

Wells Next the Sea Primary & Nursery School

Nursery Charging Policy

July 2025

Entitlement

Wells Primary and Nursery School supports the Government funding, which is intended to cover the cost to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare only. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours or additional services. We can offer paid childcare for children from the age of 3. Universal 15 free hours provision is only available from the term following a child's third birthday up until they reach compulsory school age. The free entitlement will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the free entitlement will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables. Some families will be entitled to 30 hours free early years provision depending upon the family's circumstances. The 30 hours provision must be applied for and an eligibility code obtained before the start of any claim period or before the child starts attending the Nursery.

The Education Act 2002 offered the opportunity to develop childcare within the maintained sector. Maintained schools were encouraged to develop "wrap around" day care for 3 and 4 year olds attending funded Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) education.

The Department for Education advises that while free entitlement at the point of delivery is statutory, provision beyond 15/30 hours is not and therefore can be charged, in line with the power to charge for extended services. See Child Care Act 2006 (Secretary of State's code of practice 2010). The Local Governing Body of Wells Next the Sea Primary & Nursery School makes charges for additional child care under section 27 of the Education Act 2002.

Purpose of our provision

Our provision supports parents to return to work, provide education and training. For children with working parents, the provision can enable access to quality childcare and education throughout the day in a single setting. This enhances children's well-being promoting secure foundations for future learning and life.

Aims of the Policy

- Ensure that charges are fair and affordable
- To uphold the government's policy of free entitlement for 15/30 hours a week over 38 weeks of the year. This will be maintained subject to session availability
- Ensure that childcare is flexible and meets the needs of working parents
- Ensure that parents can identify on their invoice the charges made in relation to additional hours above the 15/30 free hours
- Any increase in charges will be made primarily to sustain the Nursery provision and parents will be informed in advance of any increase in charging

Education/child care charges

Child care provision will be available from 8.30 am to 3.00 pm, five days per week for 38 weeks of the year (190 days). This will be achieved through two 3 hour sessions with an optional lunch period, which will be funded if funding hours are available from the 15 or 30 hour entitlement. There is no requirement to purchase additional hours in order to secure a free place.

This Charging Policy covers children accessing our provision additional to Early Years Foundation Stage funded education. No charge can be made for the Early Years Foundation Stage funded education place of 15/30 hours per week, but parents can purchase additional child care provision where available.

The costs are based upon resource requirements to meet Early Years Foundation Stage requirements as specified by Ofsted.

Additional child care may be purchased at £16.50 per 3-hour session. Only full sessions can be booked; the Nursery cannot accept bookings for part sessions. Charges will be for the duration of the full sessions booked irrespective of the actual length of stay. If all available funded hours are already used, an additional charge of £2.75 per 30 minute session taken. Parents will be required to provide a packed lunch or book a school lunch for their own child if their child will be in attendance between 11:30am and 12pm.

Parents will be charged for sessions attended above the 15/30 hours free entitlement.

The following charges can be applied –

- School Meals - £2.58 each
- Lunch Session if all funded hours have been used - £2.75 per session
- Additional 3 hour sessions if all funded hours have been used - £16.50 per session
- Additional services - Charges for additional services such as cooking activities, visits out of school or special occasions will be agreed in advance with families.

The entitlement place is offered free. 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.

We do not charge a deposit fee for securing a place for your child at our setting.

We do not charge a fee for consumables.

Where a time lapse has occurred between the point of enquiry and their child’s start date, families should check that the information shared about funding and fees remains current so that any applicable charges can be checked / finalised before the childcare arrangement is formalised.

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

We will work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the hours/sessions that can be taken as funded provision are convenient for parents’ working hours.

If any changes are made to charges families will be given at least 6 weeks’ notice in writing to inform them of any change, and given the opportunity to discuss their options with the nursery team.

Payment information

Payments can be made via the Online Cashless system SCOPAY. Invoices will be created when there is an outstanding on SCOPAY. The invoice will be itemised to provide clear and transparent information concerning the charges as agreed in the childcare contract. It will allow parents/carers to see that the entitlement is received completely free of charge and understand additional fees that have been applied.

Payment for any lunchtime or optional sessions are to be made in advance using SCOPAY. Payments may not be refunded if a child does not attend an optional session due to illness or if parents choose not to bring the child to the session for any other reason. The Nursery maintains staffing levels to meet current guidelines and accepts bookings within the current capacity, therefore staffing costs will still need to be met. If a child is absent for a long period of time, the Nursery/School will decide on a case by case basis as to whether fees

will still be payable for the period. The case will be referred to the Local Advisory Board and their decision will be final.

If you are unable to pay these charges, please speak with the school office to discuss the alternative options available.

All fees will be charged unless specific arrangements have been agreed and whilst a childcare contract remains in place. Families wishing to terminate their childcare contract must provide 1 half term notice in writing. Any funding entitlement claimed beyond the notice period is transferrable to your new childcare provider via the local authority where the funding criteria is met. Where a child leaves the setting before the end of the agreed notice period, we will seek authorisation from the local authority to claim any funding applicable to your entitlement up to the end of the notice period, together with any additional fees which formed part of your childcare arrangement. We will work closely with families to discuss and agree how a child's overall care will work in practice where an entitlement is split across different providers, and where possible when families transfer their funding claim to a new setting, to ensure a smooth transition for the child.

Collection of unpaid fees

The Local Advisory Board has a duty to ensure the school receives all funds to which it is entitled including Nursery fees. A full record will be kept of debts owed to the school for 7 years. This will include all letters requesting payment, all reminders and invoices. The school will not initiate legal action to recover debts, however, we may refer uncollected debts to the Wensum Trust to consider taking such action.

Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

The Nursery/school will ensure that:

- Letters requesting payment are accurately recorded and full records are maintained
- Evidence of the steps taken by the school in pursuance of the debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters and telephone calls
- A final reminder is sent by recorded delivery to the debtor(s)
- The privacy of the family 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 Local Advisory Board will:

- Regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery
- Approve any legal action taken
- Record all approved action in the minutes of the relevant meeting
- Adhere to the privacy arrangements
- May delegate its responsibilities under this policy to the head teacher

The process for pursuing debts

- Informal reminder – within 3 days of late payment, the debtor will be informally reminded in person or by telephone that they owe money to the Nursery/School
- First reminder letter – a formal letter will be sent to the debtor if the amount is still owing one week after the informal reminder
- Second reminder letter – a second reminder letter will be sent to the debtor if the debt remains outstanding one week after the first reminder letter. At this stage the Nursery/School has the right to advise parents that continued late payments may result in the loss of their child's place at the Nursery. These letters allow the debtor every opportunity to make payment and ensure the

Nursery/school can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the amount owing should the issue proceed further.

- Final reminder letter – if no response is received following the second letter, the Nursery/School will send a letter to the debtor advising them that they will be referring the matter to the Wensum Trust to consider legal action. This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure the debtor has had every opportunity to respond. At this point a decision will be made by the Local Advisory Board as to whether the child's place will be revoked.
- Possible legal action – if no payment is made the Wensum Trust will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor(s)

Changes to sessions

We will require a half term's notice for any changes or additions to a child's attendance. The Nursery will do its best to work with parents to accommodate longer term changes but this will be subject to session availability. If notice is given to withdraw child from the Nursery, fees will be payable up to the end of the notice period.

Application for a Nursery place

Children can be accepted into the Nursery from the age of three. Applications can be made at any time prior to this by completing an expression of interest form available from the school office. Brief details will be recorded including parent's contact information, and the Nursery/School will then contact parents during the term before their child would join the Nursery. At this point parents will be asked to complete the necessary paperwork, including the funding application, and to specify their session preferences. The Admission and Charging Policies are issued to all families as part of the registration process. They are also available the school's website.

Complaints

If parents feel that their child is not receiving the free entitlement as set out in the Early Education and Child Care Guidance, or they have any concerns about the Nursery provision, a complaint may be made to the School. Parents should follow the procedures set out in the school's Complaints Policy which is available on the school website or from the school office.

Reviewing and monitoring

This policy will be reviewed and agreed by the Local Advisory Board on an annual basis.

We will work in partnership with parents, carers, childcare providers, the local authority, and other organisations to improve provision and outcomes for children in their setting. Where required we will seek parent / carer consent to collect, share and use your information in accordance with the Data Protection Act and General Data Protection Regulations.