Funding, Fee structure and charging policy

STATEMENT OF INTENT

It is our intention to apply fees fairly and reasonably.

AIM

We aim to ensure that fees are no more than necessary and not a barrier to those in a difficult financial situation.

METHODS

Fees are payable only where funding is not available from West Northamptonshire Council.

The charge is per session or hourly where over funded hours and is normally payable in advance at the beginning of each half term, with no refunds for sessions missed. Fees are expected to be paid within two weeks of issue. If they are not paid by this date, further communication with parents will take place to ascertain the reason for non-payment and a payment plan will be put in place if appropriate. If the payment plan is not adhered to, and there is not a valid reason for further non-payment of fees*, parents may be informed that their child cannot return to pre-school until the first payment of the agreed payment plan is put in place.

Parents are made aware of information about Tax-Free Childcare.

The amount of the fees is determined by how much income is needed to ensure staff levels are maintained both at the level required by legislation and at the level we determine is required to provide a better-than-average facility.

*Where a parent/carer is experiencing financial difficulties they should speak to the pre-school manager who will refer the matter to the pre-school trustees. It may be possible to spread payments over a longer period, or come to some other arrangement. This will be at the discretion of the pre-school trustees.

In the case of prolonged unexpected absence, e.g. serious illness, fees may be refunded at the discretion of the pre-school trustees.

If we are informed that a child will be taking a planned extended absence, then fees may be reduced for the agreed period at the discretion of the pre-school trustees.

We are registered to accept Tax Free Childcare and Childcare Vouchers. If using Childcare vouchers, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform us.

CANCELLATION OF PLACE – CHILD LEAVING PRE-SCHOOL

We ask that you give, wherever possible, 4 weeks' notice of your child cancelling their place at Little Fishes pre-school. Where no notice has been given, Little Fishes Pre-school can continue to charge for up to 4 weeks attendance in lieu of notice.

If no notice has been given and the child has a funded place, the pre-school can continue to claim funding for a maximum of 4 weeks.

FUNDING

Little Fishes Pre-school are registered to provide free entitlement to Early Education and Childcare. We are registered to provide funding for 2, 3- and 4-year-olds, in line with government funding.

For more information, please visit:

Get help paying for childcare | West Northamptonshire Council (westnorthants.gov.uk)

PAYMENT PROCEDURE

Where funding is not available from West Northants Council or a child attends hours that exceed the relevant funding, an invoice will be provided to the parent / carer.

The charge is hourly and parents / carers are invoiced half termly in advance. Invoices are issued by email (paper copies can be requested) to the parent / carer during the first week of a half term.

Preferred payment method is via bank transfer wherever possible (our bank details will be provided on the invoice).

Payment due date will be 2 weeks from the date of the invoice.

All invoiced hours are payable regardless of missed sessions due to sickness /holiday and will commence from the child's agreed start date.

CLOSURE FOR REASONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL

Should the pre-school need to close for reasons beyond our control (e.g. water /heating etc) or adverse weather conditions, fees will not be refunded for the first two days of closure.

After the second day of closure if we need to remain closed then fees will not be refunded but we will credit the amount invoiced against future sessions.

EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM

Children who meet certain eligibility criteria may be eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This is additional funding that is available for improving the outcomes of children. If the child is eligible, pre-school would receive a payment each month for resources / additional help that the child would benefit from. On receipt of the parent / carer contract funding form, pre-school will use this information to check eligibility with West Northamptonshire Council.

Date policy adopted / reviewed November 2026

Signed on behalf of the Pre-School Trustees _____

Name and position of signatory Denise Smith, Chair

Policy review date **November 2027**