

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 is a charity and not for profit. All fees are used to ensure the running of the setting and 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. It also enables staff to concentrate on your child and, where applicable, other governance matters, thus not being distracted chasing unpaid fees and impacting on the rewarding pre-school experience we aim to offer your child.

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.

Definitions

- "Funded sessions" are a child's hours covered by the Nursery Education Grant Funding (NEF) and covers 2, 3 and 4 year olds dependent on their eligibility. This [link](#) will take you to the relevant page on Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC) website.
- "Non-funded sessions" are a child's hours not covered by NEF. This could be because the child is not currently eligible for funding or the hours are over and above the regular NEF hours the child attends and recorded on GCC's nursery portal for the term.

Nursery Education Grant Funding (NEF)

- St Joseph's Pre-school are registered to receive 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 the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms. Similarly, St Joseph's Pre-school will also issue an Extended Hours Form each term for parents to complete if they shall be using the extended entitlement. Parents are responsible for applying for the extended 15 hours free childcare entitlement through the Government's online Childcare service at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to receive an eligibility code. This code is required to be entered on the Extended Hours form provided. Parents shall apply for an eligibility code each term before the deadline dates, which are 31st August for the Autumn term, 31st December for the Spring term and 31st March for the Summer term. St Joseph's Pre-school are responsible for verifying (or confirming) eligibility by checking that the parent's code included in the Extended Hours Declaration form is valid.
- 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.
- On the funding form you will need to declare any NEF sessions being claimed elsewhere (e.g. 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 each of the 3 terms to change your child's hours and an amendment funding form will need to be completed. 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.

¹ 15 hours extended entitlement is income related

² As per para 13.9 Local Provider Agreement 2020-21

Description of Payments

Refundable deposit

To secure a child's place at St Joseph's Pre-school, an advanced payment of £25 is required. If 2 or more places are being requested by the same parent/carer, eg. for twins, then the first child will be charged at £25 and any subsequent siblings joining at the same time will be charged £12.50 each. This will be refunded in the first term of the child's/children's attendance. The deposit needs to be paid within 10 working days of confirming the requirement to secure the place(s). If the monies are not received within this period then the place(s) will not be held. In addition, in the event of a child/children not taking up their offered place(s), then the deposit(s) will be retained.

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).
- Funded hours will be the first hours of the week accounted for on termly invoices followed by unfunded hours (as applicable).
- Fees are reviewed each year by the Committee and would normally rise in September (in line with inflation), 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. From 1 September 2023 the Pre-school's flat fee rate is £5.25 per hour for all children.
- Staff are eligible to receive "benefit in kind" of a 5% discount on their child's termly invoice and any extra session invoices should they attend St Joseph's Pre-school.

Mandatory contribution: nappy disposal

- Each half-termly invoice will include a mandatory contribution³ as follows:
 - nappy-wearing children will be charged an additional £10 to cover the costs of nappy disposal, consumables and to reflect increased demands on staff time.
- This charge is permitted through our Local Provider Agreement with GCC⁴.

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 (i.e. 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 (i.e. 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 room⁵.
- If late collection occurs on a regular basis, your child's place could be withdrawn.

³ Starting from 1 April 2023

⁴ As per para 12.2 Local Provider Agreement

⁵ St Joseph's Out Of School Club uses the room before and after pre-school hours.

Extra session(s)/extra days fees:

- Separate invoices will be issued for extra sessions/extra days attended by your child. Hours will be charged at the flat fee rate (see “Term fees”) regardless of whether your child is entitled to NEF or not
- Additional days must be agreed by 1pm on the day before the requested day to ensure sufficient space and staffing is available.

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, e.g. 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 regularly attendance hours can only take place at the start of the next term, unless there are extenuating circumstances affecting the child's welfare or the welfare of his/her parents/carers.
- Please note that there are 6 terms in a year. For funding purposes 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 to 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/Treasury Administrator (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 a sealed envelope addressed to the Treasurer with your child's name as a reference and purpose and amount of payment.
- Parents will be reminded, during the term, that their child's invoice is outstanding (if applicable).
- Concessions cannot be made for absences as the pre-school cannot fill a child's space with another child.

Non-payment of fees

If payment for any invoices, ie. half-termly, extra sessions, late fees etc, are not received by the requisite due dates, then the Treasury Administrator and/or Treasurer will refer to the Pre-school's Debt Procedure⁶ to recuperate monies owed.

Once all outstanding monies have been paid then reinstating any non-funded hours or increasing NEF hours or the booking of extra sessions can be discussed – dependent on space and staff availability.

Following a £10 late payment charge within a pre-school year, extra sessions will need to be paid for in advance of attendance. You can either settle the balance

- in cash or cheque (made payable to St Josephs Preschool) direct to the Lead Practitioner. This must be in a sealed envelope, addressed to the Treasurer, with the child's name and the reason for and amount of payment; or
- via the pre-school bank account at least 24 hours before the extra session, with confirmation by email to the Treasury Administrator and the Lead Practitioner with a screen shot of the payment.

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, rental of facilities 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.

⁶ 4.10.3 Debt Procedure

- If the Pre-school has to close due to Government requirements (e.g. as in March 2020 re COVID-19 pandemic) then the Emergency/temporary closure policy⁷ will be followed. If refunds are applicable (non-funded places only), then parents will be informed accordingly.
- If the Pre-school is open and other educational establishments are closed/partially closed, for example due to industrial action, and a parent decides not to send their child in, a refund will **not** be made (non-funded places only).

Further guidance

- Gloucestershire Local Provider Agreement “Early Years Funded Entitlements for 2, 3 & 4 year-olds”

Associated policies and procedures

- 4.3 Parent Pack (latest update).
- 4.10.3 Debt Procedure
- 4.1 Admissions

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
6.0	K Coupe, A Shipton, A Hitchings	More clarity given to the process to be followed with regards to non-payment of fees.	28/01/2021 Cttee – via email
7.0	K Coupe S Turner A Shipton	Updated to reflect change from 2-tier hourly rates to flat fee from 1 September 2021. Also more clarification about applying for 30 hours extended entitlement and non-payment of fees.	01/04/2021 Cttee – via email
8.0	K Coupe	Removal of reference to 2-tier hourly rates prior to 1 Sept 2021	08/07/2021 Chair
9.0	K Coupe	Within “Description of Payments” the inclusion of a paragraph regarding the “Refundable Deposit” introduced from 1 January 2022	25/11/2021 Cttee Mbr (T Clapp)
10.0	K Coupe & L Farrer	Updated as follows: • Deletion of wording stating that Committee members are eligible for a “benefit in kind” (5%	12/05/2022 Cttee Mbr (M Montgomery)

⁷ Policy 39 Emergency/temporary closure

Version Number	Author	Purpose of change	Date
		discount) on child invoices as applicable – as per DBS advice Inclusion of “further guidance” section. Inclusion of “associated policies and procedures section as per EY safeguarding audit (section 175/157);	
11.0	K Coupe & L Farrer	Updated as follows: • Inclusion of wording “(in line with inflation)” regarding September pay review. • Inclusion of new debt procedure in list of associated policies and procedures. • Inclusion of wording with regards to changing hours because of extenuating circumstances. “Associated policies and procedures” section updated accordingly. • Amendment of flat fee hourly rate to £4.95 from 1 September 2022	26/08/22 Cttee Mbr (G Ind)
12.0	K Coupe & L Farrer	More clarification with regards to the refundable deposit particularly with regards to twins etc.	05/11/2022 Cttee Mbr (L Finn)
13.0	K Coupe	Updated to • include reference to mandatory nappy disposal charge (starting from Term 5); • confirmation that no refund given if child does not attend when setting open if, for example, there is industrial action and other siblings schools are closed/partially opened.	28/02/2022 Cttee Mbr (S Webb)
14.0	L Farrer & K Coupe	Updated to reflect the Pre-school’s new Debt Procedure and to correspond with the Procedure in relation to Extra Sessions.	30/04/2023 Chair (A Hitchings)
15.0	K Coupe	Updated to reflect the increase in the hourly rate (flat rate) from 1 September 2023	06/06/2023 Chair (A Hitchings)
16.0	K Coupe	Wording confirming that funded hours will be allocated first on invoices followed by any unfunded hours.	12/07/2023 Chair (A Hitchings)