monday** of the week, or not received by **the end** of the first week of the Month will be deemed late.
- A **£4 daily late payment fee** will be added to the final bill.
- Should a Parent/ Carer have problems paying their child's fees on time they should communicate in confidence to the Nursery Director (elephantnursery@gmail.com).

If an arrangement has not been made then the following procedure will apply:

Procedure:

- If weekly or monthly payments are 1 week late, a Late Reminder Invoice (LRI) will be issued, and you will additionally incur a **£4.00 daily charge for late payment**.
- If weekly or monthly payments are 2 weeks late after an LRI has been issued, **the nursery will end the service and the child will not be accepted back to nursery**. The nursery will use any paid Deposit to cover any loss of fees.
- Elephant and Castle Day Nursery thanks all Parents and Carers for their understanding and will do all that it can to avoid the above situation.

3. Notice of Withdrawal

- If you wish to withdraw your child from the nursery, a minimum of **two – weeks written notice** must be provided in writing to the Manager or Nursery Director. You may do so also by sending an email to elephantnursery@gmail.com. Failure to do so will result in the full deposit being forfeited.

4. Schedule for paying nursery fees

- Your child's first week attendance fees must be paid in advance before their first day of starting nursery.
- We accept **Direct Debit** or **Standing Order** as the main ways of paying the fees. The Nursery Bank account details are printed in the Parents/ Carer Pack and are listed below.

Fees should be paid either:

- Weekly - before the Monday of each week or
- Calendar monthly - on or before the first week of every month. The **monthly fees** are calculated by multiplying the weekly fees by 52 weeks/ year and then dividing by 12 months/ year to obtain an equal monthly fees amount.

5. Childcare Vouchers

The nursery participates in the Childcare Voucher Scheme, a tax and National Insurance relief scheme offered by government legislation. If your employer participates in this scheme and you wish to pay your Nursery fees this way, please contact us. We accept Childcare Vouchers from all the financial organizations, including Care4, Busy Bees, Fidelity, You at work, etc. Ask us if you have vouchers from another source.

6. Nursery holidays and closure and fees during a child absence

- We are open all year round.
- The Nursery is closed for Christmas week, all Bank Holidays and four Staff Training Inset days per year. Parents/ Carers will be given advanced notice of these closures.
- Fees remain payable throughout closure periods.

Fees during Absence

- If your child is absent from the nursery due to sickness or holiday, the full fees must be paid for the place to be kept.
- If the sickness or holiday absence exceeds three consecutive weeks, a **half - week fee** will be charged for each week starting from the **fourth** week of absence.

For Parents/ Carers who work in other childcare settings that are closed between the school terms, the Nursery will keep a child's name on its registers only if a **single flat fee of £1,500.00** is paid in advance for all the 14 weeks of a child's absence in a year.

Emergency Closure

In unavoidable and exceptional circumstances, such as notifiable infection or consequential damage following a fire, it may be necessary to close all or part of the Nursery at short notice. In common with most independent schools, it is not the nursery's policy to refund fees in such circumstances.

7. Receipts for payment of fees

- A receipt for the payment of the fees will be issued **by email** to the Contracting Parent or Carer by the Nursery Director following payment of fees.
- Please notify the nursery if your email address has changed or you have not been receiving a receipt.

8. Financial Support for Childcare

There are a number of means- tested and universal initiatives to provide assistance with child care costs:

Childcare Grant

If you're a full-time higher education student with dependent children, you may be able to qualify for this grant which could cover as much as 85 per cent of your childcare costs during term time and holidays. Parents of one child could claim up to a maximum of £148.75 per week, or £255 per week for two or more children. How much you get is dependent on your household income and actual childcare costs. More details can be found at the DfES web site www.direct.gov.uk

Access to Learning Funds (ALF)

The ALF can help to support student parent/carers who are on low incomes and who face financial difficulties. Education providers decide how to distribute the fund; however lone student parents/carers are a priority.

Child Tax Credits

Families can claim Child Tax Credit from the HM Revenue and Customs if they care for at least one dependant, you don't have to be working to claim. Extra financial support is available through the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit for families who work but earn a low income. The amount you can claim depends on your living arrangements and income. The childcare element of working tax credit will be paid into the bank account of the main carer alongside the child tax credit. For further information please visit www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits or call 0845 300 3900.

9. Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE)

- Under the universal FEEE scheme, the 2, 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to receive 15 hours of free education a week. Please speak to the Nursery Manager for more information or visit www.direct.gov.uk, www.southwark.gov.uk/freeearlylearning for more information.
- Free Early Education Extended 30 hours Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds only. This offer of additional funded hours will only be available to families who meet certain criteria which include all parents living in the household working and earning approximately £110 per week depending on your age/s. Read more on the National Minimum Wage here: www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates. For one parent families, the parent must be working. In two parent families both parents must be working.
- Parents will be given an eligibility code, which they will need to take to their childcare provider when enquiring about a free place.
- Eligibility codes will have a validity period of 3 months. Parents will be asked to reconfirm their eligibility with HRMC every 3 months, declare any changes in circumstances. If a parent(s) falls out of eligibility, they will be given a grace period before their extended entitlement is withdrawn. Parents will still be able to receive their existing 15 hours universal offer.

To access free learning hours, parents can pick option **A, B, C or D** listed below:

- **A)** Children can attend for 5 hours a day, for three days/ week of your choice.
- **B)** Children can attend for 3 hours a day, for five days/ week of your choice.
- **C)** Children can attend 3, 4 or 5 full days so parents will pay discounted fees.
- **D)** The 30 free extended hours can be taken as:
10 hours/day x 3 days, or 7.5 hours/day x 4 days or 6 hours/day x 5 days.

The Free Early Education Scheme Entitlement (**F E E E**) scheme applies during Term – Times only, for 38 weeks of the year and will **not apply during schools holidays**. The FEEE applies from the beginning of the term after a child's second, third or fourth birthday until they are 5 years old and going onto school. The cost of this is paid by Southwark Children's Services-Early Years Department to Elephant and Castle Day Nursery and deducted from your nursery cost accordingly.

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