

Newbold Church School



Nursery Fees Policy (V2)

Review: M.Johnson updated June 2025

Approved: GB January

Signed: Chair of Governors _____

Signed: Headteacher _____

Next Review: June 2026

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Statement of intent

The Nest @ NCS aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary school.

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to nursery fees such as universal credit.

This Nursery Fees Policy has been established to provide transparent fee information, set procedures for the payment of fees and create a framework for dealing with non-payment in a swift and fair manner.

Parents should be aware of and given access to this policy and the school's procedures. It will be included on the school's website and made available to view at the school on request.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016 (as amended)
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guidance'
- [Updated] DfE (2024) 'Early education and childcare'
- [New] DfE (2024) September 2024 early education and childcare entitlements expansion'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Debt Recovery Policy
- Nursery Admissions Policy

2. Fees

2.1. The Nest @ NCS charges parents for care provided outside of the:

- **Working parents' entitlement** – this entitlement is available for working parents of children from the term after they turn nine months until they start school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year.
- **Universal entitlement** for three- and four-year-olds – all three- and four-year-olds are eligible for this entitlement from the term after they turn three through to starting school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year and can be combined with the working parents entitlement to make up 30 hours.
- Extended 30 hours free provision a week for three- to four-year-olds, where eligible. Parents/carers can see the eligibility criteria at <https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/check-youre-eligible>

Children need to have their valid eligibility code (at the first day of the funding block) to use the extended 30 hours for free. This code needs to be renewed regularly and this is the responsibility of the parents/carers to ensure that the code is renewed before the first day of the funding block (1st January, 1st April, 1st September). ▪ If a valid eligibility code is not received by the nursery then any hours used will be charged.

- If families do not meet the eligibility criteria for the Free Extended Funding, they may pay for additional sessions over and above the initial 15 hours at a charge of £16.50 per session. (3 hours - £5.50 per hour)

2.3. Parents will book the required sessions for each week in advance.

3. Universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds

All children in England can receive 570 hours free childcare per year.

These hours are usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year.

'15 hours' free childcare is available from the term following a child's third birthday.

The school will ask parents to complete a form to help us ensure they receive their free childcare hours.

3.1 Working parent entitlements

Three- and four-year-olds

Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, children of working parents agreed three- and four-years-old will be entitled to the 30-hour entitlement. The working parent entitlement takes account of the universal entitlement and offers eligible parents an additional 15 hours of early years provision per week.

3.2 Eligibility

Parents will be eligible to claim the working parent entitlement if their child has attained the relevant age, is under the compulsory school age, and the parents:

- Are seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
- Are in qualifying paid work and earn the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage rate over the forthcoming quarter.

Parents will be treated as though they meet the minimum income requirement if they are on certain forms of family leave from work or are in receipt of certain forms of statutory pay in connection with sickness or parenting. If one parent in a couple household is in receipt of, or

could be entitled to, specific benefits related to caring, incapacity for work, or limited capacity to work, they will be treated as though they are in paid work and therefore eligible.

Parents that are newly self-employed will not be required to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months in order to qualify for the working parent entitlement.

Any parent whose income exceeds £100,000 will not be eligible for the working parent entitlement.

Children in foster care will be entitled to free early years provision under the working parent entitlement if the child has attained the age of three, is under the compulsory school age and the criteria set out below are met:

- The LA is satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision-making
- In single foster parent families, the foster parent holds additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer
- In two-foster-parent families, both partners hold additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer or one partner is working and the other has a limited capability for work and work-related activity

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlements upon reconfirmation, a place will continue to be funded for the child for a limited 'grace period'.

4. Payment information

- 4.1. Payments should be made in advance on Monday mornings for all non-statutory sessions and lunches, which parents have booked for their child that week.
- 4.2. Payments will be made by the School Money system or via card at the school office.
- 4.3. Payment is required when a child is on holiday or absent due to illness as the nursery must hold the child's place during this period and staff rotas are set on a monthly basis.
- 4.5. If a child is absent for a long period due to illness, the nursery will decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether fees will need to be paid for the period. The nursery's decision is final.
- 4.6. Late payments will incur a £10 fine for each week payments are overdue. Parents can avoid this by ensuring the timely payment of fees each week.
- 4.7. One month's notice and payment will be required to withdraw your child from the nursery.

5. Late collection

- 5.1. Staffing ratios must be maintained at all times. If a child is collected late, this can lead to staff needing to stay beyond the end of their shift. This incurs a cost which will be passed on to the parents at £5.00 for the first 15 minutes and a further £1 for each subsequent 5-minute period.

6. Difficulty with payments

- 6.1. The Nest @ NCS will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.
- 6.2. Parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties should contact Mrs Joanne Brown, the School Business Manager, as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

7. Debt collection

- 7.1. The governing body has a duty to ensure the school receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including nursery fees.
- 7.2. To ensure that the School's budget is not adversely affected by the cost of Nursery debt the Governors consider the fairest system to all families is to pursue a 'Zero Tolerance' approach. Although, this may seem harsh to some parents it is important that the school budget is spent for the benefit of all our pupils and not a small number.

The governing board will not write off any debt that exceeds £500.

- 7.3. A full record will be kept of debts owed to the school for seven years. This will include all letters requesting money, reminders and invoices.
- 7.4. The school will not initiate legal action to recover debts. However, we will refer uncollected debts to the Derby Diocese Academy Trust (DDAT) to consider such action.

8. Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

- 8.1. The headteacher and school business manager will ensure that:
- Letters requesting money are accurately recorded and those records maintained.
 - Evidence of the steps taken by the school in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters and phone calls.
 - A final reminder is sent by recorded delivery to the debtor.
 - The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
 - The level of outstanding debt can be determined at any time.

9. The process for pursuing debts

- 9.1. Informal **reminder** – Within five days of late payment, the debtor will be informally reminded in person or by telephone that they owe money to the school.
- 9.2. **First reminder letter** – If the debt is yet to be paid two weeks after an informal reminder, a formal letter will be sent to the debtor.
- 9.3. **Second reminder letter** - If the debt is yet to be paid three weeks after a first formal reminder, a second formal letter will be sent to the debtor. These letters allow the debtor every opportunity to settle their debt and ensure the school can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt should the issue proceed further.
- 9.4. **Final reminder letter** - If no response is received following the second reminder, the school will send a letter to the debtor advising them that they will be referring the matter to the LA to consider legal action, and suspending the child's place within The Nest until a point at which the debt has been recovered. This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure the debtor has had every chance to respond.
- 9.5. Possible **legal action** – If no payment is made, the Derby Diocese Academy Trust (DDAT) will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor.

10. The waiving of debts

- 10.1. The waiving of debts is at the discretion of the headteacher and the governing body.
- 10.2. A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship or if all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and it is believed it would not be cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.
- 10.3. The headteacher is authorised to waive debts off up to £100.
- 10.4. Debts between £100 and £500 will only be waived with the approval of the governing body. Debts of £500 or more will never be waived

11. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years or earlier by the headteacher and EYFS lead, with any changes made to the policy being communicated to all Office staff and the governing board.

The next scheduled review date will be June 2026