

General Welfare Requirement: Organisation

Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs.

Finance

4.10 Payment of Fees

Policy Statement for St Joseph's Pre-school

Statement of Intent

To ensure that the rules of payment of money owed to St Joseph's Pre-school are clear to all. The Pre-school rely on regular income to continue operating. It is in the best interests of every child that fees are paid promptly and fully so they can benefit from consistency of care and routine.

The Committee has set a minimum session attendance at the setting of 2 sessions a week to secure a place. Days/times will be dependent on spaces available and staff to child ratios. Please talk to the Lead Practitioner in the first instance.

Nursery Education Grant Funding

- St Joseph's Pre-school are registered to receive *Nursery Education Grant funding (NEF)* which children are eligible to receive from the term following their third birthday. NEF covers 38 weeks of the Pre-school year. The pre-school reserves the right to charge for any additional days not covered.

Your child's 3 rd birthday	When your child will receive NEF funding
1 September to 31 December	Spring term (starts January)
1 January to 31 March	Summer term (starts April)
1 April to 31 August	Autumn term (starts September)

- St Joseph's Pre-school accepts 15 hour universal education funding hours for 2 year olds (where they are eligible). We require a copy of the confirmation email received by the parent/carer from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) for our Treasurer records.
- Children of 3 or 4 years old at St Joseph's Pre-school are entitled to a maximum of 15 hours of government universal entitlement funded sessions per week for 38 weeks a year, plus an extra 15 hours per week extended entitlement¹. Parents can use this funding at any registered setting or with registered childminders, and can use their funding entitlement in a combination of settings or childcare arrangements.
- For the initial 15 hours universal funding entitlement parents will need to complete a form which St Joseph's Pre-school will supply at the beginning of every term. Parents are responsible for applying for the extended 15 hours free childcare entitlement through the digital childcare service to receive an eligibility code. St Joseph's Pre-school are responsible

¹ 15 hours extended entitlement is income related

for verifying (or confirming) eligibility by checking that the parent's code is valid. Parents will be asked to complete an Extended Hours Declaration form in this respect.

- Parents will be prompted every three months by HMRC to reconfirm that they remain eligible. If they are no longer eligible for 30 hours, they will enter a grace period and will be able to retain their place for a short period. The updated statutory guidance outlines the specific grace period cut-off dates. If a parent falls into their grace period before their child has started a 30 hours place, they should not take up their 30 hours place. Should a parent lose their eligibility St Joseph's Pre-school are not responsible for paying/reimbursing any fees accrued, it is the parent's responsibility to then pay the fees.
- St Joseph's Pre-school currently opens for no more than 39 weeks in a school year. Our term dates and inset days are the same as St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.
- Parents/carers will be issued with a funding claim form at the start of the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. This must be filled in and brought back with proof of your child's date of birth by the deadline given by the Pre-school. You will need to declare any NEF sessions being claimed elsewhere (eg. at a day nursery, childminder or other pre-school). If you do not sign the form by the deadline, we will not be able to claim your child's NEF entitlement until the headcount amendment task opens later in the term. Delay in applying may cause financial difficulties to the Pre-school.
- Once your form has been submitted, there is only one opportunity within the 3 terms to amend submit an amendment form. If you change your child's hours outside this window, you will be charged for the extra hours your child attends.
- **IMPORTANT:** All hours claimed on the funding forms, be they for 2, 3 or 4 year olds **must** match those shown in the register of attendance as registers will be inspected as part of the funding audit that GCC undertake². However, if a parent/carer works an irregular shift pattern, then they will not be disadvantaged from using the funding – please talk to the Pre-school in this respect. We require written confirmation from the employer of this shift pattern for our Treasurer records.
- **Non attendance and funding:** As per our Local Provider Agreement with GCC, GCC will not claim back funding for any irregular attendance in a funding period. However, the Pre-school **does** need to inform them of any regular patterns of non-attendance so the matter can be reviewed for the following funding period. Children can be absent due to sickness or holidays for a period of up to 2 weeks before any funding will be recovered. In exceptional circumstances GCC will not claim back funding for a period of 2 weeks in cases where parents/carers do not give their correct notice period when leaving the setting.

Description of Payments

Term fees:

- A fee is charged per hour for all children that are not eligible for funding and for all hours over any government funding (statutory 15 hours universal entitlement and/or 15 hours extended entitlement).
- Fees are reviewed each year by the Committee and would normally rise in September, but the Committee reserves the right to change fees at any time of the year with advance notice of not less than four weeks given for any increase. The current fee is £4.10 per hour for 2 year olds, £3.90 per hour for 3 and 4 year olds.

² As per para 13.9 Local Provider Agreement 2020-21

- If your child reaches 3 years old before the start of a term³, but is not yet entitled to NEF, then the hourly rate charged will be that for 3 and 4 year olds. If your child turns 3 years old during a term, then your child's invoice will reflect the hourly rate for 2 year olds.
- Committee members and staff are eligible to receive "benefit in kind" of a 5% discount on their child's termly invoice and any extra session invoices.

Late collection fees:

- A late collection fee is in place – separate invoices will be issued as applicable.
- If a child is collected between 5 and 9 minutes after their session has ended (ie. 12pm, 1pm or 3pm), on 3 or more occasions during the term, then a charge of £5 will be levied.
- Any child collected 10 minutes after their session has ended, their parent/carer will automatically be charged £5. Even if pre-school are notified, you will be charged unless you have informed pre-school at morning drop-off (ie. 8.30am); then additional hour(s) will be charged only.
- If you are later than 10 minutes, an additional charge will be enforced at the discretion of the committee, this could either be an hourly rate or a higher rate of £10 for every subsequent 10 minutes. The reason for this is due to ratio in the pre-school, safeguarding the children and the availability of the room⁴.
- If late collection occurs on a regular basis, your child's place could be withdrawn.

Extra session(s)/extra days fees:

- Separate invoices will be issued for extra sessions/extra days attended by your child.
- Additional days must be agreed by 1pm on the day before the requested day to ensure sufficient space and staffing is available.
- The hourly rate will reflect the age of your child at the start of the term the extra session(s) occurred regardless of whether your child is entitled to NEF or not.

Retention fee

The Committee reserves the right to charge a nominal non-fundable retention fee to those parents/carers whose child is not in receipt of funding, to enable them to retain their child's place at the setting. This will be in exceptional circumstance, eg. closure of the Pre-school adhering to a Government requirement (as in March 2020 due to COVID-19).

Requests for changes to attendance

- **A minimum of 6 weeks'** notice is required to delay your child's start date, change attendance days or to remove your child from St Joseph's Pre-school. Any requests for additional hours or change of hours must be submitted in writing, preferably by email to the Lead Practitioner and Treasurer. Please note that you will be liable for any fees incurred should inadequate notice be given, even if your child is eligible for NEF.
- **Attendance of a minimum of 2 sessions** a week is required to secure a place at St Joseph's Pre-school.
- Any changes to hours can only take place at the start of the next term.

³ St Joseph's Pre-school works to 6 terms a year, rather than the 3 terms that NEF applies to.

⁴ St Joseph's Out Of School Club uses the room before and after pre-school hours.

- Please note that there are 6 terms in a year. For funding there are 3 terms in a year.
- If you are increasing the hours your child attends, you will receive a response as to when this can be accommodated within 10 working days of receipt of your request. The Pre-school reserves the right not honor requests for increased hours if inadequate notice is given.
- However, it may not be possible to accommodate requests if the sessions are already full. If it is not possible to grant a request, the Lead Practitioner will keep a note that you are interested in that session should a space become available. Spaces arising in any session are offered in waiting list order.
- If you are looking to swap your child's hours around in any one week, then we will only accommodate this if staff ratios permit – and only if it is a 'one-off'. Note, however, that your original invoice for the Term will stand and the 'swapped hours' will be classed as an 'extra session(s)' and you will be invoiced accordingly.

Rules of Payment

- The Treasury Administrator will issue an invoice within two weeks of the start of a term, stating a due date. If it is not possible to pay the fees immediately and in full, then it is the parent/carer's responsibility to agree a payment plan with the Treasurer (who will confer with the chair and staff).
- Invoices for extra sessions are issued on the day or when booked. Payment of these are required within 7 working days of the date on the invoice.
- Invoices for late collection are issued on the day and payment is required within 7 working days of the date on the invoice.
- St Joseph's Pre-school's preferred method of payment is by BACS (bank transfer). Bank details are given on the invoice. Parents must use their child's name as a reference and send an email to the Treasury Administrator to confirm payment.
- St Joseph's Pre-school accepts childcare vouchers. Parents must use their child's name as a reference and send an email to the Treasury Administrator to confirm payment.
- Cheques, made out to 'St Joseph's Pre-school', and cash are accepted. Please hand in person to the Lead Practitioner in an envelope addressed to the Treasurer with your child's name as a reference.
- Parents will be reminded, during the term, that their child's invoice is outstanding (if applicable).
- If payment has not been made by the first date (nor the payment plan agreed), a reminder will be issued giving a final due date, four weeks from the initial invoice date.
- If the full payment has not been received, nor payment plan agreed four weeks after the initial invoice was issued, or where repeated default is made on a payment plan then St Joseph's Pre-school has the right to take away the child's non-funded sessions immediately and offer them to another family, subject to St Joseph's Pre-school's discretion, ie. taking into account any external factors relating to the child.
- St Joseph's Pre-school may take further action to recover the lost fees from the parent/carer.
- Concessions cannot be made for absences as the pre-school cannot fill a child's space with another child.

Refunds

- Refunds will **not** be made for absence through illness, holidays or other, including weather conditions apart from exceptional circumstances (at St Joseph’s Pre-school’s discretion), as the running costs of the Pre-school remain the same.
- Refunds will **not** be made where a child leaves or reduces their weekly sessions after the initial invoice has been issued.
- Refunds will **not** be made for school trips/outings as St Joseph’s Pre-school is still required to pay staff and for the Leigh Building and associated costs.
- Refunds will be issued for paid fees (not funded placements) when St Joseph’s Pre-school closes a planned session, with prior notice by letter given 48 hours before the session.
- Refunds will be arranged by the Treasurer and/or Treasury Administrator, by deducting from the next month’s invoice, or by BACS or cheque, this will be discussed between the parent and the Treasurer/Treasury Administrator.
- If the Pre-school has to close due to Government requirements (eg. as in March 2020 re COVID-19 pandemic) then the Emergency/temporary closure policy⁵ will be followed. If refunds are applicable (non-funded places only), then parents will be informed accordingly.

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
1.0	E Kemp	Update re. 15 hour extended entitlement	Nov 2017
2.0	K Coupe	Review & update re preferred payment method	19/9/2018
3.0	K Coupe, N Powers & A Wand	Update re. ad hoc swapping of hours, funding amendment form and written clarification of 2 year old funding, NEF forms must match attendance	1 May 2019 Cttee mtg
4.0	K Coupe	Amendment wording about the “benefit in kind” available to committee members and staff	10/07/2019 AGM
5.0	K Coupe	Inclusion of paragraph with regards to non attendance and funding, “late fees” updated and addition of a retention fee	06/08/2020 Cttee Mtg

⁵ Policy 39 Emergency/temporary closure