

FEE PAYING POLICY

Reference: CF16

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Windmill Hill City Farm is a not for profit organisation. All families attending the Children and Family Services (C&FS) have a responsibility to pay all their childcare fees as laid out in this Policy and the Allocations Policy.

This Policy has been updated in line with current Government Guidance in managing the COVID-19 Pandemic within Early Years Settings (21/05/2020):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings/coronavirus-covid-19-implementing-protective-measures-in-education-and-childcare-settings>

This is the method in which we will work with each parent/carer:

- Each family will be invoiced for their child's booked/agreed sessions on the 1st of every month (or the closest possible date to the 1st) for the forthcoming month.
- The Children and Family Services Administrators will advise, via the weekly e-mail updates, when the invoices have been sent. The e-mail will be sent to the main family e-mail address unless otherwise advised.
- If you require a paper copy of the invoice, please inform the administrators who will ensure a copy is put in the post for you each month.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to check their emailed/posted invoice. All e-mailed invoices require a password in order to open them - this will be your account number which we e-mail to you prior to your first invoice.
- All invoice amounts must be paid and cleared by the 14th of every month. Please allow enough time for internet banking payments to reach our account by the 14th of the month.
- Due to the current Covid-19 situation parents/carers are required to pay full fees if using any sessions and 20% (or percentage notified) if not. Please note that operational times may vary during this period and you will only be charged for the times offered.
- If you are unable to pay all or part of the invoice it is imperative that you speak to us at the earliest opportunity.

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- If payment has not been made by the 14th of the month a final reminder will be sent advising the need to pay within the next seven days and you will incur an administration charge of £20.00 which will be added to the following months invoice.
- Once the seven day period has expired and if no payments have been made you will incur another administration charge of £20.00 and be notified that if payment has not been made by the end of the month your child will be at risk of losing their Nursery or Farm Adventurers place.

Deposits

- The maximum time that we can hold an offered place for any family will be eight weeks. Any fee paying/part fee paying family accepting a place will need to pay a deposit within two weeks of the written offer being made. The deposit will be the equivalent of four weeks fees of the booked/agreed sessions. When your child is due to leave this amount can be deducted from your final payment or returned to you once the account is clear. Refunds will be made by cheque or a BACS payment. Please note that deposits cannot be paid via childcare vouchers/tax free childcare due to the tax relief parents/carers receive resulting in us being unable to refund the deposit amount back to you directly when your child leaves (if there are no fees owing).
- If, during the time of the deposit being paid and the agreed start date, the family decides to decline the place the deposit will not be refundable as it may have prevented another family having the place.
- The deposit will be the equivalent to four weeks fees of the booked/agreed sessions and/or meal charges if these apply. **This will be refunded when the child leaves the service that they are attending providing all fee payments are up to date.** Please note the deposit cannot be used as payment for your first month's fees.

Parents/carers in receipt of childcare funding for training/furthering education:

- Prior to the child starting, written confirmation from the training provider must be given to us confirming that they are going to pay the childcare costs that are booked. This must include details of payment and from when the childcare funding will start. Without this information the child cannot start and may lose their place.
- A payment schedule will be required from the college/learning provider listing the dates that the parents will receive childcare funding for their child's agreed sessions. Please note, parents remain responsible for ensuring that any outstanding fees are settled within seven days of the scheduled payment date.

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Permanent Sessions (changes request):

New starters:

- As we allocate places based on a points system determined by how many sessions you have requested, sessions cannot be reduced for the first three months.
- If after the three months you require to change the agreed permanent sessions, please fill in the appropriate form. One month's notice is required for any permanent changes; changes may not be granted without this notice.

Existing families:

Requesting to permanently increase or change current days/sessions

- All permanent change requests have to be submitted by the 10th of every month to start at the beginning or within the following month (or after this if the request is made further in advance), e.g. requests submitted by 10th August will be implemented during September or after depending on the request date made.
- Requests submitted after the 10th of the month will not be reviewed until the following month, and implemented the month after, e.g. requests submitted 11th of August or after will be reviewed in September and implemented in October or after depending on the request date made.
- You will not be able to bridge gaps with temporary additional sessions while waiting for a permanent change to be implemented.
- If at any stage you require to reduce your agreed permanent booked sessions, one month's notice is required. The full months' notice will be payable in all instances regardless as to whether your child attends for the full month or not.
- If you wish to increase sessions, please complete the relevant form and return to your child's room. Once your request has been assessed we will e-mail/contact you to confirm whether we can accommodate your request or not. Please note we can only agree to increasing sessions if spaces are available, fee payments are up to date, and the appropriate paperwork has been completed and authorised.
- Please note that if you are increasing sessions you will need to pay a deposit for these before the agreed start date. This will be advised to you in the confirmation e-mail.

Extra Sessions:

If you require any extra sessions, please fill in the appropriate form either before or on the day that you are going to use the extra session and hand to a Room Leader to

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check availability and authorise. Please give as much notice as possible. Once the request has been authorised **you will not be able to cancel** as this request may have stopped someone else accessing the session or appropriate staffing may have been arranged to support this request. The cost of this extra session will be added to your next invoice. **Please note that we do not allow the swapping of any sessions that have been permanently booked and agreed by both parties.**

Payment options:

- We encourage all payments to be made via bank transfers. The bank name is the Co-operative Bank, the account number is 50072334 and the sort code is 089002. Please ensure that you use your child's full name as the reference when you set this up. Please note that if your account is also held with The Co-Operative Bank we would request that you inform us by email of each payment made, as we do not receive a reference with these payments.
- If you wish you can choose to set up a monthly standing order (please make the amount the equivalent of four weeks fees) to be paid before the 14th of each month. We will send quarterly statements showing any outstanding balance and request that you make an additional payment to bring the account up to date.
- If you are paying by cheque, please make all cheques payable to Windmill Hill City Farm Ltd. We do not take cheques for any amount under £5.00. If, for whatever reason, your cheque bounces, you will be liable to pay £15.00 towards the bank charges and administration costs. If this does occur, you will be notified and expected to pay the invoice amount by an agreed date as well as the £15.00 charge.
- There is the option to pay fees by credit card; please ask the office staff for more details.
- Many employers run a childcare voucher scheme where parents can access tax free childcare costs. Payment of childcare vouchers may be paid to us directly via BACS transfer or via paper vouchers which are issued to you to pass to us. This is set up via your payroll department who will advise you which scheme they operate and what payment information they require. Please ensure vouchers are received in enough time for the payment to be processed before the 14th of each month, this can take at least a week.

You may be entitled to join HMRC's Tax Free Childcare Scheme, where they add 20% to any funds paid into the scheme which can then be used to pay for nursery fees. Please visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> for more information.

Please note:

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- We cannot refund any overpayments that have been paid by vouchers/tax free childcare.
- Deposits cannot be paid using vouchers/tax free childcare.
- Please note that we do not encourage payments by cash.
- When paying your fees please endeavour to make the payment to the Administrators, Manager or the Deputy Manager in the office.
- If you need to make an urgent payment and it cannot wait until the following day or the next time you are in, you may make the payment to a Room Leader who will take the payment and issue you with a receipt (this only applies to cash or cheque payments). Fee payments must not be given to any other staff members who work with the children as this then takes them away from their care duties.

Invoice queries:

- If you have any invoicing queries, please raise these with either the Finance Administrator or the Senior Administrator by the 7th of the month. Please raise any queries in writing by email, as shown on your monthly invoice.

Late pick up charges:

- Late collection causes significant disruption and increased staff costs as it impacts on child:adult ratios resulting in staff members having to stay and work after their normal working hours. If you are late collecting your child you will be charged £5.00 for every five minutes (or part thereof) after the end of your booked and agreed session i.e. collection at 5.04pm for a session ending at 5.00pm will incur a £5.00 charge, collection at 5.06pm will incur a £10.00 charge. This charge will be added to your next invoice. If there is an unavoidable circumstance for which you may have no control, we encourage parents/carers to telephone us, in these cases it will be at the Manager's/Room Leaders discretion whether to charge or not. Please note that if you are late on a regular basis other sanctions may be taken.
- To monitor the time/lateness, staff will use the room 'Tablets' or the telephones in the rooms for accuracy as these will be the same as 'smart devices/watches'.

Non-attendance:

- If your child is away for any reason including illness or holiday, payment of fees (including meal charges) will still apply.
- Please note that you will not be charged for any C&FS closures of our decision e.g.

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Bank Holidays, staff in-service days etc.

Notice Period:

- If it is your intention to remove your child from the service you are accessing, you are responsible for giving four weeks' notice in writing (please complete a leavers form available in the nursery reception/office). On receipt of this, we will make arrangements for your deposit to be refunded back to you once your child has left. Deposits can be refunded by cheque or bank transfer (please email bank details to charmaine.nethercott@windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk) or you may choose to use it towards your final payment. Please note your deposit will only be returned if all accounts are up to date and four weeks' notice has been given.
- If notice is not given with regard to any absences and the absence period exceeds two weeks and you have not contacted us within this period, we will make every effort to make some form of contact with you, but in the event we cannot get hold of you, your child will automatically lose their place and your deposit will be non-refundable. Please note that you will be charged for the four weeks' notice period regardless of the reason as it may have stopped another family accessing the service e.g. child not settling in, change in circumstances etc.

Free Early Education for 2 year olds:

A child may be eligible for FEE sessions if parents/carers receive certain benefits (further details can be found at www.bristol.gov.uk/page/children-and-young-people/early-education-and-childcare). They will receive up to 12 non-chargeable hours 48 weeks of the year. The 12 hours funding can be used Monday – Friday between the hours of 9.00am – 5.00pm (set session times will apply).

A deposit will be required to secure a place; this will either be based on your child's meal charges or any additional hours over and above the funded 12 that you may access.

Parents/carers will be invoiced and be expected to pay for the extra hours or meal charges accessed per month as outlined in this policy. Please note you will be charged for any meals that are part of that session unless you have opted for your child to have a packed lunch.

Flexible Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) Grant Funded Sessions for 3 & 4 year olds:

All children aged 3 and 4 will be eligible for the universal FEEE funding (from the term after their child's third birthday). This will mean that the family will receive up to 12 non-chargeable hours 48 weeks of the year. Many families may also be eligible to the

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extended funding which would be another 12 hours in addition to the universal 12 hours. More information available on request. The funded hours can be used Monday – Friday between the hours of 9.00am – 5.00pm (set session times will apply).

A deposit will be required to secure a place; this will either be based on your child's meal charges or any additional hours, over and above the funded 12, that you may access.

If your child is accessing two settings, you may wish to split the funding. If this is the case you will need to inform us so that you can be advised accordingly of how this works and what paperwork needs to be filled in so we can ensure the correct amount of funding is claimed.

Parents/carers will be invoiced and be expected to pay for the extra hours or meal charges accessed per month as outlined in this policy. Please note you will be charged for any meals that are part of that session.

As a setting we aim to be supportive to all our families and in order for this to happen there must be trust, commitment and co-operation from both parties. This policy works in conjunction with the Admissions Policy.