

Fees Policy

1.0 Statement of intent

Our intention is to provide children with an environment they can feel safe and secure in. It is our intention to make sure all fees are kept up to date, in order that we are able to perform our duties to the best of our abilities and maintain the financial running of the Nurseries.

2.0 Aims

Our aim is to provide the best care and education for your child/ren; to do this we need to:

- Maintain correct staff/child ratios as dictated by National standards;
- Employ staff with appropriate level of training, experience and qualification;
- Replenish resources on a regular basis;
- Use fees in appropriate areas for the benefit of the children's care and education and;
- Maintain a safe and healthy environment.

3.0 Procedures - Collection of Fees

- 3.1 Invoices will be made available for collection by the 20th of each month and it is the parents/carers responsibility to ensure they collect their invoice from a staff member in their child's nursery room.
- 3.2 Fees are payable on the 1st day of each month.
- 3.3 Fees are payable 1 month in advance i.e. December's invoice should be paid by 1st December.
- 3.4 Fees are charged for term time only and are not charged for any school holiday period unless you elect for your child/children to attend the Nursery holiday play scheme. Play scheme attendance will be invoiced separately from term time attendance.
- 3.5 Fees are payable in full for the days your child is booked into the Nursery, including days when your child is absent due to illness or holidays.
- 3.6 Refunds of fees will not be made in the case of closure of the Nursery due to circumstances beyond its control i.e due to consideration for individual's safety in circumstances such as snow/ice. Parents/carers will be notified
- 3.7 Fees are charged for any extra sessions of care required and will be invoiced separately.
- 3.8 If you wish to relinquish your child's place or decrease sessions on a permanent basis, the Nursery requires 1 month's written notice.
- 3.9 The notice period is taken from date of receipt of written notice.
- 3.10 The notice period, when relinquishing a place at the Nursery, is based on term time weeks only. School holiday periods are not included in any notice period.
- 3.11 Any increase in fees will be notified in advance through a newsletter subsequent to agreement and endorsement of any such rise by the Directors of Bedfordshire East Schools Trust Nurseries Ltd. Fee details are posted in the Main Nursery foyer.
- 3.12 Non-payment of fees and failure to engage with BEST Nurseries Ltd Financial Hardship Policy will jeopardise your child's place at the Nursery.
- 3.13 Payment is accepted as cash, bank transfer, childcare voucher or cheque made payable to BEST Nurseries.
- 3.14 Fees are banked by BEST Nurseries Ltd. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that sufficient funds are available. If a parent/carer has concerns that

cheques may be returned as 'refer to drawer', the Nurseries suggests that they pay in cash.

3.15 No cash is kept on the Nursery premises. If paying in cash please ensure the correct amount is paid.

3.16 When paying with cash parents/carers must hand to member of staff who will issue a receipt immediately on verification of amount.

Voucher Payments - BEST Nurseries Ltd accepts all Government recognised schemes

4.0 Late/non payment of fees

See also 5.0 Financial Hardship

The process for late/non-payment of fees is as follows;

1. When payment has not been received within 1 week of payment due date (always the 1st of each month) the parent/carer will be asked to speak to the Finance Manager about any difficulties the parent/carer may be having in paying the fees.
2. We will give the opportunity for the parent/carer to organise payment in instalments as 5.0 Financial Hardships details, this will be discussed on an individual basis.
3. If the problem is not resolved within 3 weeks of the payment due date the Nursery Manager will ask that the child be kept away until the fees have been paid. A record of late payment will be kept and, should a fee default occur again, the nursery place will be withdrawn within 2 weeks of 1st due date.
4. Any unpaid fees will be pursued.

5.0 Financial Hardship

Background

BEST Nurseries Ltd is a community oriented service. We understand that there can be times when our customers, through no fault of their own, may be struggling to pay their child care costs. This Financial Hardship Policy outlines the minimum standards we will adopt in dealing with customers who are experiencing hardship. The policy is freely available by contacting us directly by phone or mail. If you are in a situation of genuine financial hardship and cannot pay your child care bill please contact us urgently on **01462 815637 (Shefford and Langford)** or **01462 732168 (Arlesey)** so that we can do our best to help you.

Definition

We define financial hardship as:

1. where you tell us you are experiencing difficulty paying your bill, or
2. where your payment history suggests difficulties with payments.

Our customer values

We recognise that for a whole variety of reasons you might find yourself in times of genuine financial hardship and unable to pay your child care bills. Our hardship policy is in place to help and support you. We will try and find workable solutions to help you that are fair, equitable, effective and lasting for both you and us.

Our approach

Our approach is to treat you with courtesy and respect. We understand that if you are faced with financial stress things need to be managed both with timelines (to prevent further escalation of the situation) and with the utmost sensitivity.

We will ensure that you are fully informed of your rights and obligations under the terms of your contract, including your rights and obligations under this hardship policy, in relation to:

1. additional time to pay;
2. instalment plans;
3. Government programs if applicable; and
4. payment options

Availability

Our Financial Hardship Policy is available to you at any time that you are experiencing temporary or more permanent financial hardship, resulting in non-payment of your child care bills. We will make every effort to assist you in such circumstances. Please call us on **01462 815637** or **01462 732168** for assistance.

Early alert to your potential hardship issues

We issue invoices monthly, which alerts us early to potential problems when you do not make your child care bill payment. We welcome early approaches by customers experiencing financial hardship so that this policy can be implemented. There are several actions which can be taken to alleviate financial burdens arising from your use of child care.

Additional time to pay

An extension of time to pay your bill may be arranged, at our discretion, for some or all the amount owed. Our senior management representative who is responsible for your case is authorised to make this decision. All discussions with you will be confidential.

Instalment plans

If you would like to make payments in advance of your next invoice we can easily arrange this for you. We can also provide you with the facility to pay amounts in arrears on an agreed instalment plan. In agreeing an instalment plan with you, we will agree the period of the plan, the amount of the instalments (reflecting your needs and your capacity to pay), the number of instalments, and details of the method of instalment calculation. We will review progress on your plan and agree with you any plan changes to adjust for circumstances.

Our clear message to you is this:

If you find yourself in financial difficulty and you cannot pay your child care invoice, please contact us for assistance as soon as you can and before the invoice is due for payment. Our number is 01462 815637 (Shefford and Langford) or 01462 732168 (Arlesey).

5.0 Staff Fee Concession

5.1 Summary

A childcare fee concession is granted to paid employees of BEST Nurseries Ltd for Nursery aged children attending a BEST Nurseries Ltd setting during term time and for children

aged 4mths to 12 years during school holiday periods and for whom they have direct parental responsibility during the session.

5.2 Scope

A concession may be granted to current paid employees that have a Nursery aged child attending a BEST Nurseries Ltd setting.

- Employment with BEST Nurseries Ltd must be current.
- The employee must have direct parental responsibility for the child.
- The concession will be:
 - A) School Term Time - a 50% reduction of childcare fees payable for non-funded hours attended, by a child that the employee has direct responsibility for, at a BEST Nurseries Ltd setting during the employees working hours;
 - B) School Holidays - a 100% reduction of childcare fees payable for non-funded hours attended, by a child that the employee has direct responsibility for, at a BEST Nurseries Ltd setting during the employees working hours.
 - C) The total benefit, over a financial year period, will not exceed £5,000.