

## 1 ADMISSIONS, WAITING LIST & PAYMENT POLICY

### STATEMENT

Admissions are made to ensure that each setting operates to as near full capacity as possible, as set out by Ofsted registrations.

Admissions are made at the discretion of the management but places are available to everyone in the community who require day care, whilst they are, primarily, at work. Admissions are available all year round without reference to ability or aptitude.

Nursery places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and can be booked in advance. All funded sessions are now in line with the flexible arrangement as specified by the Government. When you register your child for their funded place we will discuss your needs, and as far as possible with availability and staffing arrangements we will accommodate your wishes.

We operate an inclusion and equality policy and ensure that all children have access to nursery places and services irrespective of their gender, race, disability, religion or belief or sexual orientation of parents. The funded entitlement 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 an enhanced resource place or a fully funded place.

We are required to have arrangements in place to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND. This can be found in our SENE Policy.

### **Implementation of the policy in the Nursery:**

#### **The Manager must ensure that:**

- New members of staff, including students and volunteers, must read and adhere to the Admissions, Waiting List and Payment Policy.
- Parents/carers are aware of the Admissions, Waiting List and Payment Policy.
- All the adults who care for the children understand the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements relating to the Early Years Foundation Stage document.
- All staff, students and volunteers are involved in the implementation of the policy.

## **1. Enrolment Procedure**

Parents/carers wishing to apply for a Nursery place should contact the nursery manager or deputy manager via our website or by telephone or by email. Enrolment can also be arranged in person during a nursery tour.

Once a visit has taken place and an interest is expressed, applications for a place must be made via the Registration Form, which can be given during the visit or emailed. One form per child will be required. A copy of the child's birth certificate or passport should be provided with the application form. For parents accessing an Enhanced Resource place a non-returnable Registration Fee of £100 will become payable when the form is handed in. This fee is still payable to be placed on the Waiting List. The fee is still payable by families taking up a government funded (Fully Funded) place as a deposit, this will secure your place. For children accessing the Fully Funded sessions and taking no settling visits this fee will be refunded within 6 weeks of the first day of attendance. Settling visits may only then be taken during the funded hours themselves.

If you decide to postpone your start date or decide not to take up the place offered, the Registration Fee will not be refunded.

If we cannot offer you the required session we shall refund your Registration Fee

On receipt of the Registration Form, the Nursery Manager will add your child to the waiting list register and a letter of acknowledgement will be sent to you by the Nursery Administrator. If an immediate placement is available (if requested) then the Nursery Manager or a member of the Management team will contact you directly to offer the placement, subject to a signed contract.

The completion of a Registration Form does not in itself guarantee an offer of a specific place, as this will be decided by the available places that we have on offer at that time. Place allocation is a complex matter and some sessions have limited availability which is dependent on the number of full-time equivalent places being taken up. All parents have the same right to access our Fully Funded sessions and these will be allocated as follows. We offer 1 Fully Funded place for 15 hours and 1 Fully Funded place for 30 hours.

As part of the registration process, parents/carers will be required to provide documentation to evidence their child's date of birth. This is to confirm they have reached the eligible age for the funded entitlement. A copy will not be retained but may be requested again later by the Local Authority for audit or fraud investigation purposes.

Families accepting a 2-year-old funded place will be able to claim the entitlement until their child(ren) is eligible for either the 3- and 4-year-old funding universal entitlement or working parent entitlement.

If there are more applications than places available then places will be allocated by the Manager firstly to those who have completed the relevant forms and paid their fee (on a date received basis). Full-time places will take priority over part-time places and sibling places. Employees' children will be considered on the same basis. Where a place cannot be found then children will be placed on a Waiting List.

All new registrations will be acknowledged and the details will be entered onto our database. Child Visit & Starting Procedures will then be followed.

When a place has been confirmed then the child or children will be booked into the base room for their settling visits as per the agreed schedule. These will preferably take place in the weeks immediately before starting. In emergency admissions then these settling visits may need to be altered to accommodate the child's and parent's needs.

Each key person will introduce themselves to the parent/carer(s). Prior and during the settling visits the child's Key Person will assemble all relevant information including Permissions Forms and All About Me information in order to assist us in getting to know the individual children. The first Invoice is usually also presented by hand or via email during the settling visits, ready for payment when the child starts. Key Persons should check with the Manager that payment has been received.

Once a child has started, daily feed back to the parents is made via the key person and through the Daily Diary or eyLog and this is continued throughout the nursery. The child should be entered onto the electronic learning system and observations begun straight away.

The Management Team will provide the agreed childcare facilities for your child at the agreed times (subject to any days when your child's nursery is closed). If we change the opening hours, we will give you as much notice of our decision as possible and if necessary, work with you to agree a change to your child's hours at the Nursery .

The Management Team will notify you as soon as possible of any days on which your child's nursery will be closed; and try to make available to any of your other children a place, however we cannot guarantee that a place will be available.

## **2. Waiting List Criteria**

Children will remain on the Waiting List until a place becomes available. Looked after Children and those with any additional needs will be prioritised for our Fully Funded places. If we cannot find a place in the timescale required then any Registration Fees will be returned.

## **3. Parental Responsibility**

Parents must complete all relevant forms during your child's initial induction before your child can be left unaccompanied at the Nursery. The Nursery must be informed immediately of any changes to the information you have provided:

- Name, address, date of birth, sex, ethnic origin and religion of the child;
- Dietary requirements and allergies
- Name, home address and place of work (including respective telephone numbers) of parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child;
- The person who is responsible for paying nursery fees and their contact details
- Name address and telephone number of doctor and health visitor of the child;
- State of immunisation and infectious diseases suffered by the child and other relevant information on the child's health; for example; allergies;
- Consent (or otherwise) to prescribe medication being administered to the child by nursery staff, if required;
- Consent (or otherwise) to the child receiving emergency medical treatment from senior nursery team, if required;
- Consent (or otherwise) to the child being taken out of the nursery premises (for occasional exercise, excursions etc.) by nursery staff;
- Names of persons authorised to collect the child from the nursery.

You must keep us informed as to the identity of the persons who will be collecting your child from the Nursery. If the person collecting your child is not usually responsible for collecting them we will require proof of identity and password. If we are not satisfied that an individual is allowed to collect your child, we will not release your child into their care.

You must inform us if your child is the subject of a court order and provide us with a copy of such an order on request.

You must immediately inform us if you are unable to collect your child from the Nursery by the official collection time.

You must inform us in advance of any dates in which your child will not be attending the Nursery . You must provide us with at least one month's notice of your intention to decrease the number of hours your child spends at the nursery, this also applies in cases where you intend to withdraw your child from the Nursery, to which you would be ending this agreement. Where insufficient notice is given, you will be responsible for the full fees of your child for one month from that date, as if the hours had not decreased.

You must immediately inform us if your child is suffering from any contagious disease. For the benefit of the other children in the Nursery, you must not allow your child to attend the Nursery if they are suffering from a contagious disease which could easily be passed on to another child during normal daily activities of the Nursery .

#### **4. Basic Fee Structure is available from the Nursery**

Please see our Fees Sheet for details of fees for our various sessions, both funded and unfunded.

Our fees are reviewed twice annually in April and September. Families will be given at least 4 weeks notice in writing to inform them of any change and given the opportunity to discuss options with the Manager.

Where a time lapse had 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 starts.

#### **5. Nursery Payment Schedule**

The Nursery fees are based on a daily fee, which are detailed in the Fees Sheet. Fees must be paid on a monthly basis, in advance, by the 1st of each calendar month. We may review these at any time, although this is usually done twice per year, and shall inform you of the revised fee with a months notice, you may also end this agreement by giving us two month's notice in writing.

The 2-3 and 3-4 year rate applies from the month following your child's second or third birthday. Funding is applied, where eligible, in the term after your child turns 9 months, 2yrs or 3yrs.

All payments under this agreement must be by standing order, cheque, cash or vouchers. If payment is made by cash it is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure they receive a receipt as proof of payment from the senior nursery team.

The Management Team will try and accommodate any request made for additional sessions of childcare; extra sessions can only be accepted up to 2 weeks in advance, however this will not be granted if there is an outstanding balance on your account and we cannot guarantee availability.

The funded entitlement place is offer at no cost to parents. However, where parents choose to access additional hours and enhanced services in the sessions on offer in the fees List then these attract an additional charge which depends on the attendance pattern that is chosen.

If you have requested additional sessions or have been unable to collect your child by the official collection time and we have, as a result, provided you with additional childcare facilities we will charge you for the additional childcare monthly in arrears at the Ad Hoc hourly rate.

All families will be issued an invoice monthly in advance unless the balance equals zero. The invoice will show the hours they have received free of charge for early learning and childcare and then there will be a total owing, which reflects the attendance pattern chosen. This total includes additional hours, enhanced provision (as itemised on our enhanced provision flyer), food and consumables fees as detailed within our Fees Sheet. The invoice should allow parents to see that they have received their hours at no charge to them and understand the additional charges that have been made.

The Management Team will issue reminders where fees are overdue. We may ask you to withdraw your child from the Nursery if you have failed to pay your fees within the agreed payment timescale. When payment is received your child may return to the nursery. If payment is still not received, this will result in the permanent loss of the child's place. If no attempt is made to pay outstanding fees legal action will be taken in order to recover any monies owed.

## **6. Sibling Discount**

There may be a sibling discount for additional children of the same family, following discussion with the manager, unless they are attending funded sessions only, or a full-time discount or other.

## **7. Flexible Funded Childcare and Education Offer**

*"Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services. Operational Guidance April 2024"*

We offer various sessions using Flexible Funding and these sessions include our enhanced resource services alongside the additional hours. These services include but are not limited to all meals and snacks, trips outside the nursery, offsite Forest School, visitor activities, woodwork and yoga clubs as well as much more, all of which is detailed in the Enhanced Provision Flyer.

Parents are not obliged to take up these additional services and you can access your funding as Fully Funded sessions as shown in the Fees List, subject to availability. Parents opting for these sessions are not able to access any additional hours or sessions. If you would like to take other hours or sessions, you will need to move over to our Flexible Funding offer.

To ensure a smooth transition for the child, 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.

Early Education is offered within the national parameters -

- no session to be longer than 10 hours
- no minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register)
- not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm
- a maximum of two sites in a single day

Should your eligibility for 30 hours change then the company reserves the right to offer you an alternative place based on the Universal Entitlement as places are allocated dependent on the total number of hours in the settings. We will always endeavour to ensure continuity of care for your child in order to support their remaining with the setting but we have to balance our staffing with our overall attendance patterns.

Grace Periods have been put in place to support families where their circumstances and therefore their eligibility might change. These are:

<b>Validity end date:</b>	<b>Grace Period End date:</b>
1 Jan - 10 February	31 March
11 Feb - 31 March	31 August
1 April - 26 May	31 August
27 May - 31 August	31 December
1 September - 21 October	31 December
22 October - 31 December	31 March

### **Complaints Procedure for the Government Funded Entitlement**

Our Complaints Policy is issued to all families as part of the registration process.

Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the funded entitlement in the correct way (as set out in the funding agreement and in Early Education and Childcare Statutory guidance for local authorities), a complaint can be submitted directly to the manager. If you still do not get a satisfactory answer to your complaint within 2 weeks, then you may copy your complaint directly to the Owner through [admin@littlestelf.co.uk](mailto:admin@littlestelf.co.uk) and you will receive a response within 2 weeks of it being received there.

If you still consider the complaint has not been dealt with satisfactorily then you may contact the Local Authority in which the setting operates and follow their complaints procedure. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure we are delivering our funded hours within the national guidelines and whilst we might not offer our funding in the way you might like to access it, the Local Authority can help you in finding a setting that might better suit your needs, if this is the cause of your complaint.

Ofsted are not concerned with, or have time to deal with, issues relating to funding or fee charges that are made for children. Their responsibilities lie clearly with the regulation and inspection of the welfare and safeguarding requirements and the children's learning and development.

Any other complaints about funding should be made directly to the Department for Education via gov.uk or your local MP.

## **8. Charging for non-funded hours or other services**

Extra hours (either due to parental choice or for additional hours over the free weekly entitlement) will be charged at the Ad Hoc hourly rate.

## **9. Working families tax credit**

Universal Tax Credit is an in-work tax credit for families, which includes an element to support the costs of registered or approved childcare for working parents.

For further information please visit the government website  
<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

## **10. Childcare Vouchers**

Tax Free childcare is available through the government website  
<https://www.gov.uk/working-tax-credit>

Other Workplace Benefit Schemes are available to help you save money. Childcare Vouchers could be available through your employer. These vouchers are exempt from Tax & National Insurance Contributions. This means both employees and employers make tax savings. Employees should approach their employers about joining their scheme. Childcare Vouchers can be used to pay for their child's hours or sessions. More information about the Workplace Benefit Scheme can be found here  
<https://www.workplace-nursery.net/>

For more information about your eligibility for various support streams please visit  
<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>:

The Family Information Service (FIS)  
<https://communitydirectory.norfolk.gov.uk/Services/14632/Norfolk-Family-Infor>

## **11. Bank Holidays and Planned Holidays**

The nursery is open for 51 weeks a year except during bank holidays. No refunds will be given for the bank holiday closures, as this will already have been taken into account



when calculating your child's fees. Where funded hours are due to be delivered on these days we re-allocate these across any remaining days or weeks in the month and charge full fees for the bank holidays.

No refunds will be given for periods where your child's Nursery place is vacant due to illness or holidays.

## **12. Notice of Absence**

Parents/carers must inform the Management team by 10:00am if their child is not attending the Nursery on that day. If a child is missing from a session without prior notification the nursery will assume there are mitigating circumstances and will make every effort to contact the parents/carers and/or emergency contacts.

## **13. Termination of the Child's Registration**

Families wishing to terminate their childcare place must provide 8 weeks notice in writing to the Manager. Any funding entitlement claimed beyond the notice period is transferable to another 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 childcare agreement in place.

We may immediately terminate your child's registration if you fail to pay your fees.

We reserve the right to terminate a child's registration where the nursery deems the child's actions to be detrimental to other children. A period of four weeks' notice will be given, where possible.

We reserve the right to suspend a child's registration, where the Nursery deems the child's actions to be detrimental to other children. The withdrawal shall continue whilst we try to address the problem with the child's parents. A period of four weeks will be given, where possible.

## **14. Removal of a Parent, Carer or Visitor**

We reserve the right to ask a parent/carers or visitor to leave the premises if they are found to be causing offence to anyone on the Nursery's premises. If this action occurs persistently the nursery reserves the right to terminate the child's place at any time.

*For further detailed information - refer to 'Suspension and Exclusions Policy'*

**Signed by manager(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Review of Policy**

This policy is reviewed annually

**Date of Review: December 2024**