

Fees and Charging Policy

Little Oaks is a not-for-profit charity, we aim to make our Pre-School and Playgroup as accessible to as many families in the community as possible, as part of this we try to ensure our fees are not above market value and represent value for money.

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. This policy adheres to the standards regulated by Northamptonshire County Council regarding the Government Funding for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Summary of Fees & Charges: (From September 2020)

- Playgroup sessions: £13.00 per 3-hour session
- Breakfast Club: £4.00 a session
- Lunch Club: £3.50 per session
- Non-funded pre-school day care sessions (if available): £13.00 per 3-hour session
- Expressing an Interest Fee: £0.00 (only available for academic years not yet open for registration).
- Play Group Registration Fee: £20.00 for formally registering a child on or after the registration date, before the child becomes eligible for Early Years Funding. This fee is not refundable unless Little Oaks is unable to offer a place for your child or your child is eligible for Early Years Funding when joining.
- Pre-School Registration Fee: £0.00 for all children registered after they are entitled to Early Years Funding. Please note there is limited availability and priority is given to children already attending Little Oaks.
- Late payment of Session Fees: £5.00
- Late payment of Club Fees: £3.00
- Bounced Cheque admin fee: £10.00
- Continuous Late pick-up fee: £10.00

Bank Transfer is our preferred method of payment:

Bank Account No: 18250160

Sort Code: 30-11-08

Please quote your child's name and what is being paid as reference.

(For example, John Smith - Registration)

Registration Payments

- If registering in person on the Registration date, this is payable by cash or cheque (payable to *Little Oaks Pre-school*) on the day or BACS payment can be made in advance. Alternatively, you can agree to pay via Direct Debit.
- If registering by email or post on or after the Registration date the fee should be paid by BACS, cash or cheque, due immediately or by agreeing to complete a Direct Debit mandate.

Payment Procedure:

- All parents/carers will receive an invoice by the beginning of the first week of each half term. This may be hard-copy or via email. Please inform the office if you want to receive an invoice via email.
- Fees can be paid in full during the first week of term OR paid weekly. If paying weekly, payment is due on the FIRST session of the week that your child attends Little Oaks. Otherwise Late Payment charges will apply.
- 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), cheque, childcare vouchers, Tax-Free Childcare or cash. Little Oaks also facilitates payment via Direct Debit should you choose to complete a mandate. If you have set up a mandate to collect fees via Direct Debit, please inform the Office if you decide to change your method of payment i.e. if you have a Tax-Free Childcare account, in order to avoid duplicate charges being made. If for any reason a Direct Debit payment fails, Little Oaks will try to take the payment a second time. If this further attempt fails, we will contact you to seek alternative payment which will be due by return and subsequently the normal application of late fees will apply (see below).
- If paying by cash, please ensure that we receive the correct money as we cannot guarantee to return any change on the same day. Cash payments should be limited and we reserve the right to refuse large cash payments over £100.
- Once payment has been received by cash or cheque, a receipt will be issued. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform Little Oaks if a receipt has not been issued by the end of the week and to keep all receipts for future reference.
- If paying using childcare vouchers it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the Office Administrator.
- If you choose to pay using the 'Tax Free Childcare' scheme, please let us know the ID reference number so that we can identify payments.
- All invoiced fees are payable **regardless of attendance** from the start date indicated at enrolment. Fees are still due for sessions missed due to sickness or holiday or if a child's place is deferred for longer than half a term without notice being given (please see our Admissions Policy). This applies to Playgroup and Pre-school sessions, Day Care and pre-booked Breakfast and Lunch Club sessions.
- If a child will be absent because of holiday, then payment for the missed sessions must be either made in advance of the absence or as normal, it will be expected on the first day of the week that your child would normally attend or a late payment charge will apply (see below).
- We do not accommodate any swapping of sessions for any reason during the week. If your child is unable to attend a session and you would like to book them in for a different session in the same week, this will be chargeable as an ad hoc booking.
- Parents or carers will be asked for one week's fees to be paid at our Enrolment event for those starting Playgroup, based on sessions chosen. This will be credited as payment for the first **full** week's attendance when the child joins Little Oaks. If the parents or carers choose, for whatever reason, not to take up the place then this money will not be refunded and will be retained by Little Oaks as payment in lieu of notice. If, however, once a child is enrolled at Little Oaks, it transpires that they have an entitlement to 2-year funding then the advance enrolment fee will be refunded.

Closure of Setting:

Should the setting need to close due to reasons beyond our control (e.g. water/sewerage, heating failure, flood, staff sickness) or adverse weather conditions (e.g. snow and ice), fees will not be refunded for the first 2 days of closure, thereafter paid fees will be credited against future sessions.

Please see below section titled 'Covid-19 Update' for specific guidance in the event of closure from Covid-19.

Notice Period and Conditions:

Cancellation of a REGULAR Breakfast Club, Lunch Club or Day Care place will require half a term's notice (6 weeks).

Permanent, regular bookings will be charged in full if the notice is not given.

If Breakfast or Lunch Club is ever seen as a non-viable service, Little Oaks reserves the right to give parents a six-week notice period of the service being cancelled.

Charges for visits and shortened sessions:

We encourage parents to visit with their child prior to the child starting with us. There are occasions when a child's keyperson may suggest shortened sessions when a child first starts. In these circumstances, the following charging policy will apply:

- For settling in sessions where the parents or carers are requested to stay, there will be a pro rata charge.
- For shortened sessions, full session fees will be charged for the first 4 weeks. If shortened sessions continue beyond the first 4 weeks, the fees will be reduced on a pro rata basis. If fees have already been paid, then this amount will be credited to the next invoice payable. Shortened sessions are at the discretion of the child's keyperson.

Late Collection:

Continuous late collection of your child will incur a charge of £10 as per our Late Collection Policy.

Voluntary Healthy Snack Contribution

We ask for a voluntary contribution of £10.00 per child per half term towards the cost of healthy snacks from all children in receipt of free entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare i.e. 3-year old funding.

Information will be sent to parents/carers via email. We prefer not to accept payment for Healthy Snack and Cooking via the Tax-Free Childcare scheme or company childcare vouchers as we would be unable to claim Gift Aid on your contributions. Payment can be made via cash, cheque, BACS or Direct Debit.

Late Payment:

- Parents and carers are responsible to pay the invoices issued by Little Oaks, the setting will not issue reminders. If fees are not paid, late payment fees and charges will automatically be applied:
 - Late Playgroup or Day Care Fees £5.00
 - Late Club Fees £3.00
 - Bounced Cheque Admin Fee £10.00
- If a child is absent due to illness, no late payment charges will be added for that time, providing we have received a phone call on the first day of absence and payment is received on the **FIRST** session the child returns to Little Oaks.
- If a child is absent for more than 5 days due to a pre-arranged operation or hospitalisation, arrangements should be made **PRIOR** to the absence with the Office Administrator.
- If after three requests the outstanding 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.

Cancellation of child leaving Little Oaks Pre School:

- Six weeks' notice is required if a child is to leave Little Oaks.
- If six weeks' notice is not received, then 6 weeks' fees will be charged in lieu of notice.
- If a child who is in receipt of funding leaves after headcount day, then we do not transfer the funding to their new setting.
- If a child who is in receipt of funding joins Little Oaks after headcount-day, then we will not request a transfer of funding from the previous setting.

Funding

We are registered to provide the free entitlement to Early Learning and Childcare and will meet our statutory obligations in this respect. For more information, please visit:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/early-years/Pages/default.aspx>

For parents who receive government funding (either the 2-year old funding or when the child receives 3-year old funding) we will require documents to prove your child's date of birth and a utility bill to prove where they live. A parental contract will be drawn showing the amount of hours due to attend and this will be updated and require a signature at each funding block (i.e. each term).

We are registered to provide funding for 30 hours but this is dependent on the availability of sessions at the time of the eligibility being confirmed. In line with the 3-year funding, there is a deadline for applying for this each term i.e. 31st December (for a January start) and 31st March (for an April start). It is the **responsibility of the parents** to re-check their eligibility every three months otherwise it could result in payment of fees or the child losing their place at Little Oaks.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Children who meet certain eligibility criteria could be eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). The Early Years Pupil Premium is additional funding available for investment in improving outcomes for children. Children will be eligible if they are 3 or 4 years old and receiving Government funded Free Entitlement in any OFSTED registered childcare provider and their parents are in receipt of one or more benefits used to access eligibility for free school meals. More information can be found here:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/early-years/Pages/childcare-funding.aspx>

Once your child is funded at 3, a funding application form will need to be completed by the setting to access this funding, including details of the parents to find out eligibility. Once eligibility has been confirmed by Northamptonshire County Council, any voluntary contributions asked from parents - including snack, cooking, visits and outings, will be covered by the EYPP payment. If required, this payment can also cover one lunch club a week, depending on availability, for the child attending Little Oaks.

COVID-19 Update

Should Little Oaks be required to close a room or the setting due to a positive case of Coronavirus, parents will be notified immediately and fees will not be payable for the period of closure. If a parent has paid for the half term in advance, sessions will either be credited or refunded as appropriate.

Updated coronavirus guidance from the government for Early Years settings released on 22nd December 2020 states that if a child is self-isolating having been contacted by NHS Test and Trace, the provider should not charge the parent or carer for this period. We ask that you provide us with evidence of the dates your child has been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace and we will refund/credit the fees for this period accordingly.

Other related Policies:

- Admissions
- Healthy Eating Policy

This policy was adopted at a committee meeting of Little Oaks held on.....

Signed on behalf of the committee.....

Role in the committee.....

Update History

This policy was reviewed and updated November 2012, Jan 2013, Sept 2013, October 13

Updated Jan 14, Feb 14, Sep 14, updated Jan 15, Updated Oct 15 New late payment charges.
Updated Feb 16 - new fee charges, March 16, Update Sep 16, Feb 17, March 17, June 17, Sept 17,
updated Nov 17. Reviewed & Updated March 2018, July 2018. Updated Nov 18, Jan 19.
Updated May 2019 - Format changes + Direct Debit, Updated September 19 (Direct Debit).
Reviewed and updated Jan 2020 - addition of 6 weeks' notice for closure of BFC or Lunch Club,
addition of no swapping sessions and fees to be paid if deferring longer than half a term. Updated
Jan 21 with Covid-19 Update.