

Charging Policy

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 1.4.25 until further notice

Children aged under 2	Full day fee	Half day fee
Days not funded	£83.00	£42.00
Funded days *	£0.00	£0.00

Children aged 2	Full day fee	Half day fee
Days not funded	£83.00	£42.00
Funded days **	£10.00	£5.00

Children aged 3 and over	Full day fee	Half day fee
Days not funded	£75.00	£38.00
Funded days **	£22.00	£11.00

* A funded day starts from the school term after a child is 9 months' old. While no Consumables Charge applies for this age group, parents should expect there to be one when their child receives funding for all other age groups – see below.

** Consumables Charge (See note 24 below)

Government/Local Authority funding is available from the start of the next school term from when a child turns 9 months old. Depending on the child's age and parent eligibility, either 15 or 30 hours per week funding for 38 weeks of the year is available. As we run day care nurseries, we 'stretch' this funding over the 51 weeks of the year we are open. In these cases, a 'Statement of Fees' is produced for each school term as described in para 4 below.

Averaged monthly fees

Where no funding applies, 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 (see note 5 below). Averaged monthly fees can be calculated by adding the total weekly cost of sessions, multiplying by 51 (weeks) and dividing by 12 (months).

Example fees for a child aged under two where no funding applies, attending two full days per week from 1 April 2025: $£83.00 \times 2 = £166 \times 51 \div 12 = £705.50$ per month.

Where funding applies, a 'Statement of Fees' is produced. This will show a breakdown of sessions attended, the number of funded hours to be claimed and the averaged monthly fees for the period shown – as described in para 4 below.

Methods

1. We charge fees for a full day or a half day, not by the hour.
2. For children not receiving government funding, all consumables, including the meals and snacks 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 government funding, a 'Statement of Fees' is prepared for parents/carers showing how fees have been calculated in advance of 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, 1 September to 31 December or any combination of these depending on when a child starts to be eligible for the funding (i.e. from the start of the school term following their second or 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 standard bank holidays that fall outside of the Christmas closure period. Where no funding applies, a refund for these bank holidays will be given during the month of the bank holiday. Where funding applies, the 'Statement of Fees' will exclude all days the nursery is closed. If extra bank holidays are announced, we will let parents know whether we will be open or not. If the nursery is open, fees will be charged. If we close, they will not be charged.
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 April. We aim to communicate any changes to our fees to parents at least three months in advance. In exceptional circumstances, we may increase fees at other times. Again, we aim to give three months' notice.
8. We provide details of our charges when parents are offered a place for their child at the nursery, or earlier if requested. They are also shown on our website.
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 able 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 £200 Registration Fee guarantees your child's place in accordance with our Offer letter.
 - 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.
 - d. If a sibling joins, a Registration Fee of £100 applies. When the eldest child leaves, their remaining £100 will be transferred to the sibling.
 - e. 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 7th and 9th of each month.
 - f. The above Registration Fee does not apply for children attending fully 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 £15 may be charged for every 15 minutes late to cover costs for the two members of staff who need to stay behind.
 11. Fees are due by the dates shown on invoices, typically monthly in advance.
 12. 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.
 13. **Once upon a time** is signed up to receive payments from the Tax-Free Childcare scheme via HMRC. We also accept Childcare Vouchers from several voucher providers – details available on request. We also accept 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.
 14. No Childcare Voucher or Tax-Free Childcare payments must be made to **Once upon a time** before an invoice has been raised, other than paying for the Registration Fee. If any such payments are made, they will be returned to the Voucher provider/HMRC.
 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 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 per week is being attended.
 19. If fees are not paid by the last working day of the month in which they are due, a 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. Where overpayments are made to the nursery, a refund will be made to either the parent, the child's Tax Free Childcare account or the Childcare Voucher provider.
 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 government funding and has agreed to meet the conditions of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities – April 2024. Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of childcare.

It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, snacks, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

23. All children attending our nursery schools qualify for government funding from the start of the school term after they are 9 months old. Eligible parents of qualifying 3&4 year olds will also be entitled to claim up to a maximum of 30 hours per week for 38 weeks of the year. 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 hours, they can claim up to a maximum of 15 hours per week 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.
24. Parents will not be charged a 'top-up' fee to recoup the difference between the amount received from the Local Authority and the current full day/half day fees. However, **Once upon a time** will apply a Consumables Charge for each funded session attended. This charge includes all meals and snacks. Where parents are unable to pay this charge, they should contact the Finance Director to discuss what options exist (e.g. allowing them to supply their child's own meals and snacks).
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 government funding. **Once upon a time** will, in plenty of time, contact parents with details of how to claim any funding they are or may be entitled to. However, it is each parents' responsibility to obtain their eligibility code from HMRC and to re-confirm their eligibility **every three months** as re-confirmation dates are different for every parent. Parents must advise the nursery if they become ineligible for funding. If eligibility is not re-confirmed within the timeframe allowed by HMRC, parents will be charged for any loss of funding.
26. The government allocates funding for 38 weeks of the year. However, as a day care provider open all year round, we 'stretch' the funding over the 51 weeks of the year we are open. If your child attends a second setting, it is your responsibility to let **Once upon a time** know the details. **Once upon a time** will keep a record of all funded hours claimed so that the number of hours allowed over three school terms does not exceed the maximum allowed per year.
27. The funding entitlement will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the funding entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals, snacks or consumables.
28. We will work with parents to ensure that as far as possible the hours/sessions that can be taken as funded are convenient for parents' working hours.
29. Where parents/carers are not satisfied that their child is receiving the 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.
30. For each session attended where no funding is received, our full fees will be charged.
31. Each term, we claim funding on behalf of parents/carers direct from Norfolk County Council.
32. A Norfolk County Council funding 'Claim form' must be completed and signed by a parent/carer each term to enable us to claim each child's funding. The nursery will issue these forms at the beginning of each school term. Parents/carers should ensure they are not overclaiming if their child attends more than one setting.
33. Parents/carers will also be asked to confirm on the claim form whether they qualify for certain benefits that may result in the nursery receiving additional funding under the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) scheme.
34. Four weeks' written notice is required if you wish to change your child's sessions or leave the nursery.

35. If you wish to remove your child from nursery, you must give a minimum of four weeks' written notice.
36. Planned trips may be charged for to cover costs. You can choose for your child to opt out of any trip.
37. 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 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic, no fees were charged to parents during the lockdown period as funding continued for all funded children and the Job Retention Scheme helped to pay staff salaries.
38. **Once upon a time** agrees to meet the Operational Guidance for Local Authorities and Providers – April 2024.
39. Any queries with fees or invoicing should be emailed to: john@onceuponatime.org.uk

This policy was adopted by Once upon a time nursery school

Date: 24 April 2007

Amended on: 7 February 2025 (but effective from 1 April 2025)

Signed on behalf of the nursery

To be reviewed: Annually or sooner if any matters arise