A Guide to Funded Childcare

St. Helen's College

Forfar EDUCATION

Welcome to our Nursery

A child's early years are so important. At our nursery your child comes first and our expert team of childcare professionals are here to help and support them as they learn and grow. We understand that getting to grips with new processes, such as funding, can be overly complicated and so we have created this informative guide to help explain the ins and outs of the Government's childcare funding schemes, including essential daily costs that create our unique nursery experience.

We aim to make fees and funding as straight forward as possible so that we can all focus on the most important thing; caring for your child.

Did you know?

While the government funding is a great help, it unfortunately doesn't cover many of the essential extras and consumable items that help us create a truly enriching experience for your child at nursery.

To make sure we can continue offering the highest quality care and exciting learning opportunities, we ask parents to contribute towards these additional costs alongside their funded hours.

What help is available with the cost of childcare?

Tax-Free Childcare

You can receive up to £500 from the Government every 3 months (up to £2,000 a year) for each of your children to help with the costs of childcare.

If you qualify for Tax-Free Childcare, you will need to set up an online childcare account for your child. To check your eligibility and apply, visit the website, www.gov.uk/applyfortaxfreechildcare. For every £8 you pay into this account, the government will pay in an additional £2 for you to use to pay your provider. You can get Tax-Free Childcare at the same time as Early Years 15 or 30 hours funding, if you're eligible for both.

Universal Early Years Funding for three and four year-olds

The Government's universal funding scheme is available to all 3 and 4 year olds from the term after their 3rd Birthday. 15 hours of childcare is applied across 38 weeks of the school's term time. Our nursery operates 50 weeks a year, and therefore we stretch these hours over each week that the nursery is open. If we apply the Government's 15 hours of childcare to the 50 weeks that our nursery is open, this equates to approximately 11 hours of funding per week.

Extended childcare entitlement for working families

From **April 2024**, eligible working parents of 2-year-olds will be able to access 15 hours childcare support.

From **September 2024**, 15 hours childcare support will be extended to eligible working parents of children from the age of 9 months to 2-year-olds. And from **September 2025** this will be extended to up to 30 hours for working parents of all children from 9 months upwards.

Like the universal funded childcare for 3 and 4 year-olds, these hours are 'stretched' over 50 weeks at our setting.

Am I eligible?

To be eligible for the working families extended entitlements, you and any partner must each expect to earn (on average) at least £183 per week (equal to 16 hours at the National Minimum or Living Wage).

You can't get 15 hours of the extended funded childcare if you, or your partner, each individually expect to earn £100,000 adjusted net income or more. Our parents usually need their child to spend more hours in nursery than their funded hours allow. We offer additional, non-funded hours to fit in with your schedule as part of morning or afternoon sessions.

Government funding does not cover food, essentials and extras.

Parental Declaration Form

To enable us to apply for Early Years Funding (EYF) on your behalf, parents must complete a local council Parent Declaration Form. This will be sent to you in the 'When to Apply' time-frame to complete (on page 8 of this document) and return to us. Please complete:

1. Section 1: Child's Details – please complete your child's details and include a copy of your child's birth certificate and/or passport when you return the form;
2. Section 2: Eligibility and Claim Declaration – include your eligibility code for your childcare account and your and your partner's details. Complete the session times and leave the hours section blank to be completed by the office
3. Section 3: Funding Statements – tick to confirm that you agree with the declarations. Complete the 'working parents' entitlement statements if you are applying for the extended childcare.
4. Sign and date the form and return to the finance team along with your child's identification document.

Each term, we may need to ask you to complete a local council Parent Declaration form to allow us to continue claiming your funding.

Our Nursery

At our Nursery, we strongly believe in the benefit of a rich, child-centrered curriculum delivering high quality learning through play on a year-round basis. Young children benefit from routine and continuity. They settle and learn better if they attend nursery consistently without long holiday gaps. As they grow and develop we support them to become more able to manage their emotions and attachments, ready to start school as happy and confident learners! The 15 and 30 hour entitlements are over 38 weeks only; 570 or 1140 hours a year. As our setting is open all year, all funding is stretched giving 11 hours a week (for 15 hour funding) or 22 hours a week (for 30 hour funding).

Did you know?

If you need to book additional ad-hoc sessions at short notice please speak to us and we will always try to help.

Sessions

We offer childcare by the session, rather than by the hour. We have many options to suit busy families. These include morning sessions, afternoon sessions or a full day. There are some real benefits to the way that we 'stretch' the Government funded hours; having your child attend all year round really helps them to settle into a routine, to go to nursery happy and smiling, and to support their development and grow their friendships. It also helps you as busy or working parents!

We will discuss your session preferences with you as part of the admissions process and we will always do our best to provide you with the sessions you need, subject to availability and our minimum number of sessions. Once you have decided on the best sessions for your family, these will be booked so that you have the same sessions each week. We ask for notice of two months to change or reduce sessions, unless we can offer these to another child on the waiting list.

Remember!

Funded hours are 'stretched' over the 50 weeks that the nursery is open. The funding is allocated termly and as each term differs in length the number of funded hours does too. The Autumn Term can be up to 14 weeks long equating to 210 hours of funding. The Spring and Summer Terms vary in length with a maximum of 12 weeks (180 hours) being available. So, for each of the 50 weeks your child attends our nursery, you will receive approximately 11 funded hours for the Government's 15 hour funding. We ensure that each term, the full number of free hours allocated to your child by the Local Authority is deducted from your invoices.

Fees and funding

Did you know?

Early Years Funding pays only for your child's base funded childcare hours at nursery.

As the Government's funding does not cover any additional hours to make up full sessions, or those all-important essentials and extras that make our nursery a wonderful place for your child to be, there will be an additional amount that you will be asked to pay. In order to be as transparent as possible with our parents, monthly invoices will provide you with a comprehensive breakdown as follows:

- The number of fully funded hours allocated in the calendar month; these are allocated pro-rata per session.
- The fees charged for non-funded hours – this will be the remaining hours of each session that your child is booked to attend, charged at the advertised rate.
- Consumables, essentials and extras, for the month, for all those things not covered by your funding. These are detailed further on the next page. The current consumables fee rate is set out on the Nursery fees sheet.
- Total: this is how much you will need to pay for the calendar month.

Parents may access only their free funded hours, however, many parents find that they need more sessions than the funded hours provide. We allow funded hours to be taken in any session to support parents, however, in the best interests of the children and for operational consistency we only provide full sessions and cannot support children attending part sessions. Parents accessing only their funded hours will not be asked to pay a registration fee for their place but the usual nursery deposit will be payable. Parents accessing a funded only place may choose to pay the consumables charge voluntarily or alternatively will need to provide essential extras and consumables not covered by the funding such as, all food and drink, sun cream, bedding (where applicable) and more. We encourage parents to pay the consumables charge to support the nursery; where parents choose to provide food we will share our allergen management and healthy eating policy and this must be adhered to. If you are looking for a funded only place please contact us to let us know this at registration. Where children attend additional paid hours, these are provided as a separate private contract for services and any consumables charges then form part of this contract.

Essentials and Extras

As the Government funding does not include any essential extras, like those detailed below, a simple consumables charge will added to your child's invoice for the funded hours used within each of the sessions they attend. This consumables charge covers things such as:

- All meals, drinks and snacks
- Toiletries and potty training support
- Our enhanced and unique programme of activities
- Specialist support and enhanced transition for children moving into schools. Our qualified nursery staff will help prepare your child so that when the time comes, they confidently move from our nursery to School. The consumables charges are voluntary for all pupils accessing funded only hours and parents may choose to provide meals, drinks and extras instead. For children attending hours outside of and additional to funded provision, parent enter into a separate contract for services with the nursery to provide childcare and in such cases consumables charges form part of this contract.

Our nursery follows the National Curriculum for the Early Years Foundation Stage however children benefit from a variety of opportunities beyond this framework. Our setting offers exceptional pastoral care, given by skilled and knowledgeable staff. As part of the Forfar Education family all our staff benefit from extensive training, and development, and the nursery has strong Governance to ensure the highest safety standards and best practice are being delivered on a daily basis.

Did you know?

Within the consumables charge, we offer a range of different and exciting opportunities to enrich your child's learning and development. These change throughout the year and might include specialist lessons; Forest or Beach School and our exciting WOW! Days plus specialist music, language or dance sessions, baby yoga or gym to name a few.

How does it work?

Funding is allocated to us by the Local Authority each term (autumn, spring and summer). A child can receive funding the term after they are eligible and have a valid eligibility code, whichever is later. Term start dates are 1st September, 1st January and 1st April.

Did you know?

To keep your 15 hours of extended funded childcare place you need to check your details are up to date every 3 months by checking on the government tax-free childcare website.

The table below should help you work out when your child an begin receiving funding:

Your child meets eligibility age:	When they can get their hours from	When to apply:
1st September to 31st December	Term starting on or after 1st January	15th October to 30th November
1st January to 31st March	Term starting on or after 1st April	15th January to 28th February
1st April to 31st August	Term starting on or after 1st September	15th June to 31st July

Here's a reminder of what you need to do!

1. Set up a government childcare account – www.gov.uk/childcarechoices.
2. In the term before your child may be eligible to receive early years childcare funding we will provide you with a local council Parent Declaration Form to complete.
3. For extended childcare for working parents, log-in to your childcare choices account to obtain your eligibility code, which we will send you via our online funding loop platform. If you are eligible, complete the Parent Declaration Form and submit it to us along with a copy of your child's identification.
4. For universal 3 and 4 year old funding please complete the Parent Declaration Form and return it to us along with a copy of your child's identification.
5. Once approved by the Local Authority funding will be applied to your child's account.
6. We will provide an invoice for any additional unfunded hours, as well as essentials and extras as the consumables fee. The number of funded hours you have received that month are shown on the invoice.

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We hope that this guide has been helpful in providing vital information regarding Government funding.

If you have any further questions, or are unsure of anything covered, please do speak with us. We would be more than happy to help.

Contact us

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