



## Fees Policy

### Policy Statement

This policy is intended to ensure parents understand the terms and conditions that apply when their child attends Bledlow Preschool in respect of the invoices they will receive and the payments they are required to make. Bledlow Preschool accepts children in the age range 2 years to 5 years.

All 3 to 4-year-olds in England can get 570 hours per year which is funded by the UK Government (Flexible Free Education – FFE). It's usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year and starts from the term after your child's 3rd birthday. *Please note;* we do not currently participate in the 30 free hours offer.

As a community resource, we keep our fees affordable whilst ensuring that we provide childcare of the highest quality. We aim to ensure financial stability of the Preschool and therefore continuity of service provision by having a fair, transparent, and consistent fee and payment process.

Bledlow Preschool relies on the active support of parents to ensure the smooth running of the Preschool and to help keep costs down. Parents should be aware of their responsibilities when they accept a place for their child at the Preschool. We welcome parents (and other family members) as volunteers - helping at special activity sessions, joining the management Committee, or leading fundraising activities. Parents supporting the Preschool in this way does help to control costs and keep fees competitive, and is a very important part of .

### Fees

Fees will be charged to those children who do not qualify for FFE funding or for any other Government funding and for all hours attended which are additional to the funded hours to which they are entitled.

No fees will be charged for the first 15 hours of attendance at Core Sessions (which are 9:15am- 12:15pm, Monday – Friday) for children from the term after their third birthday, provided they are in receipt of FFE and assuming they have not used up their allocation at other settings.

Our fees are reviewed bi-annually, and we aim to remain competitive in the local market without compromising on health and safety standards or the quality of the care that we provide.

**Academic Year 2020/21: £7.00 per hour. Effective from 1st September 2022 – July 31st 2023.**

Core Session 9:15am – 12:15pm, Monday to Friday.  
£21.00 per session including a light mid-morning snack.

Afternoon session 12:15pm – 2.15pm Monday - Thursday  
£14.00 per session

*Please note:* Children are eligible to join afternoon sessions **ONLY** if they attend at least 3 Core Morning sessions per week. Lunch is not provided, children must bring a packed lunch for afternoon sessions. *Please note;* A child who has been accepted for FFE but persistently does not attend for their funded hours - and assuming there is no valid reason communicated and accepted by the funding body - is at risk of their funding entitlement being withdrawn by the awarding Council. In that situation Bledlow Preschool will invoice the child's parent for a sum equivalent to the withdrawn funding in order to recoup staffing and related costs in respect of the unused place and this invoice will be payable in full on issue.



Parents are asked to help with the costs of certain things which are not covered by Government funding such as ingredients for baking days, or seeds/plants for gardening sessions.

Parents are also asked to contribute towards the costs of hygiene items that we use (such as barrier cream, wipes, sun cream, antiseptic, plasters etc) as these are not covered under the FFE scheme.

*Please note:* A charge of £25 per term will be added to your invoice as a contribution towards hygiene items, cooking ingredients and materials for gardening activity. Most parents find this way of contributing towards ad hoc activities and items the most convenient. However, if you would prefer to 'pay as you go' and not have this contribution added to your invoice, please speak with the Practice Manager or the Chair.

### **Deposits**

We charge a £150 deposit for all new registrations where a child is not eligible for Government funding at the time of the application. This fee pays for the administration involved in arranging for a place and will only be refunded if a place is not found within two weeks of the child's expected start date. It will not be refunded if the days offered are not suitable, or if the parent decides to choose another setting instead of Bledlow Preschool.

### **Deferred Entry and/or joining mid term**

For those children under the age of 3 wishing to defer entry and join Bledlow PreSchool mid academic year a £150 deposit is payable at the time the place is formally accepted.

NB: This deposit will be deducted from the first invoice for fees after the child has completed one full term if the child takes up the place and has paid in full for their first terms attendance. If the place is not taken up the deposit is forfeited.

No deposit will be required for children who are aged over 3 at the time the place is accepted and who are entitled to FFE. However, if the child has been receiving funding at another provider, they will not be funded at Bledlow Preschool until the start of a new term.

Once we have agreed the hours and days that a child is to attend the Preschool, those days/hours should not change unless there are significant extenuating circumstances (e.g. a family moving away from the area). This prevents places becoming empty mid-term which affects our running costs and the longer-term sustainability of the service provision. Please also note **Notice Periods and Termination of the Contract.**

### **Ad hoc and Exceptional Fees**

From time to time we have special events and activities which all children are invited to participate in, and which may result in additional operational costs for the Preschool. A fee may be requested to cover the costs of these activities and payment should always be made in advance of the event to secure the place. Payments are non-refundable if the child does not attend. Parents will be given advance notice of such sessions and attendance at such extracurricular activities is not mandatory.



### **Late Collection**

Children must be collected promptly at the session close. Very often, the village hall will be in use immediately after Preschool ends and we are not allowed to 'over run' our booking.

If a child is not collected after 10 minutes from the end of the session, a Late Fee of £15 may be payable for every 15 minutes (or part thereof) after the relevant time until the child is collected. The parent will be given a letter in the first instance and if lateness continues the Late Fee will be charged. Any failure to charge the fee on occasion will not prevent it becoming payable on future occasions.

### **Holidays, sickness and exceptional closures**

Fees will not be charged on days where the Preschool must close due to unforeseen circumstances, such as a government election or severe weather conditions. If fees have already been paid for these days, the relevant amount will be deducted from the next invoice.

*Please note;* if we must close once a session has already started no refunds will be given.

If a child is absent due to sickness or for any other reason the fee will remain in place as the Preschool will have kept their place open and still must employ staff. In the case of a long-term illness which will affect ongoing attendance, please speak to the Preschool Manager who may, with the agreement of the Chair, use her discretion to make special arrangements.

The Preschool is closed on all Bank Holidays thus no fee is collected for these days. If a child has a planned holiday that falls during term time fees will still be due for the days the child would usually attend Preschool.

### **Payment of Fees**

All fees are due in full at the beginning of each term, and payment should be made in advance for the whole term.

- Invoices must be settled within 7 working days of receipt.
- Our preferred payment method is by bank transfer direct to the Preschool bank account. All transfers should reference the surname of the child and the term for which payment is being made e.g. SMITH SPRING
- Cheques should be made payable to Bledlow Preschool and handed to the Preschool Manager in a sealable envelope marked with the name of the child and the term for which the cheque payment relates. The Preschool Manager will seal the envelope and issue a receipt for the cheque.
- **NB: We are unable to accept cash payments for fees under any circumstances.**

### **Childcare Vouchers**

We are currently registered to accept Childcare Vouchers from Edenred, Compuserve, Sodexo and Busy Bees. It may be possible to make arrangements with other providers. Please discuss with the Administrator *prior* to confirming your child's place. *Please note;* payment by childcare vouchers is subject to the same terms and conditions as other methods of payment.



### **Non-payment of Fees**

If invoices remain unpaid 7 working days after the start of term, the child's place will be withdrawn until payment is received. NB: Any child who is receiving FFE Funding will be able to remain at Preschool for their Council funded hours.

Persistent late payment may attract additional fees to cover our higher administration costs. In extreme circumstances, outstanding debts may be referred to the County Court.

*Please note:* Anybody experiencing difficulties paying the fees for their children must let the Preschool Manager know as soon as possible. In exceptional circumstances and always with the best interests of the child in mind, we may be able to agree special payment terms for the child to remain at Preschool. Any family in this situation should contact the Preschool Manager at the earliest opportunity to arrange a private meeting with the Chair. Anything discussed will be treated in the strictest confidence. As a registered charity, we exist to provide a service to local children and families, not to make a profit. However, this aim can only be fulfilled if we have enough income to cover our outgoings. We will never take any action against a child, including, but not limited to, exclusion or discriminatory treatment due to a parent's genuine inability to pay fees. We will, however, pursue parents for full payment of fees if genuine financial hardship is not demonstrated.

### **Notice Periods and Termination of the Contract**

Bledlow Preschool reserves the right to terminate the contract without notice in the event of unacceptable behaviour from parents or for non-payment of fees. At all other times one half terms notice in writing will be given.

*Please note:* All parents are required to give one half terms notice to either decrease the number of sessions their child is enrolled for or to withdraw their child completely from the Preschool.

A cancellation charge equal to the fees for one whole term will be made if these notice periods are not adhered to.

*Please note:* Fees are usually reviewed bi-annually, are subject to change and any changes, including hourly rates, take effect the first full term after the review date.



*See also; Financial Policies and Procedures, Admissions Policy, Food and Snack Policy.*

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This policy was adopted at a meeting of Bledlow Preschool Management Committee

Held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee by:

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Sabina Malik- Chair

***This policy to be reviewed bi-annually.***

***Next review due by***

Dec 2023