**Administration – 6.2 Funding, Fees and Payment policy**

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**Policy Statement**

This policy aims to specify the process around payment of fees and the funding available.

Little Apples understands the cost of childcare can seem expensive to parents / carers. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating environment is not cheap. In order to ensure continued high standards and sustainability of the setting we ask parents / carers to comply with this policy.

**Fees / Payment process:**

All our Pre-School sessions are chargeable unless they are covered by Early Years Education funding. Such instances where funding does not cover the session fees are: if a child’s funding is allocated to a different provider, if the child begins attending Pre-School sessions before they become eligible for funding, or if the child attends for additional sessions. We are unable to provide ad-hoc sessions.

You will be offered 2 settling sessions, the first will be to visit for 1 hour with parent / carer, the second a 2 hour visit independently. If you are not entitled to EYE funding, the second settling visit will be chargeable at our current hourly fee rate, the first 1 hour visit is free of charge to all families.

You will be charged at our hourly fee rate based on the age of your child. Fee rates reduce from the 2-year-old rate to the 3- & 4-year-old rate from the half term after your child’s 3rd birthday.

Absence due to illness or holiday cannot be made up or fees refunded. If your child is absent for any length of time for reasons other than illness, it is up to the committee to decide whether to keep the place open. Furthermore, refunds will not be issued if the preschool needs to close due to unforeseen circumstances, including adverse weather conditions.

If you wish to withdraw your child from the Preschool, or to alter the sessions they attend, then notice of at least one-half term is required or you will be liable for any fees due.

* You will receive your invoice on the first day back after every half term. Fees are payable half-termly in advance. You have 2 weeks to submit your payment.
* You will receive a receipt for your payment, if you have not received this within 2 working days of your payment being made, then please contact the Business Manager straight away to ensure payment has been received.

* If you are having difficulty paying your fees you must contact the Business Manager immediately to arrange a payment plan.
* If no payment has been received within the 2-week timeframe, you will receive a letter / email requesting immediate payment and a copy of appendix 1: Procedure for late payment of fees. At this point the Pre-school reserves the right to re-allocate your child's place.
* If still no payment is received, you will be contacted to set-up a payment plan.
* If payments are not met as detailed in your payment plan, then we reserve the right to decrease your child's hours / suspend attendance until the child is eligible for EYE funding / re-allocate your child's place. You will however still be liable for the sessions your child has attended and will be expected to have cleared this balance before your child returns to the Pre-School.

**Methods of payment:**

**Cash** - we are unable to give change, so please ensure you have the correct amount, any credit will be carried over to the following half term and deducted off of your next invoice.

**Cheque** - Please make cheques payable to 'Little Apples of Bramley'.

**Bank Transfer** – Bank account details can be found at the bottom of your invoice.

**Tax Free Childcare** - We understand in some cases it takes time to build up the required amount to make your payments in this way, but we ask that you communicate to us if there is going to be a delay.

**Childcare Voucher** – These are currently being phased out, so we would suggest contacting your employer to discuss this.

**Early Years Education Funding (EYE) process**

Little Apples of Bramley accepts all the different funding schemes available including Universal 3 & 4 yr olds, Working Families 2 yr olds (Expanded) and Working Families 3 & 4 yr olds (Extended) and Funded 2-year-olds. There are no restrictions on when this funding can be used. Use the link at the bottom of this policy to review the funding options available to your family.

* If your child is eligible, you will receive an EYE funding form each academic year, for completion. We will need confirmation of your eligibility code for Working Families funding and Funded 2-year-olds. For funded 2-year-olds, we can apply on your behalf, or alternatively, you can follow the link below. We will need to see your child’s birth certificate or passport; a copy will be taken for our records, as proof of eligibility.
* You will be offered 2 settling sessions, the first will be to visit for 1 hour with parent / carer, the second a 2 hour visit independently. If you’re second settling visit does not fall on a funded session, this will be chargeable.
* EYE funding covers the cost of childcare for the funded hours only. Any additional hours will be charged.
* If your child attends more than one setting, parents / carers must advise the setting at point of registration. The total funded hours cannot exceed the statutory entitlement.
* If funding reconfirmation is required (Extended / Enhanced), it is the responsibility of the parents / carers to ensure that the reconfirmation is completed on time and successfully to maintain eligibility for continued funding. We will send reminder emails to parents / carers once a week for three weeks, followed by a final direct contact in the fourth week.
* We can normally only accept one request per term to change funded hours per child, there is no guarantee that we can facilitate this request. In exceptional circumstances or emergencies, we may consider a further request. Where new hours exceed your number of funded hours, you will receive an invoice for the additional hours. Payable within 2 weeks. You will be asked to complete a ‘Request to change funded hours’ form.

**Early Years Pupil Premium Funding (EYPP)**

EYPP is additional funding for eligible 2, 3 & 4 year old children, to support and enrich their learning and development. Parents / carers are encouraged to apply for EYPP if they are in receipt of certain benefits (Income Support, Income based Job Seekers Allowance, Working Tax Credits, Universal Credit etc) or if your child has been adopted, has been in local-authority care or has left care under a special guardianship order.

Your child will benefit by additional support with speech and language, further training for staff who will be better equipped to support your child or supply additional resources to further develop your child’s learning and interests.

To receive this funding parents / carers will need to complete section 4.2 of your funding form. All funding is paid directly the setting.

**Pre-School lunch**

* **Invoices and Payment:** Invoices are issued on the first day back after each half term, with fees payable in advance for the entire half term. Payments must be made within 2 weeks of receiving the invoice. A receipt will be provided within 2 working days of payment.
* **Refunds and Absences:** Refunds are not available for absences due to illness. For holiday absences, refunds are only provided if notice is given one half term in advance. No refunds will be issued if the preschool closes due to unforeseen circumstances, such as adverse weather.
* **Ad-Hoc Lunches**: AD-Hoc lunches are not available, except in emergency situations.
* **Withdrawal from Lunch Scheme**: If you wish to withdraw your child from the pre-school lunch scheme, a notice period of one-half term is required.

**Useful links:**

<https://childcarechoices.gov.uk>

<http://littleapples.org>

<https://www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare>

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/paying-for-childcare/2yearoldoffer>

**Exceptional Family support**

Our aim is to support families at times of exceptional hardship or distress and offer additional support to families at such times. As a charity which exists for the benefit of local children we anticipate that this policy would be used to in some way ease the pressure on families and therefore children at exceptionally difficult times.

We have regular formal and informal contact with families to try to ensure we have as much information about their situation as possible. Where this information leads us to believe exceptional support may be appropriate, staff are to discuss this request with a manager. If a manager agrees exceptional support is appropriate, a request in writing is made to the chair, outlining the forms of support proposed and the reasons for it.

* Situations in which exceptional support maybe situations affecting a family’s ability to offer a secure, settled & stimulating environment for pre-school children. Examples could be, but are not limited to:
* Bereavement
* Ill health
* Accommodation issues
* Emergency situations/disasters
* Financial hardship alone **will not** qualify for Exceptional Support as children are supported by EYE grant

Staff are encouraged to consider whether the circumstances of the request are such that support from Children’s Services might be required, or a referral to the Child Protection team is appropriate. A child’s welfare must remain our primary concern.

* Examples of exceptional support may include the provision of additional sessions without notice or charge. In this instance the setting must ensure that Statutory adult: child ratios are never compromised.

The Chair and committee will consider the request and may exercise their discretional right to approve the request by signing the letter which is placed in the child’s file. Relevant staff (e.g door staff) and the Business Manager are to be advised of the decision. The approving of exceptional support is entirely discretional and there are **no circumstances** in which it is guaranteed. The decision will also consider the organisations ability to provide the support without affecting the provision for all children.

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| **This policy was adopted by Little Apples of Bramley** |
| **On 6th September 2021** |
| **Date to be reviewed** |
| **Signed on behalf of the management committee *J V Whatley*** |
| **Name of signatory J V Whatley** |
| **Role of signatory Manager** |