



Ox Close Federation

Nursery Fees Policy

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Ox Close Federation, at Oxclose Nursery, aims to provide a Nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to Primary school.

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to Nursery fees such as working tax credits and free childcare entitlement. This 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 Nursery's procedures. It will be included on the school's website and made available to view at the school on request.

Fees

Parents are charged for care provided outside of the following provision:

- 15 hours free provision a week for eligible two-year-olds
- Universal 15 hours free provision a week for all three to four-year-olds
- Extended 30 hours free provision a week for eligible three to four-year-olds
- Extended 30 hours free provision a week for children in foster care

The charges are £15 per additional session.

Parents will confirm the required sessions for each week one term in advance.

The 30 hours free childcare offer cannot be used to pay for meals, other consumables, e.g. nappies or sun cream, additional hours or additional activities e.g. trips. The school may charge a fee for these additions. If parents choose to pay for these, it will be an arrangement between the parent and the school.

Parents will not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a '30 hours' place.

Eligibility for 15 hours free childcare for three-and four-year-olds

All children in England can receive 570 hours free childcare per year.

These hours are usually taken as 15 hours a week for 38 weeks of the year, but parents may choose to take fewer hours over more weeks. Please note that 38 weeks is the maximum amount of weeks of the year that the Nursery provision is available.

'15 hours' free childcare is available from the term following a child's third birthday.

The school may ask parents to complete a form to help us ensure they receive their free childcare hours.

Eligibility for 30 hours free childcare extended entitlement

Parents of three- and four-year-olds must meet the eligibility criteria below to be eligible for the extended 30 hours free childcare.

These are as follows:

- The parent of the child, and the parent's partner, where applicable, is seeking the free childcare to enable them to work

- Each parent earns, or is expected to earn, a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage – this funding limit does not apply if a parent is self-employed and started their business less than 12 months ago.

Where one or both parents are in receipt of benefits in connection with sickness or parenting, they will be treated as though they are in paid work.

Where one parent in a couple household is in receipt, or could be entitled to be in receipt of, specific benefits related to caring, incapacity for work or limited capability for work, they are treated as though they are in paid work.

Parents are not eligible if:

- The child does not live with them.
- The parent or their partner has a taxable income over £100,000.
- The parent is from outside the EEA and their UK residence card says they cannot access 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 eligibility code, National Insurance number and child's date of birth, along with their 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, in line with the Data Protection Act 2018, it will be stored securely and deleted when there is no longer any good reason to keep the data.

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria, they will receive a grace period, i.e. they will continue to receive the 30 hours free childcare for this period.

A child who becomes ineligible during the first half of a funding block will be funded until the end of that following funding block or for as long as they remain under the compulsory school age, whichever is shorter.

Consideration to extend the grace period will be taken in exceptional circumstances, e.g. if a parent has been forced to leave their home and paid employment.

A child will not be able to take up their 30 hours free childcare place if their parents fall into their grace period before the child has started at the school.

30 hours free childcare can be claimed at the same time as claiming Universal Credit, tax credits, childcare vouchers or Tax-free Childcare.

Eligibility for extended entitlement for children in foster care

A child in foster care will be entitled to an additional 15 hours childcare per week (30 hours free childcare per week total) provided that the child is aged three, but below the compulsory school age, and the criteria below are met:

- Accessing the extended hours is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision making.
- In single foster parent families, the foster parent holds additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster parent.
- In two foster parent families, both partners hold additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster parent.

To receive their free childcare allowance, foster parents will apply directly to the LA by completing the LA's eligibility form. The school can provide this form on request.

Foster parents will be required by the LA to reconfirm their eligibility every three months.

Payment Information

Payments are due weekly and to be paid by the Friday of each week. Payment for all non-statutory sessions and lunches that parents have booked for their child will show on Arbor that week.

Payments will be made via the Arbor system. Payment will be required when a child is on holiday or absent due to illness. If a child is absent for a long period due to illness, the Nursery will decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether fees will need to be paid for the period. The Nursery's decision is final. One month's notice and payment will be required to withdraw your child from the Nursery.

Difficulty with payments

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

The school understands that 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 will contact the Federation Business Manager early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

Debt Collection

The Federation has a duty to ensure the Nursery receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including Nursery fees.

In circumstances where accounts are in arrears, we will follow our process to recover the amounts outstanding:

- 1 On a weekly basis, the accrued amounts owed will be notified via the Arbor Parent Portal App.
- 2 After seven days, the overdue amount will be notified by letter via the Arbor Parent Portal App requesting payment or contact with Ox Close Federation within 14 days.

- 3 If there is no response to the above letter and the overdue amount is still outstanding, a final follow-up letter will be issued. In the event that the debt remains outstanding and a payment plan has not been negotiated, after 28 days we reserve the right to refer the debt to the Durham County Council Debt Collection team and you are at risk of your child losing their Nursey place.

Our staff are here to help you and will always treat with you with dignity and respect. Please treat our staff in the same way. The use of aggressive, offensive or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.