**

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## Fees, Charging and Non Payment Policy

### Policy Statement

At Dandelions Community Pre-school, we aim to make our setting as accessible to as many families in the community as possible. We therefore aim to ensure our fees are as competitive as possible. As a non-profit making charity, we rely on prompt fee payments to be able to meet our running costs and to provide equipment and resources for the children who attend.

### Fees (From 1st April 2023)

* £6.20 – 2 year olds per hour
* £6.00 – 3-4 year olds per hour

**Optional**

£3.40 – Early start 8.30am

£3.40 – School Offer 8.45am start and 3.15pm finish

£5.10 – Early start 8.30am and 3.15pm finish

£6.80 – Early start 8.30am and 3.30pm finish

* Registration fee of £25.00 for formally registering a child with the setting.

Please note that BACS or electronic bank transfer payments for registration and any other fees are our preferred method of payment. Please quote your child’s name and what is being paid as reference. (For example, John Smith – Registration)

**Additional Charges**

The Department for Education issued guidance in December 2016 stating that the Early Years Funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver the 15 or 30 hours of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It does not cover: consumables and materials, observation logs, equipment to complete observations, maintenance of the setting and much more. With the cost of living, national minimum wage, food and general running costs for the Early Years Sector, we now need to charge for additional services not covered by the funding.

From April 2022, we shall be charging for additional services for all funded children which will part cover the costs of all consumables. This charge will cover baking, messy play, craft supplies and consumables. It will also cover the cost of other groups or outside agencies that come in to the preschool such as Relax Kids, Boogie Mites and Sports4Kids, plus trips to St Marks farm. There will also be other events such as our Easter Egg Hunt, Christmas and Leavers Party. This list is not exhaustive.

The introduction of this charge reflects the growing financial pressures that the childcare sector is facing. We are continually undertaking cost reduction exercises; however, this was deemed necessary to contribute to sustainability and to maintain the quality of our provision. Should you have cause for concern in relation to making this extra payment, please do speak to a member of the committee or the Preschool Manager.

Our fee structure (consumable charge) for funded hours from 1st September 2023

will be as follows:

0 – 10 hours funding per week £3 per week

10-20 hours funding per week £6 per week

20-30 hours funding per week £9 per week

### Payment Procedure

All parents/carers will receive an emailed invoice prior to commencement. Following this, we aim to have invoices issued prior to the start of each term.

Fees can be paid in full within 30 days of the invoice date, or paid weekly or monthly depending on agreed payment schedule. Please see late payment charges below.

Payment for all fees can be made via our preferred method of BACS for the exact full weekly payment (i.e. weekly or fortnightly, not part weeks) childcare vouchers or cash. If paying by cash please ensure that we receive the correct money as we cannot guarantee to return any change on the same day.

If paying using childcare vouchers it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Pre-school Manager of the payment plan.

Once a child has begun at Dandelions Pre-school, fees are payable for all sessions regardless of attendance. Therefore, fees are still due for sessions missed due to sickness or holiday.

If a child will be absent because of holiday or illness, then payment for the missed sessions must be either made in advance of the absence or the parent must make payment on the child’s first week of return or by the Monday of the week of Half term, or a late payment charge will apply (see below).

### Late Payment

A late payment fee charge of £5 will automatically be applied to outstanding fees on the Monday after half term.

In the event of a cheque being returned to Dandelions Pre-School marked unpaid, a £10 administration charge will be incurred.

**Non-Payment**

In order to run a high quality childcare setting, it is essential that fees are paid on time.

We understand that some families may face genuine hardship in paying fees. We ask that, in these circumstances, parents or carers speak to the Pre-School Manager in confidence immediately as it may be possible to arrange a flexible payment plan.

Any account falling into arrears will trigger the following procedure:

1. If an account falls into arrears a reminder invoice will be issued to bring the account up to date within 7 days.
2. The Preschool Manager will advise that if the account is not brought up to date that the child may not be able to attend the setting.
3. Following, this, if the balance has not been paid, we will advise the parent/carer that the child will no longer be able to attend their sessions until the balance has been settled.

If the account is still not settled the arrears will be passed to a Debt Collection Agency.

Any child that leaves the setting with an outstanding fee will trigger the following procedure:

In order to give a last opportunity to settle an account the parent / carer will be informed of the date that the debt will be passed to a Debt Collection Agency.

If the account is not settled it is out of the hands of the setting, and all payments plus any additional charges by the debt collection agency will have to be paid by them.

**Late Collection of Child**

Dandelions Pre-School has a duty of care to the children and parents to ensure that collection of young children is made at the agreed time or within normal Pre-School opening hours. Late collection causes additional overheads and cost for the Pre-School and potentially unnecessary distress to a child.

Children remaining in our care after the agreed collection time or after normal opening hours must be supervised by a minimum of two members of staff, one of whom must be qualified.

We appreciate that sometimes there may be circumstances beyond parent / carer control affecting the prompt collection of your child. If you know you are going to be late collecting the child in our care please call at the earliest opportunity and discuss with the Manager the arrangements for the collection. Please note that a late collection fee will still be chargeable, unless agreed otherwise, for example in exceptional circumstances.

Continuous late collection will incur a charge of £5 for the first 10 minutes per child and a further £5 for every 5 minutes following.

### Notice Period and Conditions

If you wish to increase sessions subject to availability this can be done with immediate effect.

Should you need to make a change or decrease the number of session you will be given the opportunity at the end of each half-term to do so.

Please complete the amendment to sessions form which is available from the office or can be found on our website.

### Child leaving Dandelions Pre-School

Six weeks notice is required if a child is to leave Dandelions Pre-School.

If six weeks notice is not received, then 6 weeks fees will be charged in lieu of notice.

### Funding

We are registered to provide the free and Universal Extended hours entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare and will meet our statutory obligations in this respect. For more information please visit: https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/payingforchildcare/freechildcare

**Adverse Weather and Exceptional Circumstances**

In the event of extreme weather conditions, we will endeavor to remain open unless we feel it is not safe to do so.

In such cases, you will be notified by Tapestry, Facebook or on our website of the closure and a notification will be posted on the Hampshire County Council School Closure page.

The safety of our children, parents and staff will remain our priority and we will only close in extreme circumstances or circumstances beyond our control.

At these times, as well as closure due to unexpected exceptional circumstance, fees are still payable. However, should a closure exceed 3 days this will then be reviewed.

### Pandemics

Should a lockdown situation occur then any fees already invoiced are payable. The preschool will endeavor to keep all charges to a minimum and will discuss with parents the possibility of providing children with catch up missed sessions.

However, this is subject to availability, and the preschool reserves the right to make decisions on fees and sessions considering the preschool as a whole and the viability of the business during the pandemic.

This policy will be reviewed termly.

The policy was adopted by the Committee on…………………………………………

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School………………………………………

Name of Signatory………………………………………………….

Role of Signatory……………………………………………………..

Date to be reviewed………………………………………………….