



Hughenden Hoppers Pre-School Fees Policy

Approved by:	Governing Body	Date: May 2024
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Last reviewed on:	Updated May 2024
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Next review due by:	September 2025
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Statement of intent

Hughenden Hoppers Preschool is sited within Hughenden Primary School and aims to provide a pre-school experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary school.

We aim to:

We provide a provision for a maximum of 16 children offering a combination of hours to suits to needs of our parents. The minimum booking is 1 day equivalent to 6.5 hours and the maximum is 32.5 hours. The maximum funding available is 30 hours, the chargeable lunchtime period (30 minutes daily) is invoiced separately by the school.

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to preschool fees such as Working Tax Credit, Disability Living Allowances and Early Years Pupil Premium.

This Preschool Fees Policy has been established to provide transparent fee information, set procedures for the payment of fees and create a framework for dealing with non-payment in a swift and fair manner.

Parents should be aware of and given access to this policy and the school's procedures. It will be included on the school's website and made available to view at the school on request.

Children joining our preschool do not automatically gain a school place at Hughenden Primary School as a Rising 5. Parents still have to apply through the Admissions Team at Buckinghamshire Council.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 (as amended in 2016)
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016
- DfE (2017) 'Early year's entitlements: operational guidance'
- DfE (2017) 'Early education and childcare'

Fees

Hughenden Hoppers Preschool charges parents for care provided outside of the:

- Universal 15 hours' free provision a week for all three- to four-year-olds.
- Extended 30 hours' free provision a week for three- to four-year-olds, where eligible.

The charges are as follows:

- £6.50 per hour
- A discount will be applied to the supervisory lunchtime charge for staff children each term, charged at £2 per day instead of £3.25. Any other dispensations are at the discretion of the Headteacher and Governors at the time of booking.
- The morning session runs from 8.45-11.45 am.
- The afternoon session runs from 12.15-3.15pm.
- The lunchtime session is 11.45-12.15pm and incurs a daily lunch charge of £3.25 per day which is invoiced separately to parents on a termly basis. Details of how to pay are shown on the invoice.
- For children staying for the extended 30 hours' free provision a week, where eligible, the session will run from 8.45-3.15pm. The additional lunchtime period of 30 minutes will be invoiced termly at a charge of £3.25 per day (30 minutes/50% of hourly rate).
- There is an option to choose a mixture of half days or full days across the week to suit your needs dependent on availability. The minimum booking is 1 day but we recommend 2 days. Any hours over and above funding entitlement will be charged at the hourly rate.
- If a school lunch is required there will be a charge for this and payment is due directly to our lunch provider. There is no funding for preschool lunches so parents. Alternatively, children can bring a packed lunch instead. Details of how to book will be provided within the Welcome Pack.
- Parents wishing to change their preschool booking, will need to complete a new booking form and the Amendment Form to annotate the change and the date the change becomes applicable from. All changes are subject to availability.

Eligibility for 30 hours' free childcare

Parents of three- and four-year-olds must meet one or more of the following criteria in order to be eligible for the extended 30 free hours of care:

- Each parent earns, or is expected to earn, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage (unless in a 'start up' period – i.e. newly self-employed – in which case they don't need to meet the income criteria for 12 months).
- The parent should be seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
- One or both parents are on maternity, paternity, shared parental or adoption leave, or are on statutory sick leave.
- One parent meets the income criteria and the other is unable to work because they are disabled, have caring responsibilities or have been assessed as having limited capability to work.
- If a non-EEA national, the parent has recourse to public funds.

Parents will check their eligibility for the scheme by using the government's [Childcare Choices](#) website or the [Childcare Calculator](#). If parents are eligible, they will be directed to the digital childcare service to apply.

Eligible parents will provide the school with their unique code, National Insurance number and child's date of birth, along with written consent, to enable the school to verify eligibility and receive future notifications from the LA on the continued validity of the code – parents are encouraged to do this as soon as possible, as they can only start their 30-hours free childcare the term after receiving a decision from HMRC.

The school will retain digital copies of documentation to enable the LA to undertake audits and fraud investigations; however, as per GDPR regulations they will be stored securely and deleted when there is no longer any good reason to keep the data.

If a child becomes ineligible they will be entitled to a grace period as shown below, after which they will have the option to pay for the additional childcare hours but will still be entitled to take up their universal entitlement.

Date parent receives ineligible decision on confirmation	LA audit date	Grace Period End date
1 Jan – 10 Feb	11 February	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	1 April	31 August
1 April – 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

If the parent is taking up the extended entitlement at more than one provider, the local authority should continue to fund 15 hours at the provider of the parent's choice.

Payment information

Payments should be made within 30 days for all non-statutory sessions and lunches, which parents have booked for their child that week.

Payments will be made by bacs, cheque or cash at the school office clearly noted 'Hughenden Hoppers Pre-School'. Payment details are provided on the invoice.

If a parent issues a cheque that cannot be cashed, a £10 fine will be issued along with any bank charges incurred and all future payments must be made in cash.

Payment is required when a child is on holiday or absent due to illness as the Pre-School must hold the child's place during this period and staff rotas are set on a termly basis.

If a child is absent for a long period due to illness, the Pre-School will decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether fees will need to be paid for the period. The Pre-School's decision is final.

Late payments will incur a £10 fine for each week payments are overdue. Parents falling into difficulty, should contact the school to discuss in more detail.

One term's notice and payment will be required to withdraw your child from the Pre-School.

Late collection

Staffing ratios must be maintained at all times. It is essential for safeguarding to pick up within the specified times. Persistent lateness or delays will require a separate conversation with Senior Leadership staff and may incur a late collection charge at the discretion of the Head teacher. The late collection charge is currently set at £5 per day and will be invoiced directly to the parent.

Difficulty with payments

The school will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.

Parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties should contact the school office as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

Debt collection

The governing board has a duty to ensure the school receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including preschool fees.

The governing board will not write off any debt.

Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

The Head teacher and School Business Manager will ensure that:

- Letters requesting money are accurately recorded and those records maintained.
- Evidence of the steps taken by the school in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters and phone calls.
- A final reminder is sent by recorded delivery to the debtor.
- The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
- The level of outstanding debt can be determined at any time.

The governing board:

- Will prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery.
- Must approve any legal action taken.
- Will record all approved action in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Will adhere to the privacy arrangements.
- May delegate its responsibilities under this policy to the Head teacher.

The process for pursuing debts

Informal reminder – Within **two** days of late payment, the debtor will be informally reminded in person or by telephone that they owe money to the school.

First reminder letter – If the debt is yet to be paid **one week** after an informal reminder, a formal letter will be sent to the debtor.

Second reminder letter - If the debt is yet to be paid **one week** after a first formal reminder, a second formal letter will be sent to the debtor. These letters allow the debtor every opportunity to settle their debt and ensure the school can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt should the issue proceed further.

Final reminder letter - If no response is received following the second reminder, the school will send a letter to the debtor advising them that they will be referring the matter to the LA to consider legal action. This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure the debtor has had every chance to respond.

Possible **legal action** – If no payment is made, the LA will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor.

The waiving of debts

The waiving of debts is at the discretion of the **Head teacher** and the **governing board**.

A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship or if all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and it is believed it would not be cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action. The **Head teacher** is authorised to waive debts in consultation with the Governing Body.

Debts between **£100** and **£500** will only be waived with the approval of the **governing board**. Debts of **£500** or more will never be waived.