



# Clapham Preschool (Bedford)

## Our Payment Policy

### Statement of Intent

The preschool is committed to provide a safe environment for all children & staff. We aim to offer a wide range of activities and resources to all who attend. To enable us to do this we need to ensure sufficient funds are available and a fair system is in place to all parents & carers.

### Aims:

Our aim is to keep fees affordable and flexible. To ensure clear guidelines are provided for both finance staff and parents to ensure regular and full payments of fees to the preschool, both for non-funded & those exceeding their government funded hours. It will outline support to parents who find themselves in financial difficulties and outline the clear process the preschool will take to ensure all fees are collected.

### Background to the policy

Clapham Preschool recognises that the need for affordable childcare is needed so manages its resources and charges to ensure its services are available to a wide local audience. We do not operate a “deposit” fee system and hourly fees are kept as low as possible.

Parents are advised of payment methods on the monthly invoices, where their child uses non-funded sessions or exceed their government funded hours. Payment can be made weekly or monthly, the administration manager is available to support parents who find themselves in difficulty when paying.

### Fees & Government funded places

Current fees	£5.00 per hour
Late collection fee	£5 admin fee + 2x hourly fee, payable per 15 mins

All fees include snack and drinks, nappies & wipes – lunch not included.

Hot lunch	£2.65 per day (set and supplied by Cater Kids, hot meal & dessert) Drink will be provided by preschool
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Government funding is available in the beginning of the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, current funding entitles each child to 15 hours and can be used as sessional care or full day care; hours available can be found in the prospectus.

You do not have to use your full entitlement and will be required to sign termly for the hours used. You may claim your funded hours across more than one setting.

Some 2 yr old children are also eligible for 15 hours free funding, to see if you are eligible please contact preschool or children’s services at Borough hall.

Hot lunches are available, at an extra cost, this must be booked and paid for a week in advance; regular users can be billed monthly with prior agreement by the administration manager. If your child is ill and you notify us, payment will be carried forward to next week, if no contact is made payment for meals will be forfeited.

Each month there are a number of families who the preschool are required to chase for payment and make little or no effort to contact the administration manager regarding their

outstanding fees. If you are having difficulties paying please come and discuss the matter with the Administration manager. All fees are payable regardless of whether your child attends their session or not.

### **Fee collection process**

- 1) Monthly invoices for fees will be given to parents of non-funded children and those exceeding their government funded hours.
  - The first week of the month to be billed
  - Invoices will list dates and number of hours billed
  - Invoices will show various payment plans available
  - These will be enveloped and distributed via emails or book bags, dependant on the parents preference
- 2) Our preferred method of payment is direct bank transfer into the preschool account. Cash & cheque can also be used. We also work with a number of childcare voucher schemes.
  - Cash & cheque payments should be put in the payment box in the lobby, please do not leave in book bags.
- 3) In case of overpayment the parent must state whether they wish to have change or be credited on to the next month.
- 4) The Administration manager will reconcile payments against the children's accounts and pay into the bank within 1 week of receipt.
- 5) Payments should be made within 14 days of the date of the invoice.
- 6) If no payment has been made by this date a Statement and letter will be sent to parents reminding them of their obligations.
- 7) If no money is forthcoming or the parents make no contact to the reminder letter, at the end of the month the parents will be invited to meet with the Admin manager to discuss the matter and set out a payment plan.
- 8) When a payment plan has been agreed payment will be expected as per the terms agreed by the parent & administration manager. If these terms are not met and payment is not made you will be given notice to lose their child's place.
- 9) Any unfunded children with unarranged debt at the end of the month will automatically forfeit their place. For those paying for hours exceeding government funding, hours will be reduced to basic funded hours only.
- 10) Any child funded in the following term, without an agreed repayment arrangement will have the offer of that place withdrawn.
- 11) If a child leaves the preschool owing fees, the preschool may take proceeds in the Small Claims Court to recover outstanding fees. This is common practise in most settings.

### **Leaving preschool**

Please give us four weeks' notice if you are leaving – this will give us time to notify the next person on the waiting list that a place has become available and make adjustments to funding where applicable.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Clapham Preschool held on.....

Signed on behalf of the preschool .....