



## **First Friends Preschool Fees Policy**

**Date: January 2024**

Acting Headteacher: Jessica Millard

CEO: Lorraine Heath

Due for review: Spring Term 2025

## PURPOSE:

To give clear and concise responsibility for the financial aspects of First Friends Preschool.

## POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the intention of First Friends Preschool to make the provision accessible to children and families from all sectors of the community. In order to do this effectively regular income and expenditure will be required.

## SCOPE:

This policy applies to all managers, staff and parents. We operate a service that is fair and competitively priced, and always aim to offer a high quality, safe and stimulating environment for you child(ren). First Friends Preschool opens 08:30 – 15:30 38 weeks of the year inclusive of inset days & bank holidays, session times are outlined below (please see school calendar for inset days).

## FEES:

Sessions	Aged 2 years old	Aged 3-4
07.35am – 8.30am Extended service	N/A	£5.00
8.30am – 9am Early Start	£3.00	£2.66
9am – 12noon Morning session	£18.00	£16.00
12noon – 3pm Afternoon session	£18.00	£16.00
3pm – 3.30pm Late Leave	£3.00	£2.66
School Day 9.00am-3.00pm	£36.00	£32.00
Hot school lunch	£2.60	£2.60
3.30-4.30pm After School Club	N/A	£5.00
4.30-5.30pm Extended service (inc snack)	N/A	£5.00
Hourly fee above funded hours	£6.00	£5.33

- Fees are charged depending on the age of your child.
- Variable rates apply due to the statutory staff to child ratios.
- Fees will be charged per whole session although you may drop and collect your child within these times to suit your personal requirements.
- Fees quoted are per child.
- Younger siblings will be charged as above with a 10% discount
- Fees will be payable monthly in advance and invoices will be issued one month before the relevant period of childcare to ensure a 30-day payment period expires before the childcare begins.
- Any additional sessions attended will be added to the next monthly invoice.

- Where Early Years Funding is used to pay your fees and you are booking a session that includes a meal charge you will be invoiced for this meal charge on a monthly basis.
- Nappies, wipes and creams are excluded and must be supplied by the parent / carer.
- Late Collection fees will be charged at £10 per each 15 minutes or part thereof. This is to cover the staff costs.

Parents may be asked to pay additional fees where activities or outings are planned that the preschool cannot fully fund. Details of such activities and outings will be provided to parents with details of any additional fees involved.

Fees will be reviewed six monthly and any changes will be notified to parents in writing with a minimum of 1 months' notice. Any notice of change will include details of who to contact should you wish to discuss the changes.

### **REGISTRATION PROCESS:**

We operate an Inclusion and Equality policy and ensure that all children have access to preschool places and services irrespective of their gender, race, disability, ethnicity, competence in spoken English, religion or belief or sexual orientation of parents.

Parents/Carers are required to complete a registration form indicating the hours they wish to send their child/ren to preschool. The preschool administrator will review the request in line with the current availability and either confirm the requested hours or advise as to availability. We will endeavour to be flexible regarding attendance to accommodate the needs of the family, however staffing ratios must be maintained in line with Ofsted regulations and the safety of children is our priority.

The following factors will be taken into consideration when allocating places:

- The age of the child and the current availability with regards to staff ratios and safe operating procedures
- Whether the family has siblings already in the preschool and or Neroche Primary School.
- Whether the parents are staff at either the preschool or Primary School.
- Length of time on waiting list (if applicable).
- A child requiring a full-time place may have preference over one requiring a part-time place. This is dependent upon work commitments, occupancy, and room availability.
- Any extenuating circumstances affecting the child's welfare or the welfare of his/her family.

Once hours have been agreed by both parties First Friends preschool will send out a letter of confirmation. At this stage you will also be asked to complete and return the required information about your child/ren such as medical details, next of kin etc. Failure to return this information can cause the offer of a place to be revoked.

Where we are unable to accommodate a child immediately, and with the parents' consent, we will add them to the preschool waiting list. The waiting list will be monitored and reviewed regularly.

Please be advised that admission to First Friends preschool does not guarantee a place at Neroche primary school. The normal school admission process applies for admission to Neroche primary school. Parents/carers will still need to apply for a place in the reception year at the school at the appropriate time.

## **SETTLING IN:**

Parents and carers will not be charged during the settling in period, which is up to four hours. If more than four hours are required, fees will be charged.

## **FUNDING FOR 2 YEARS OLDS:**

Families with 2-year-old children who meet the required criteria can apply for funding for 2-year olds. Somerset County Council will pay for a place for up to 570 hours over the year at a registered childcare provider. A maximum of 15 hours per week is available. Children become eligible in the funding period after their second birthday. For more information and to see if you are eligible visit <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/paying-for-childcare/funding-for-2-year-olds/>

If you are entitled to the 2-year-old funding and we can offer your child/ren a place we will need to see your letter of entitlement and your child's birth certificate.

## **EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENT – 15 hours**

From the age of 3 all children are entitled to 15 hours a week funded childcare for 38 weeks a year, up to a maximum of 570 hours each year. This entitlement starts the term after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. First Friends will claim for this funding on your behalf subject to you providing:

- a copy of your child's birth certificate or passport with a signed Child Registration Form
- a completed and signed Parent's Declaration Form to claim the funding

Children who are 4 between 1 September and 31 December will be able to claim up to a maximum of 380 hours from 1 January to 31 August. Children who are 4 between 1 January and 31 March will be able to claim up to a maximum of 237.5 hours from 1 April to 31 August.

## **EARLY YEARS ENTITLEMENT – 30 hours**

The government has extended the above entitlement of 15 hours to 30 hours for working parents of three and four year olds for up to 38 weeks of the year.

To be eligible for this extended entitlement parents must:

- Each earns or expects to earn the equivalent to 16 hours a week at the National Minimum or Living Wage over the coming three months. [Please see GOV.UK for full eligibility criteria.](#)

This means you don't have to actually work 16 hours a week but earn at least the equivalent wage rates. 'Working' will include the employed and self-employed, and people on zero-hour contracts, and people away from work due to statutory sick pay, maternity, paternity or adoption leave, and where one parent is working and the other is in receipt of benefits due to caring responsibility or disability.

To apply visit <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/education-and-families/paying-for-childcare/30-hours-extended-entitlement/> or call 0300 123 4097.

You will need:

- your National Insurance Number, and your partner’s National Insurance Number (if applicable)
- child’s legal name and correct date of birth
- a government gateway account

If you are successful you will need to provide us:

- with the 11-digit eligibility code you receive on your successful notification – begins with 500
- your child’s legal name via a copy of your child’s birth certificate
- the parents name who made the claim and their National Insurance Number.
- written permission for us to verify your eligibility code

Without all of the above we cannot verify your code with the Local Authority and we will not be able to accept this funding as payment of your fees.

### When you can start using your extended entitlement hours:

If your child’s third birthday falls between	You need to apply, get a code and contact your childcare provider before	Once your place is confirmed you can start using your extended hours from
1 September – 31 Dec	31 December	1 January (Spring)
1 January – 31 March	31 March	1 April (Summer)
1 April – 31 August	31 August	1 September (Autumn)

If you become eligible after the start of a funding period, you must wait until the following period to access your extended entitlement place. To be able to use your extended entitlement you will need to have made a successful application and received a code by the deadlines given. If you miss the deadline you cannot use the extra funded hours, but you will still be able to use the universal hours. For example, if you do not apply and receive a code by 31 August deadline you cannot use your extra hours in September you will need to wait until 1 January.

### Reconfirming your 30 hours and tax-free eligibility

You will need to reconfirm you are still eligible for 30 hours and Tax- Free Childcare every three months, using your childcare service account, even if you have not yet taken up your place. This is the parent’s responsibility and the Nursery cannot do this for you. It’s easy to do; if your details have not changed you just tick a box to confirm this. You’ll be reminded to do this 4 weeks before the reconfirmation deadline. It’s important you let HMRC know if your circumstances have changed, as they will be checked against other systems.

If you miss the reconfirmation deadline, you will receive a message telling you that your eligibility has lapsed. You should go into your childcare account and reconfirm.

## Grace Period

If you are no longer eligible for 30 hours, you will enter a grace period where you may be able to retain your 30 hours childcare place for a short period of time.

Parent receives ineligible decision on reconfirmation	Grace period end date
Between 1 January and 10 February	31 March
Between 11 February and 31 March	31 August
Between 1 April and 26 May	31 August
Between 27 May and 31 August	31 December
Between 1 September and 21 October	31 December
Between 22 October and 31 December	31 March

Once out of the Grace Period and you no longer qualify for Extended Hours funding, fees will be charged as per the table in the FEES section of this document. If you wish to change your child's hours or remove your child from the preschool please refer to the REQUEST TO CHANGE SESSIONS and TERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE sections in this document.

Your entitlement to the extended hours will stop

- when your child reaches compulsory school age
- when your child attends a reception place in a maintained school or academy

## FUNDING MISC:

- You may choose to use any of the above funding at one or more settings. You must, therefore, advise the preschool administrator if your child attends another early years setting so that the funding can be calculated accordingly.
- First Friends will notify you in writing of any changes made by the Local Authority for Nursery Education Funding.
- The maximum extended entitlement that can be claimed is 15 hours per week except for the summer funding period where the maximum claim is limited to 237.50 hours in total.

## CHILDCARE VOUCHERS:

This is only available to existing users registered before April 2018.

## TAX FREE CHILDCARE - [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)

If using this payment method, the preschool can be found under the school's name, Neroche Primary School.

## **MEALS:**

If you would like your child to receive a hot lunch whilst at preschool, these are bookable via the preschool administrator.

Lunch - £2.60 per day

As part of the registration process you will be asked to supply any special dietary requirements.

## **NON-COLLECTION/LATE COLLECTION OF CHILD:**

In the unlikely event that a parent is more than 15 minutes late (without some contact to the pre-school) all parental contact numbers will be tried.

- If parents cannot be reached then all emergency contacts will be tried.
- If the preschool is unable to contact any of those listed on the registration form then the senior staff member will contact Children's Social Care help line – Somerset Direct 0300 123 2224 - and follow the advice given.
- A minimum of two members of staff including, where possible, the child's key worker will remain with the child until they have been collected.
- Late Collection fees will be charged at £10 per each 15 minutes or part thereof. This is to cover the staff costs.

## **PRESCHOOL CLOSURES – PLANNED:**

First Friends preschool will be closed on all Bank Holidays, 6 x Staff Training days (which will be scheduled to match Neroche Inset days. First Friends preschool will provide confirmation of all closures in advance. Fees will not be charged for these closures.

## **PRESCHOOL CLOSURES – UNPLANNED (SHORT TERM):**

We will always strive to open the preschool but where it is deemed unsafe or we are unable to e.g. a snow day, parents will be notified at the earliest opportunity. Fees will be charged for these days but meals will not be charged for.

## **PRESCHOOL CLOSURES – UNPLANNED (LONG TERM):**

Where the preschool is required to be closed for an undetermined length of time e.g. in a pandemic such as COVID-19 we will notify parents at the earliest opportunity. Parents will not be charged fees during this time.

We will aim to provide a service for Key Workers, where it is deemed safe to do and we are able to provide the required staffing structure. Fees will be charged as per this policy. It may be necessary to adjust the sessions and days on offer but parents will be notified accordingly.

All children who hold a place at preschool will maintain their normal sessions until the preschool is able to reopen.

## **NON-ATTENDANCE:**

If a parent/carer chooses to take their child/ren out of preschool for any reason e.g. a holiday, or if a child is unable to attend due to illness, Fees will be charged at the normal rate.

Long term illness can be discussed with the preschool or School Business Manager.

## **PAYMENT OF FEES:**

Invoices will be emailed at the beginning of each month and one month in advance of the invoiced sessions. How to make payment will be detailed on the invoice.

## **LATE PAYMENT:**

If fees are not paid as per the invoice date or as stated on the bill, the administrator will notify the parent/carer in writing.

Payment options are offered to parents and they can pay monthly or otherwise and the administrator must be made aware of your chosen payment option.

The Administrator has the right to issue a formal warning to the parent/carer and inform them that continual late payment will result in their child's place at the preschool being forfeited.

Parents/carers are encouraged to speak to the Administrator if they have any query about the fee policy, or if for any reason, they are likely to have difficulty in making payment on time. Parents/carers are strongly advised to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity to avoid jeopardizing their child's place at the preschool.

Each child's attendance at the preschool is conditional upon continued payment of any necessary fees. If payment falls four weeks in arrears or amounts to more than the Governors think is reasonable the preschool reserves the right to suspend the child's place until the arrears are paid in full.

Legal proceedings will be made via the small claims court for any unpaid fees if payment is not made through previous payment request letters. Parents/carers will receive a letter stating that legal proceedings have started. The letter will include the total amount of debt which is being pursued including an additional £50 for legal costs.

## **SICKNESS:**

Please notify us each morning if your child is unable to attend preschool due to sickness. Any child with an infectious illness **must** be kept at home in order to prevent the spread of illness. In the case of sickness and diarrhoea all children must be kept at home until clear of symptoms for a minimum of 48 hours.

## **REQUEST TO CHANGE SESSIONS:**

Any requests to change your child/rens agreed sessions must be done in writing, email is accepted, for review by the preschool administrator. If we are able to accommodate the requested changes you will sent a letter of confirmation. Please allow for as much notice as possible when requesting any changes.



### **TERMINATION OF ATTENDANCE:**

Should you wish to terminate your contract with First Friends please do so in writing, email accepted, at least 30 days in advance. Fees will be due for all sessions in your notice period. Any requests to terminate contracts with less than 30 days' notice will incur a £100 administration fee and EYE funding can still be claimed.

The preschool reserves the right to terminate the contract without notice in the event of unsuitable behaviour from parents or non-payment of fees following the non-payment procedure. At all other times one month's notice in writing will be given.

### **PURCHASING OF EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES:**

The preschool has a yearly budget to spend on equipment and resources. The preschool administrator and Trust Early Years Lead will ensure that adequate stocks are maintained in the preschool.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The preschool administrator and School Business Manager is responsible for the enforcement and compliance of this policy during the day to day running of the preschool. The preschool administrator and School Business Manager will provide interpretations in the event of the need for clarification or when there is a dispute. Overall responsibility lies with the School Business Manager.

### **NOTICE OF CHANGE:**

These Terms and Conditions are subject to change with one month's notice.