

## Once upon a time nursery school

### Charging Policy (from 1 September 2022)

#### Statement of intent

We want parents and organisations we interact with to be reassured that we provide good value for money and that the processes we have in place for receiving and paying out money are fair, easy to understand and handled without delay.

#### Aim

We aim to be open, transparent and competitively priced at all times, and handle all financial transactions in a professional and responsive manner.

#### Fees – from 1.9.22 until further notice

Children aged under 3	Full day fee	Half day fee
	£63.50	£32.75
Children aged 3 and over	Full day fee	Half day fee
Days not funded	£59.00	£30.75
Funded days*	£16.00	£8.00

\* Consumables and Sustainability Charge (optional) (See note 27 below)

When a child turns 3 years old, government funding is available from the start of the next school term. Depending on parent eligibility, either 15 or 30 hours per week funding for 38 weeks of the year is available. In these cases, a 'Statement of Fees' is produced for each school term as described in paragraph 4 below.

#### Averaged monthly fees

We charge averaged monthly fees so that parents can budget to pay the same each month. We charge fees for the 51 weeks of the year we are open.

To calculate averaged monthly fees, add the total weekly cost of sessions, multiply by 51 (weeks) and divide by 12 (months).

Example fees for a child aged under three, attending two full days per week from 1 September 2022:  $£63.50 \times 2 = £127 \times 51 \div 12 = £539.75$  per month.

#### Methods

1. We charge fees for a full day or a half day, not by the hour.
2. For children not receiving 3 & 4-year-old Local Authority funding, averaged monthly fees are calculated, as described above. The food and drink we provide for either a full day or a half day are included within these fees.
3. If a child joins or leaves us mid-month, then the actual cost of each session in those months will be charged.
4. For children who qualify for 3 & 4-year-old Local Authority funding, a 'Statement of Fees' is prepared for parents/carers showing how fees have been calculated for each school term. The averaged monthly fee for that period is shown on each statement, and this figure will be shown on monthly invoices during that period. A period could cover 1 January to 31 March, 1 April to 31 August or 1 September to 31 December

depending on when a child starts to be eligible for the funding (i.e. from the start of the school term following their third birthday).

5. We do not charge for the week we are closed between Christmas and New Year or for Christmas Eve if this falls on a weekday. Nor do we charge for all other bank holidays that fall outside of the Christmas closure period.
6. Extra sessions are charged separately and in addition to monthly fees.
7. Our fees are reviewed annually, and any changes are made on 1 September. Any change to our fees is communicated to parents at least three months in advance.
8. We provide details of our charges when parents are offered a place for their child at the nursery, or earlier if requested.
9. Receipt of a Registration Form and/or Registration Fee is not a guarantee or confirmation that a place will be available. Parents/carers will receive an email when we are in a position to offer a place. On payment of the requested Registration Fee a further email will be sent confirming receipt. When registering a child with us, the following terms and conditions apply:
  - a) Payment of the Registration Fee guarantees your child's place in accordance with our Offer email.
  - b) If we do not receive payment of the Registration Fee by the due date, the Offer will be withdrawn, and the place(s) offered to the next child on our waiting list. Note: we would contact you before doing this.
  - c) Taster sessions and completion of paperwork will not be arranged until the Registration Fee has been paid in full.
  - d) 50% of your Registration Fee will be deducted from your first full month's invoice, and the remaining 50% will be deducted from your final invoice subject to one month's written notice being received and any outstanding fees paid in full.
  - e) If you change your mind, for whatever reason and with more than four months before your child's start date, and you decide you do not wish for your child to attend this nursery, a full refund of the Registration Fee will be made. However, if you were to cancel within four months of the start date, then no refund will be made.
  - f) Once the Registration Fee has been paid and you wish to either delay your child's start date or reduce the number of sessions being attended, charges will be incurred. Therefore:
    - a. If you delay your child starting, you will be charged from the date we had agreed until your delayed start date.
    - b. If you reduce the number of sessions, you will be charged for those sessions for four weeks.
    - c. In both of the above situations, we would use 50% of your Registration Fee towards the charge. If this was insufficient to cover the whole charge, an invoice for the remaining amount will be raised. We make these charges to compensate us for lost and irretrievable revenue.
  - g) By accepting our Offer, you agree to pay our monthly fees by the due date shown on monthly invoices. This date is usually between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  - h) The above Registration Fee does not apply for children attending free funded places only.
10. Our insurance and Ofsted registration agreement means we cannot open before 8am. Should a child not be collected by 6pm, a fee of £10 may be charged for every 15 minutes late to cover costs for the two members of staff who need to stay behind.
11. Fees must be paid monthly in advance. We prefer Bacs payments via online banking. Or you can pay by cash or Standing Order. If paying by cash, please make sure you receive a receipt as proof of payment. We do not accept cheques.
12. We also accept Childcare Vouchers from a number of voucher providers – details available on request. **Once upon a time** is also signed up to receive payments from the Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) scheme via HMRC.

13. No childcare voucher or Tax-Free Childcare payments should be made to **Once upon a time** until an invoice has been raised, other than paying for the Registration Fee. If any such payments are made, they may be returned to the voucher provider/your TFC account. Any credits will be returned to the voucher provider/your TFC account.
14. Payment of fees must be received by the date shown on each monthly invoice. A charge of £10 may be made for frequent late payment.
15. No refunds will be given for absence due to illness or holiday as staff levels must be maintained and the child's place kept open.
16. If the nursery is open during bad weather, then no refunds will be given, even if you are unable to get your child to nursery. However, in the rare event of a 'Red' alert being issued by The Met Office, then we will close, and a refund will be deducted from the next month's invoice. Details of whether we are open or not will be published on our Facebook page. Norfolk County Council will continue to pay us for funded days.
17. Payment of fees each month guarantees a child's place at the nursery.
18. For children attending five full days per week, a 5% discount will be given for days not funded. For children from the same family, the 5% discount will also apply where a combined total of five full days, or more, per week is being attended.
19. If fees are not paid by the last working day of the month in which they are due, your child may be excluded from attending the nursery.
20. While we try to ensure all invoicing and payments are correct, it is a parent's responsibility to check their accounts with us regularly and bring to the attention of our Finance Director any discrepancies as soon as possible. **Once upon a time** has the right to ask for any over allowance of fees to be recouped from parents.
21. Parents are requested to keep their invoices in a safe place for future reference. If copies of past invoices are required, a small charge may be made.
22. **Once upon a time** is listed with our Local Authority (Norfolk County Council) as an approved provider for funded 2, 3 and 4-year olds and has agreed to meet the conditions of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities.
23. All children attending our nursery schools qualify for government funding from the start of the school term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. From 1 September 2017, eligible parents will be able to claim up to a maximum of 30 free hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. It is each parents' responsibility to re-confirm their eligibility for 30 hours funding with HMRC every three months as re-confirmation dates are different for every parent. There is a limit of 1,140 hours that can be claimed over any three consecutive claim periods. For those parents who do not qualify for the 30 free hours, they can claim up to a maximum of 15 hours per week (over a minimum of two days) for 38 weeks of the year. In this case, there is a limit of 570 hours that can be claimed over any three consecutive claim periods. We count the three consecutive claim periods from the term after a child becomes eligible for their funding. The limits of 570 or 1,140 hours are sometimes slightly lower depending on the school calendar.
24. Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver high quality childcare for 15 or 30 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year (school term times). It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours or additional services. The entitlement is offered free. Parents/carers will not be charged a 'top-up' fee for the free hours (i.e., the difference between our current fees and the funding we receive from the Local Authority).
25. Parents must obtain their 'Eligibility Code' from the HMRC website: <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow> before the start of the claim period that they wish their child to receive the extended offer of 30 hours per week. It is each parents' responsibility to re-confirm their eligibility for 30 hours funding with HMRC every three months as re-confirmation dates are different for every parent. Parents

must advise the nursery if they become ineligible for the 30 hours. If eligibility is not re-confirmed within the timeframe allowed by HMRC, parents will be charged for any loss of funding.

26. Depending on whether children qualify for 15 or 30 hours funding, 10 hours funding can be claimed for 1 or 2 full days per week for 51 weeks of the year. This is called 'Stretched funding'.
27. Consumables and Sustainability Charge: The funding paid by the Local Authority covers the cost of the 'care and education' provided by the nursery on funded days. It does not cover the cost of consumable items provided and used by the nursery each day, such as food and drink and other consumables. This is a voluntary payment requested by **Once upon a time** to ensure all meals, drinks and snacks are supplied and the nursery receives the necessary income to provide all other consumables and operate on a sustainable basis. If the Consumables charge is not paid, parents would need to supply all food and drink (other than water) that they wish for their child to consume while at nursery. There are guidelines that apply to this which will be supplied if applicable.
28. The 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 the Consumables Charge.
29. We will work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the hours/sessions that can be taken as free provision are convenient for parents' working hours.
30. Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the free 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 John Banbury, Director of Finance – see our separate Complaints Policy – or directly to Norfolk County Council Early Years Finance.
31. For each full day and/or half day attended where no funding is received, our full fees will be charged.
32. Each term, we claim funding on behalf of parents/carers direct from Norfolk County Council.
33. A Norfolk County Council funding 'Claim form' must be completed and signed by a parent/carer each term to enable us to claim their child's funding. The nursery will issue these forms at the beginning of each school term. Parents/carers should ensure they are not over claiming if their child attends more than one setting.
34. Parents/carers will also be asked to confirm on the claim form whether they qualify for a number of benefits that may result in the nursery receiving additional funding under the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) scheme.
35. Only qualifying 2-year olds can claim Two-Year-Old Funding with us for up to 15 hours a week for 38 weeks a year over a minimum of two days. We claim this on behalf of parents direct from Norfolk County Council. As we are open for 51 weeks of the year, we do not charge any fees for either one full day or two half days per week for 51 weeks of the year.
36. Four weeks' written notice is required if you wish to change your child's sessions or leave the nursery.
37. Planned trips may be charged for to cover costs. You can choose for your child to opt out of any trip.
38. In the event of the nursery being closed by the Government (e.g. national Pandemic), alternative arrangements would be introduced depending on the financial support provided to childcare settings at the time. As an example, during the Coronavirus Pandemic, no fees were charged to parents during the first Lockdown period as funding continued for all funded children and the Job Retention Scheme helped to pay staff salaries. Once lockdown ended and our nursery schools re-opened, we gave parents up to three months to defer returning their child to nursery subject to a nominal/voluntary Holding Fee being paid to keep their child's place open.

39. **Once upon a time** agrees to meet the Operational Guidance for Local Authorities and Providers – June 2018.
40. Any queries with fees or invoicing should be emailed to: [john@onceuponatime.org.uk](mailto:john@onceuponatime.org.uk)

**This policy was adopted by Once upon a time nursery school**

**Date: 24 April 2007**

**Amended on: 6 June 2022 (Effective from 1 September 2022)**

**Signed on behalf of the nursery**

**To be reviewed: Annually or sooner if any matters arise**