



Nursery Fees Policy

Agreed by Governing Body: Autumn 2025

To be reviewed: Autumn 2026

Group Responsible: Full Governors

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Statement of intent

The CARE Federation aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary nursery.

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to nursery fees, such as working tax credits and free childcare entitlement.

This 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 nursery's procedures. It will be included on the nursery's website and made available to view at the nursery on request.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- 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 (2025) 'Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2025 to 2026'.
- DfE (2025) 'Early education and childcare'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following nursery policies:

- Debt Recovery Policy

2. Fees

Our nursery fees are set out on an hourly rate as follows:

£9.30 per hour for all children aged 3 - 5 years between 8.00am - 4.00pm

£12.00 for a fixed session of 4.00pm - 5.15pm.

Additionally to this, we ask for a non-refundable registration fee of £75.00 to register your child with us. Please be aware that if your child takes only a fully funded space with no additional hours or sessions the £75.00 is refundable within 6 weeks of your child's start date.

Government funding will deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free childcare. These hours are able to be accessed free of charge to parents, and there will be no mandatory charges for parents in relation to free hours.

Government funding will not cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

The nursery may charge parents for the following extras in connection with free hours; however, these charges will be voluntary for parents:

- Consumables to be used by the child, e.g. nappies or sun cream
- Meals and snacks
- Extra optional activities, e.g. events, celebrations, specialist tuition, or other activities that are not directly related or necessary for the delivery of the EYFS statutory framework

The nursery may also charge parents for any additional, private paid hours according to its usual terms and conditions and with the condition that taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a free place.

Breakfast, Lunch and Evening Snack

Please note that we will still be providing your child with a healthy snack during their day as part of their placement.

The optional charges for Meals is as follows:

Breakfast – £2.00 (consisting of a breakfast buffet of a choice of cereals, toast, crumpets, fruit and yoghurts)

Lunch – The provision for storing Home Lunch Boxes is available.

Evening Snack – Included within Afterschool session cost (consisting of, for example, breadsticks, crumpets, fruit)

The above charge for Breakfast is voluntary. Families are able to supply their own food if they wish. It may be possible to waive or reduce these costs, for example if your child is eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium – please discuss this with a member of management to look at what support can be given.

Please be advised that if you choose to provide your own meals, you will be required to follow our Healthy Eating Policy including any allergies advice provided by the nursery. If your provided meal does not follow the allergies guidance you will be invoiced for a meal at the relevant charge.

The nursery will deliver funded hours as follows:

- **All 3- and 4-year-olds (universal entitlement)**: 570 hours per year – over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year – from the term after the third birthday until compulsory school age.
- As per Government guidelines, this funding is a stretched offer spread across the 50 weeks of the year that Sparhawk Nursery operates. For families wishing to accept the 15 hours government funding this equates to approximately 11.4 hours per week spread across the 50 weeks. Funding amounts vary depending on the term that your child starts their funding with us and their date of birth – please speak to a member of management for further information. If you are in receipt of government funding, your child's settling-in sessions will be deducted from their funded hours.
- The funding entitlement is offered free of charge and parents will not be charged a top up fee to recoup the difference between the amount received from the Local Authority and the current hourly rate.
- Additional hours and services will be charged at the current hourly rate where hours are not funded as Early Education by the Local Authority.
- The free entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the free entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.
- **Working-parent entitlement (children aged 9 months and above)**: Children aged 9 months and above will be entitled to 1,140 hours of free childcare each year if their parents meet the working-parent eligibility criteria.
- As per Government guidelines, this funding is a stretched offer spread across the 50 weeks of the year that Sparhawk Nursery operates. For working families eligible for the 30 hours government funding this equates to approximately 22.8 hours per week spread across the 50 weeks. Funding amounts vary depending on the term that your child starts their funding with us and their date of birth – please speak to a member of management for further information. If you are in receipt of government funding, your child's settling-in sessions will be deducted from their funded hours.
- **Children in foster care**: The nursery will apply the extended working-parent rules where the foster parent is in paid work and where this aligns with the child's care plan; the minimum income test will not apply to foster parents

Any provision that goes beyond the funded entitlements for eligible parents will incur a charge, and parents will be responsible for covering the additional cost.

The nursery will not charge parents for the following in connection with entitlement hours:

- Top-up fees, i.e. any difference between the nursery's normal charge to parents and the funding it receives from the LA to deliver free places.
- The supply of or use of materials or learning resources that are necessary for the effective delivery of childcare.
- Business running costs.
- Registration fees.
- Non-refundable deposits.
- General charges or any other supplementary charges on top of the free hours.
- Any additional fees that are not specifically identified and itemised as being for chargeable extras.

The above will only apply in relation to the Government's free entitlement hours. Where a child attends provision beyond their funded entitlement, additional charges may apply. These charges, however, will never be a condition of accessing the free hours and will be clearly itemised as payable extras.

The costs of chargeable extras will be published on the nursery website.

3. Universal entitlements for three- to four-year-olds

All children in England aged three to four can receive 570 hours of free childcare per year.

To ensure the sustainability of the nursery, Sparhawk Nursery offers the funding daily as 8.00am-4.00pm as a fixed session.

For families in receipt of the 15 hours funding (11.4 hours per week all year round), you are eligible to book one of these sessions per week. This leaves a balance of 3.4 hours to allocate towards any additional day sessions of 8 hours in length (8.00am - 4.00pm).

Any additional hours booked on top of these funded hours will be charged in accordance with our hourly rates, after remaining funding of 3.4 hours per week has been allocated. Please be aware that our Afterschool session of 4.00pm - 5.15pm is our only period which is charged at a set rate of £12.00.

The free entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the free entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.

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

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

4. Working parent entitlements

A child may be entitled to free early years provision if they are at least 9 months old and below the compulsory school age of five.

Parents' eligibility for this entitlement will depend on the following:

- Parents will need to apply for free childcare in order to work
- Parents will need to be in qualifying paid work. This means they will expect to earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage each week, averaged over the next 3 months
- If one or both parents are on family leave (such as maternity, paternity, adoption, or shared parental leave) or receiving statutory sick pay, they will be treated as meeting the income requirement for a limited time
- If one parent in a couple is receiving certain disability or caring-related benefits, they will be treated as though they are in paid work
- If a parent is newly self-employed, they will not need to meet the income requirement for the first 12 months
- If either parent has an adjusted net income above £100,000, the household will not be eligible for the entitlement

Further information on free childcare for working parents can be found via the GOV.UK website:

<https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/check-youre-eligible>

To ensure the sustainability of the nursery, Sparhawk Nursery offers the funding daily as 8.00am-4.00pm as a fixed session.

For families in receipt of the 30 hours funding (22.8 hours per week all year round), you are eligible to book two of these sessions per week. This leaves a balance of 6.8 hours to allocate towards any additional day sessions of 8 hours in length (8.00am – 4.00pm).

Any additional hours booked on top of these funded hours will be charged in accordance with our hourly rates, after remaining funding of 6.8 hours per week has been allocated. Please be

aware that our Afterschool session of 4.00pm – 5.15pm is our only period which is charged at a set rate of £12.00.

The free entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the free entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables.

5. Eligibility for working parent entitlements for children in foster care

A child in foster care will be entitled to free early years provision if they have reached the required age, are under compulsory nursery age, and the following conditions are met:

- The LA will need to be satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work (other than their role as a foster carer) is consistent with the child's care plan, ensuring the child remains at the centre of all decisions
- In single foster parent households, the foster parent will need to hold additional paid employment outside of their fostering role
- In two-foster-parent households, both foster parents will need to hold additional paid employment outside their fostering role, or one foster parent will need to be in such employment while the other is either:
 - On family leave (such as maternity, paternity, or shared parental leave), or
 - In receipt of certain forms of statutory pay.

6. Payment information

Payments will be made one month in advance, by 23rd of each month, for all non-statutory sessions and breakfasts that parents have booked for their child that month.

Payments will be made by bank transfer to: NCC Sparhawk Infant and Nursery School

Sort code: 20-62-61

Account Number: 70111627

Payment will be 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.

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.

Late payments will incur a £20 fine for each week payments are overdue. Parents can avoid this by ensuring the timely payment of fees each week.

One month's notice and payment will be required to withdraw your child from the nursery.

7. Difficulty with payments

The nursery will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.

The nursery understands that 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 will contact the nursery manager as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

8. Debt collection

The governing board will have a duty to ensure the nursery receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including nursery fees.

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

A full record will be kept of debts owed to the nursery for seven years. This will include all letters requesting money, reminders and invoices.

The nursery will not initiate legal action to recover debts; however, it will refer uncollected debts to the LA to consider such action.

All debts will be handled in accordance with the Debt Recovery Policy.

9. Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

The headteacher, nursery manager and SBM will ensure that:

- Letters requesting money are accurately recorded and well-maintained.
- Evidence of the steps taken by the nursery 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.

The governing board will:

- Prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery.
- At its discretion, refer uncollected debts to the LA for consideration for legal action.
- Record all approved actions in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Adhere to privacy arrangements.
- At its discretion, delegate its responsibilities under this policy to a suitable individual.

10. The process for pursuing debts

The following procedure will be followed with regard to pursuing debts:

Informal reminder – Within two days of late payment, the debtor will be informally reminded in person or by telephone that they owe money to the nursery.

First reminder letter – If the debt is yet to be paid one week after an informal reminder, a formal letter will be sent to the debtor.

Second reminder letter – If the debt is yet to be paid one week 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 nursery can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt should the issue proceed further.

Final reminder letter – If no response is received following the second reminder, the nursery will send a letter to the debtor advising them that they will be referring the matter to the LA to consider legal action. This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure the debtor has had every chance to respond.

Possible legal action – If no payment is made, and the governing board decides to escalate the matter to the LA, the LA will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor.

11. The waiving of debts

The waiving of debts will be at the discretion of the headteacher, nursery manager and the governing board.

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.

The headteacher will be authorised to waive debts off up to £100.

Debts between £100 and £500 will only be waived with the approval of the governing board.
Debts of £500 or more will never be waived.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher and SBM in conjunction with the governing board.

The next scheduled review date will be Autumn 2026.