

## Guidance: Charging for spare places in School Nurseries

With effect from September 2012 new regulations came into force which allow schools to charge for spare places in maintained nursery classes over and above the 15 hours Free Universal Early Education. These regulations are cited as Education (Charges for Early Years Provision) Regulations 2012: [The Education \(Charges for Early Years Provision\) Regulations 2012 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukhr/2012/1200/1/2012-09-01)

We strongly recommend that schools consider how offering 'paid for' places would impact on existing provision already operating in their locality. Please contact the Early Years and Childcare Service to discuss this.

Schools should ensure that all parents/carers are aware of the school's policy with regards to the charging of additional hours over and above the child's early education entitlement.

For those parents who require information about help with childcare go to: [Help paying for childcare: Childcare you can get help paying for - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/help-paying-for-childcare)

For schools to charge for Early Years provision they must include this in their Charging and Admissions Policy.

Schools will need to ensure that the level of charging applied (hourly rate) is appropriate and agreed by the Governing Body as part of the Schools Charging and Remissions Policy. Schools must consider how they will record the income within the schools financial accounting system.

### **Paid places and the Free Early Education Entitlement**

Priority for allocating nursery places should always be given to children attending nursery for their Early Education Entitlement.

It maybe that some families wish their child to access more than their entitlement and to pay for additional hours at your nursery.

We strongly recommend that schools do not offer parents/carers the opportunity to pay for additional hours unless there is spare capacity within the nursery after all eligible 2 (if applicable), 3 and 4 year olds have been offered their requested funded hours.

When planning how many spaces you are able to "sell", consideration must be given to the fact that new children become eligible for their funded entitlement each term because their entitlement starts the term after their 3rd (or 2<sup>nd</sup>) birthday.

Ensure the school has a written admissions and equality policy for the nursery available to parents/carers that clearly describes how and when decisions about allocation of places will be taken, and how places will be allocated in the event of there being more children than places available.

### **Nursery Fee Policy**

Schools will need to develop their own nursery fee policy and keep this regularly under review. This should be fair, transparent and applied on a consistent basis. It is important to remember that this policy and any charges or conditions associated with it are only applicable to purchased places. **The Funded Early Education Entitlement must be completely free at the point of delivery with no conditions of access attached, as outlined in this government guidance:**

[Early education and childcare - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/early-education-and-childcare)

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Points to take into consideration in your nursery fee collection policy:

- Whether to collect a non-refundable registration fee when parents/carers complete an application form for **paid for** hours.
- How are parents/carers to be charged? Will they be invoiced in advance? Is it possible for fees to be paid monthly, per half term or term; by direct debit by prior arrangement with the bursar?
- Will you have a signed contract with the parent, stating how much they will be charged, when payment is due (in advance, per term, half term, monthly, or weekly) and by which method: direct debit?
- What is your non-payment of fees procedure? Does it outline how the collection of debts will be carried out and how an agreed payment plan will come into effect?
- Would there be a separate charge made for snacks or would this be included in the paid for session fee?
- Would there be a separate charge made for lunch time or would this be included in the session fee?
- Would children attending paid for hours have access to school meals and what would the charge be if applicable? [Apply for free school meals - Suffolk County Council](#)
- What would your policy be in the case of illness and planned holidays?
- Would you require notice to be given in writing prior to the removal of a child? If so how much? What action would you take if notice was not given?
- What is your policy for retaining places for any child not attending the nursery without explanation?
- What is your policy in cases of persistent lateness in collecting a child?

For information about childcare vouchers and other employer schemes please see#

[Help paying for childcare: Childcare vouchers and other employer schemes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### Updating your childcare record details on Suffolk Infolink

You should ensure that details of your nursery provision, and how much you will charge, are updated on the Suffolk Infolink – [www.suffolk.gov.uk/infolink](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/infolink) (also known as the Family Services Directory)