



HOLLY TREES FEE POLICY

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BACKGROUND

Please see below supporting policies:

- Enrolment and Admissions Policy
- Settling in policy and Procedure

Holly Trees understands that the cost of registered childcare may seem expensive to a parent/carer. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating service for children requires considerable investment, funding, astute planning and curriculum development, trained cooks, facilities and resources, trained professionals with ongoing development on all matters relating to the education, health & safety, wellbeing and safeguarding of children, senior leadership and management of provision and operational tasks, finance, accounting, HR, statutory compliance and strategic oversight to ensure the continued high standards and sustainability of the Nursery.

The above is not an exhaustive list and therefore we must ask that parents/carers respect its policy in respect of fees.

For the reasons above we have a sole funding policy and therefore your full entitlement must be used with our nursery only. There may be some extenuating circumstances in which this is reviewed however this would be determined on a case-by-case basis.

In addition, we aim to ensure that:

- The level of fees will be reviewed annually, in the light of the Nursery's financial position, its future strategic plans and any other broader economic or social considerations deemed relevant.

All childcare fees are charged based on the following structure:

BLENDING PLAN (FUNDED HOURS + HOURLY RATE):

- For families accessing government funded hours alongside additional privately paid childcare.
- Minimum booking of three days per week.
- Applies to children under 2 years, 2-3 years, and 3 years plus.
- Session duration is 10.5 hours, from 7:30am to 6:00pm.

INDEPENDENT PLAN (HOURLY RATE ONLY):

- For families not using government funding
- Minimum booking of three days per week.

- Applies to children under 2 years, 2-3 years, and 3 years plus.
- Session duration is 10.5 hours, from 7:30am to 6:00pm.

FULLY FUNDED PLAN (FUNDED-ONLY PLACES):

- For families using only government funding (no additional paid hours).
- Minimum attendance of two sessions per week, structured in accordance with the child's stretched funding entitlement. A daily consumables charge applies where applicable.
- Sessions are structured to align with funding hours:
 - Morning Session: 7:30am – 1:00pm
 - Afternoon Session: 12:30pm – 6:00pm
 - Full Day Session: 8:00am – 6:00pm (maximum 10 hours per day)
- A maximum of 10 funded hours can be claimed per day as per government guidelines.

MINIMUM ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- **Blended Plan:** Minimum of three days per week to provide consistency and social experience for the child.
- **Independent Plan:** Minimum of three days per week to provide consistency and social experience for the child.
- **Fully Funded Plan:** Children must attend a minimum of two sessions across the week. We do not offer funded only places for children attending on just one day per week. All funded only places must be taken on a stretched basis across the full year and families must use their full stretched entitlement.

For families eligible for 15 funded hours per week, this equates to 11.2 hours per week when stretched. The full 11.2 hours must be used and must be taken across a minimum of two morning, afternoon, or mixed sessions during the week.

For families eligible for 30 funded hours per week, this equates to 22.4 hours per week when stretched. The full 22.4 hours must be used. This may be taken across two full day sessions, from 8am to 6pm, or across four morning and/or afternoon sessions during the week.

Attendance patterns remain subject to availability and must fit within the nursery's available session structure. Regular attendance across the week supports children to settle, build secure relationships and engage consistently in nursery life.

CHANGES TO CONTRACTED ATTENDANCE AND NOTICE PERIOD

To support effective staffing, occupancy planning and the ongoing sustainability of the nursery, Holly Trees requires advance notice of any permanent change to a child's contracted attendance.

ONE FULL CALENDAR MONTH'S NOTICE

A minimum of one full calendar month's written notice is required for:

- the withdrawal of a child from the nursery
- any permanent reduction in contracted days or sessions
- the removal of a booked day or session
- any permanent change to a child's contracted attendance pattern

For the purposes of this Fee Policy, wherever the term "one month" or "one month's notice" is used, this means one full calendar month's notice.

A full calendar month's notice runs from the first day to the final day of a calendar month. Notice must therefore be received before the start of the calendar month that will constitute the notice period.

For example, where written notice is received at any point during September, the full calendar month of October will constitute the notice period and the change will take effect from 1st November.

Notice cannot be backdated.

PROVIDING NOTICE

All notice must be provided in writing to the nursery through the appropriate nursery communication channel.

Verbal discussions with educators, management or other members of the nursery team do not constitute formal notice.

The nursery will confirm receipt of formal notice in writing. Families are responsible for ensuring that notice has been received.

FEES AND ATTENDANCE DURING THE NOTICE PERIOD

A child's existing contracted attendance pattern remains in place throughout the full calendar month notice period and all applicable fees remain payable.

Choosing not to attend some or all of the child's contracted days during the notice period does not remove the family's obligation to pay for the contracted place.

The nursery reserves staffing and capacity based upon contracted attendance. Fees therefore remain payable until the notice period has been completed and the agreed change takes effect.

CHANGES TO GOVERNMENT FUNDING

A change, reduction, expiry or loss of government funding does not automatically change or reduce a child's contracted attendance pattern.

Where funded hours cease to be available, any contracted hours that are no longer covered by government funding will become privately payable in accordance with the nursery's applicable fee structure.

If a family wishes to reduce their child's attendance as a result of a change to their funding entitlement, the standard one full calendar month's written notice requirement will apply.

The existing contracted attendance pattern and applicable fees will remain in place until the notice period has been completed and the new attendance pattern takes effect.

ATTENDANCE PATTERN PROTECTION

Attendance Pattern Protection (APP) is linked to a child's contracted attendance pattern and, where applicable, their funding arrangement.

Where a child's attendance pattern or funding arrangement changes, any applicable APP will be recalculated in accordance with the fee structure applying to the child's new arrangement.

APP associated with a previous attendance pattern does not transfer to a new attendance pattern and does not create an entitlement to the same adjustment following a change in attendance or funding.

Further information can be found within the Attendance Pattern Protection (APP) section of this policy.

SURRENDERING CONTRACTED DAYS OR SESSIONS

Once a reduction in attendance takes effect, any days or sessions surrendered by the family will be released and may be offered to another child.

Holly Trees cannot guarantee that a surrendered day or session will remain available should a family subsequently wish to increase their attendance.

Any future request to increase attendance will be treated as a new attendance request and will be:

- subject to availability
- subject to the nursery's minimum attendance requirements
- charged in accordance with the fee structure applicable at that time
- subject to recalculation of any applicable Attendance Pattern Protection

REQUESTS TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE

Requests to permanently increase a child's contracted attendance do not require one full calendar month's notice but remain subject to availability.

Where additional days are available, the nursery will confirm the date from which the new attendance pattern and associated fees will commence.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Holly Trees recognises that exceptional circumstances may arise and reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to waive or vary the standard notice requirement.

Any variation must be agreed and confirmed in writing by Holly Trees.

A decision to waive or vary the notice requirement in one instance does not establish a precedent or create an entitlement for the same arrangement to be offered to another family or on a future occasion.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- All fees are charged on a monthly basis, calculated by multiplying the weekly fees by 52 weeks and then dividing by 12 months.
- Fees outside of the regular schedule are charged at a higher rate to account for additional operational costs and resource allocation.
- Please read our fee information document for cost of full-day bookings for additional days.
- Discounts are available for siblings attending full time. Please see our fee information document for more details.

Please speak to the manager for more information.

Please note that parents who require funded only session will incur a charge per session for consumables which contributes to costs relating to snacks, extra-curricular sessions, resources and equipment. Parents and families on FEEE2 will not be required to pay a consumables fee as set by the government. The consumables rate can be found on our fee information document

- Fees are payable 52 weeks of the year, including during bank holidays, family holidays, and periods of sickness. The nursery is closed on all English bank holidays, three inset training

days, and for one week over the Christmas and New Year period. These closure days are billable and have been accounted for within our hourly rate, which reflects the annual cost of your child's place.

- We also close at 3pm on Christmas Eve or if Christmas Eve falls at the weekend, the nursery will close at 3pm on the last working day before Christmas and is also billable and factored into your annual rate.
- Under extenuating circumstances when the nursery must close for Health and Safety reasons the nursery fees are fully payable. For example: Water supply unavailable, Electricity supply unavailable, Gas Leak, Adverse weather conditions etc.

Our guidelines are as follows:

OUR GUIDELINES

ADMISSIONS FEE AND SETTLING

DIGITAL ENROLMENT & SYSTEMS SETUP FEE:

Once you have been offered a place at Holly Trees, you will be required to complete an online digital enrolment form, sign a Parent/Carer Contract, and pay a £150 non-refundable Digital enrolment fee. Please note that payment of the Digital enrolment fee does not guarantee a place but secures your eligibility for a place, subject to availability and successful completion of our family onboarding process. Without completing the registration process, you will not be considered for a place.

Eligibility for a place indicates that your child will be placed on a waiting list, and a confirmed place will be offered based on availability and the completion of the family onboarding process.

If you choose to accept a place elsewhere while remaining on our waiting list, or if we are unable to offer a place due to limited availability, the Digital enrolment fee will not be refunded. This is because the Digital enrolment fee covers the administrative time and costs involved in processing your child's enrolment.

Parents and family accessing funding only session or FEEE2 will not be required to pay a Digital enrolment fee.

SETTLING IN:

Parents and Carers will not be charged during the Settling in period, which lasts for 3 sessions.

Session 1: 1 Hour

Session 2: 2 Hours

Session 3: 2 Hours

LATE FEES, NON-PAYMENT, PAYMENT PLANS AND SUSPENSION POLICY

INVOICES AND PAYMENT DEADLINES

- Invoices are issued monthly in advance between the 20th and 22nd of each month.
- All fees must be paid in full by the 1st of the month, before the childcare period begins.
- Fees are payable in advance and the nursery does not offer credit as standard.

LATE FEES

- A late fee of £5 per day is charged for each day a balance remains outstanding after the due date.

- Direct Debit / Childcare Vouchers: If payment is not received by the 1st, late fees apply from the 1st.
- HMRC (Tax-Free Childcare / Universal Credit): Payment is still due by the 1st. A grace period is allowed until the end of the 5th to allow for HMRC processing.

If payment has not been received by the end of the 5th, late fees will be backdated from the 1st to the 5th and will continue daily from the 6th onward.

- Late fees continue to accrue until the balance is paid in full or a payment plan is agreed and the first instalment has been paid.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

- If a parent/carer is experiencing difficulty paying fees on time, they must contact the nursery office as early as possible to discuss the situation.
- Early communication may allow for a temporary payment plan to be considered, but the nursery is not obligated to offer one.

PAYMENT PLANS

- Payment plans are not automatic or guaranteed and are only considered in genuine cases of financial hardship.
- Requests must be made in writing and any required financial information must be provided.
- If a plan is offered, it must be agreed and signed by both the parent/carer and the nursery.
- All instalments must be paid on or before the agreed dates.
If any instalment is missed or late, the payment plan will be cancelled and the child's place will be suspended immediately, without waiting until the 12th.

FINAL PAYMENT DEADLINE AND SUSPENSION

- If full payment has not been received by 11:00am on the 10th of the month, the child's place will be suspended from the 12th of the month without further notice, and the child must not attend.
- If the 12th falls on a weekend or closure day, suspension will be enforced on the next operational day.
- Even if payment is made over the weekend, attendance will not be permitted until the nursery has confirmed receipt of payment and the place has been formally reinstated.
- The earliest possible return is normally the following operational day.

REINSTATEMENT

A suspended place will only be reinstated when:

- ✓ All outstanding fees are paid in full, or
 - ✓ A new payment plan is agreed and the first instalment has been paid.
- Parents will be notified in writing when the child may return.

REFUSAL OF ADDITIONAL SESSIONS

While fees remain outstanding or a payment plan is in place, the nursery reserves the right to refuse extra sessions, additional days, or ad-hoc bookings until the account is fully up to date.

QUERIES AND DISPUTES

- Invoices can be queried by parents within 5 days of issue.
- After 5 days, invoices are considered accurate and payable.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to speak to the nursery as soon as possible if they are unsure about any charges.

TERMINATION OF PLACE (NON-PAYMENT)

- If fees remain unpaid, if late payment is repeated, or if suspension cannot be resolved, the nursery reserves the right to terminate the child's place.
- Once terminated, the place may be offered to another family.
- Any outstanding fees remain payable in full.

DEBT RECOVERY

If fees remain unpaid after suspension or termination:

- The account may be referred to a third-party debt recovery agency.
- Relevant personal and account information may be shared for this purpose.
- Parents/carers may be liable for reasonable collection costs, fees and charges incurred in recovering the debt.
- Legal action may be taken where appropriate.

NOTICE OF WITHDRAWAL

Holly Trees Day Nursery specifically reserve the right to end your agreement with immediate effect.

- You have not paid the agreed fees within the timeframe indicated in point 3 of our late/non-payment procedures.
- If you wish to withdraw your child from the nursery, you must complete an Exit Form and provide the required one full calendar month's written notice in accordance with the Changes to Contracted Attendance and Notice Period section of this policy
- A written notice must be provided in writing to the Manager. You may do this by sending an email to info@hollytreesdaynursery.co.uk
- Any sessions not used within the notice period will not be refunded (dependent upon Funding /Fee paying protocols).
- All invoices must be paid in full prior to leaving Holly Trees Nursery.
- Any additional charges you incur during your notice period will be invoiced on the next available invoicing date and must be paid within 14 days.

- Holly Trees requires one full calendar month's written notice, in accordance with the Changes to Contracted Attendance and Notice Period section of this policy, in writing should an extra booked session no longer be required. All fees are payable during this period.
- If your child is accessing FEEE and your child leaves us part way through the term, ECC request that funding follows the child, but it is at the discretion of the provider. This is a private arrangement between the parent and the 2 providers. Other than in extenuating circumstances if a child leaves us part way through the term, we retain the funding as transferring the funding would leave us financially out of pocket in the instance in which we can replace the space at the point of your transfer we may transfer the funding, however this would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that any outstanding balances on your account must be cleared before a funding transfer can be considered.

SCHEDULE FOR PAYING NURSERY FEES

INVOICES AND PAYMENT TIMING

- Invoices are issued monthly in advance between the 20th and 22nd of each month.
- Payment is due on or before the 1st of each month and must be made prior to the month of care.
- All fees must be paid in full before the childcare period to which the invoice relates.
- Fees are payable 12 months of the year, including bank holidays, inset days and closure periods (unless stated otherwise in this policy).

HOW MONTHLY FEES ARE CALCULATED

- Fees are calculated using a 52-week annual model divided into 12 equal monthly payments.
- Formula: Weekly fee × 52 weeks ÷ 12 months = fixed monthly fee.
- This ensures consistency and predictability for both the nursery and parents, allowing accurate financial planning and budgeting.
- Invoices therefore remain the same each month, rather than varying based on the number of weeks or days in that month.

CHANGES TO AGE-RELATED FEE BANDS

Where a child's age results in a change to the applicable nursery fee band, the new fee band will take effect from the first day of the calendar month following the child's birthday.

For example, where a child turns three at any point during September, the fee band applicable at the beginning of September will continue for the full month, and the applicable 3 years+ fee band will take effect from 1st October.

Fees will not be apportioned between different age-related fee bands within the same calendar month. This ensures that the nursery's fee structure is applied consistently to all families and supports the nursery's annualised monthly billing model.

This provision relates specifically to the nursery's private fee structure and does not determine when a child becomes eligible for government-funded childcare. Government funding will commence in accordance with the applicable Government and Local Authority eligibility requirements and funding periods.

ACCEPTED PAYMENT METHODS

CHILDCARE VOUCHERS

- All major childcare voucher providers are accepted.
- Vouchers must be released in time for payment to be received by the 1st of the month.
- Parents must inform the nursery which provider they use and ensure any voucher payments are set up correctly.

DIRECT DEBIT (PRIMARY PAYMENT METHOD)

- All fee-paying parents must pay via Direct Debit.
- Parents are required to complete a Direct Debit mandate during onboarding.
- The mandate must be fully active before the child's start date, otherwise the place may be delayed or withdrawn.
- Direct Debit provides secure, automated payments and supports the financial sustainability of the setting.

TAX-FREE CHILDCARE / HMRC PAYMENTS (20% FEE REDUCTION SCHEME)

- Parents may use Tax-Free Childcare or other HMRC schemes to pay fees.
- Parents are responsible for releasing funds in time for payment to reach the nursery by the 1st.
- A grace period is allowed until the end of the 5th, but late fees will be backdated from the 1st if payment has not arrived by then (see Late Fees section).

PAYMENT METHODS NOT ACCEPTED

- The nursery does not accept bank transfers, standing orders, or cash payments.
- These methods have been phased out to ensure accurate tracking, automation, and financial compliance.

FAILURE TO SET UP DIRECT DEBIT

- Failure to complete and maintain an active Direct Debit mandate may result in the child's place being delayed or withdrawn.
- The nursery reserves the right to refuse attendance until all payment methods are correctly in place.

Important Note

If parents have any questions or require support setting up payments, they should contact the nursery office as soon as possible to avoid delays or late fees.

RECEIPTS FOR PAYMENT OF FEES

A receipt for the payment of the fees will be issued by email to the Contracting Parent or Carer by the Nursery following payment of fees.

Please notify the nursery if your email address has changed or you have not been receiving invoices or a receipt.

NURSERY HOLIDAYS, CLOSURE AND FEES DURING A CHILD ABSENCE

We are open all year round.

The Nursery is closed for one week between Christmas and New Year, all Bank Holidays and up to three Staff Training Inset days per year which is factored into your annual fee. Parents/ Carers will be given advanced notice of these closures. Fees remain payable throughout closure periods.

Parents and Families who access FEEE places on our Training days will not be able to access their entitlement on these days. Early years childcare providers can claim FEEE for up to 1 day per term when they are open in order to carry out staff training.

This policy is to make parents aware before they sign the parent/carers agreement that they will lose a day of FEEE per term and will not receive any refund for this day as there is no cash value to the FEEE funding. We provide a minimum of a half term's notice of any planned closures.

Parents and families with FEEE places whose attendance falls on a bank holiday will not be able to access their entitlement on bank holidays. Therefore, you will not receive your full entitlement where there are bank holidays within the funded weeks as these days cannot be taken with another provider

and we still incur costs, such as staff wages, even though we are not open. However, we will not charge for consumables on bank holidays.

RATIONALE FOR BANK HOLIDAY CHARGES

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, our fee structure is designed to ensure high-quality childcare while maintaining the financial sustainability of the setting. As part of this structure, fees remain payable on bank holidays, even though the nursery is closed.

This policy is in place because:

- **Fixed Operational Costs:** The nursery continues to incur essential overhead costs such as rent, utilities, insurance, and staff salaries, which are calculated across the full year.
- **Annualised Fee Structure:** Fees are spread evenly across 52 weeks, ensuring consistency in payments for families while allowing us to effectively budget and sustain high standards of care.
- **Staff Contracts & Holiday Pay:** Our staff receive paid leave on bank holidays as part of their contractual entitlements, ensuring we retain skilled and experienced educators.
- **Ensuring Nursery Sustainability:** Maintaining fee payments during closures helps prevent unexpected increases in childcare costs, ensuring affordability and stability for all families in the long term.

ADDITIONAL SESSIONS OUTSIDE OF REGULAR SCHEDULE

Booking Requirement: Extra sessions will be available only as full-day bookings, covering the period from 7:30 am to 6:00 pm.

Fee Structure: For more information regarding the charge for these additional full-day sessions please read our Fee Information Document.

Holly Trees Day Nursery requires one full calendar month's notice in writing should an extra booked session no longer be required. All fees are payable during this period

FEES DURING ABSENCE

If your child is absent from the nursery due to sickness or holiday, the full fees must be paid for the place to be kept.

RE-ENROLMENT AND BREAKS IN ATTENDANCE

Families who withdraw their child from the nursery and seek to return within six months of termination will be subject to a re-enrolment fee of 60% of their final monthly invoice prior to leaving, or £500 whichever is greater.

This applies unless the withdrawal was due to permanent relocation or exceptional circumstances agreed in writing by the nursery.

Re-enrolment is not guaranteed, and places are subject to availability. Returning children will not be prioritised over those on the waiting list.

Where a child's withdrawal and return are deemed to have been made in order to avoid nursery fees (e.g. during extended holidays), the nursery reserves the right to refuse re-admission and treat the action as a breach of good faith under our terms and conditions.

Rationale:

This policy prevents families from exploiting short-term withdrawals to avoid paying fees, while ensuring fairness to those maintaining consistent attendance. The re-enrolment fee helps recover administrative costs, protects staffing and occupancy planning, and supports the financial sustainability of the setting.

LATE COLLECTION & FEES REVIEW

Parents must collect their children on time at the end of their booked session. Late collection places additional strain on staff and can impact the safety and wellbeing of children and staff.

A late collection fee of £15.00 will be charged for every 10 minutes (or part thereof) that you are late in collecting your child. This fee will apply to each child in your care, should you have more than one child at the nursery during the session in which you are late collecting.

If you are late collecting your child after 6:00 pm on three or more occasions within a calendar month, a flat late collection fee of £60.00 will be charged on the third and each subsequent late collection during that month, regardless of how many minutes you are late.

If you have not collected your child by 7:00 pm, Social Services will be contacted to collect your child.

Parents who wish to receive a thorough handover at the end of the day are encouraged to arrive in good time to ensure staff can provide this before closing. Handovers are not expected to be completed at closing time or close to it, as this places additional strain on staff who need to close the room safely and complete their end-of-day duties.

The late charge will apply to each child should you have more than one child at Holly Trees Day Nursery for the session in which you are late collecting

Holly Trees Day Nursery will occasionally arrange day trips out which may come at additional costs. Should you approve the trip, the cost will be added to your next invoice and is to be paid within the terms stated. In certain circumstances, we may require payment upfront for trips, and this will be clearly communicated to you in advance.

Holly Trees Day Nursery reviews and adjusts its rates annually, with changes taking effect each September.

Holly Trees Day Nursery will give a minimum of 6 weeks' notice of any rate change.

EMERGENCY CLOSURE

We understand that emergency closures may present a financial burden for families. While we regret any inconvenience caused, it is necessary for fees to remain payable in these instances to maintain our operational stability and staff employment.

In unavoidable and exceptional circumstances, such as notifiable infection, significant staff shortage, Water supply unavailable, Electricity supply unavailable, Gas Leak, Adverse weather conditions or consequential damage following a fire etc, it may be necessary to close all or part of the Nursery at short notice.

It is not the nursery's policy to refund fees in such circumstances.

WHY FEES REMAIN PAYABLE DURING EMERGENCY CLOSURES:

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, we are committed to providing high-quality childcare while ensuring the sustainability of our services. In unavoidable and exceptional circumstances where the nursery must close at short notice for health and safety reasons such as a gas leak, loss of water or electricity supply, extreme weather conditions, or infectious disease outbreaks, our policy states that fees remain payable.

This is because:

- Ongoing Operational Costs: The nursery continues to incur fixed costs, including staff wages, rent, utilities, insurance, and other essential expenses, regardless of whether the setting is open.

- **Staff Salaries & Retention:** We maintain staff employment during closures to ensure continuity of care and prevent disruptions for children upon reopening.
- **Sustainability of Service:** Temporary closures do not reduce our financial obligations, and continued fee payments ensure we can reopen as soon as it is safe to do so.
- **Limited Alternative Options:** In many cases, emergency closures are beyond our control and occur with little notice, meaning alternative care cannot always be arranged in time.

We understand that closures may be inconvenient for parents and families, and we will always strive to minimise disruptions. Where possible, we will communicate alternative arrangements, such as rescheduling missed sessions (subject to availability) or providing home learning resources to support children's continued development during closures.

CONSUMABLES

Government funding is intended to cover the delivery of education and care, but not the costs of meals, consumables, or additional services. Therefore, a daily consumables fee is applied for funded places to cover items and services that fall outside the scope of the government's funding contribution.

This daily consumables fee covers:

- All meals provided by the nursery: morning snack, lunch and afternoon tea
- Resources used directly by the child, such as nappies, wipes (if not provided by the parent), sun cream, and creative materials
- Enrichment activities

Families opting out of food provision are opting out of all three nursery meals: snack, lunch, and tea. In this case, parents are required to provide all three meals in accordance with the nursery's Parent-Provided Food and Packed Lunch Policy, which includes strict guidelines around allergens, food safety, and healthy contents.

Meals brought from home must fully comply with the policy. If any food is:

- Missing (i.e., not all meals are provided)
- Contains non-permitted or allergen-risk items
- Not labelled correctly

the nursery will replace the item(s) with its standard provision, and the food portion of the daily consumables charge will be applied to the parent's invoice for that day.

Should a parent wish to switch from receiving nursery-provided meals to providing meals from home, or vice versa, a minimum of one full calendar month's written notice must be given. During the notice

period, the original arrangement remains in place, and any consumables charges already due will continue to apply until the notice period ends.

Non-payment of consumables fees will be treated in the same way as any other invoice non-payment. As per the nursery's terms and conditions, failure to pay may result in the suspension of your child's place until the outstanding balance is cleared.

Persistent non-compliance may result in the withdrawal of permission to provide meals from home. Families on FEEE2 (funding for disadvantaged two-year-olds) are not required to pay the consumables fee, in accordance with Essex County Council guidance.

The statutory guidance is clear that government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

Core costs of running a business that delivers government-funded childcare are not considered consumables used by the child or additional services provided to the child. These include, but are not limited to, insurance, Ofsted registration, maintenance, business rates, training costs, rent, energy bills and staffing. These are core costs of running the business and we expect these to be covered by government funding and that parents should not be charged.

We charge for meals and snacks as part of a free entitlement place, and we also charge for additional items such as wipes and sun cream only if these are not provided by the parent, as it is our expectation that parents will supply these. We also charge for additional services such as trips, specialist tuition, and extracurricular activities including dance, yoga, football, and other sports sessions.

All additional costs listed above are charged as consumables and contribute to the overall cost of providing these services. Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

In cases where a parent or family is unable or chooses not to pay the consumables charge for certain items, an alternative may be offered. For example, you may wish to provide your child with a packed lunch and snack from home rather than using meals prepared by our kitchen staff.

Parents are welcome to opt out of individual items included in the consumables charge. However, if opting out of a specific item, an appropriate alternative must be provided by the parent (e.g., packed lunch)

An alternative to having a child sit out on a service that is offered to other children is that based on availability we will offer provision on days in which we know those services are not provided for example offer your session on day when there is no football or yoga classes.

Another alternative is in some instances we may waive the consumables fee or offer a reduced rate based on the family's situation however this would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Parents and families on FEEE2 will not be required to pay a consumables fee as set by the government.

DISCOUNTS

At Holly Trees Day Nursery, we value and support families who entrust us with the care and education of multiple children. To recognise this commitment, we offer a sibling discount for parents whose children attend on a full-day, full-time attendance pattern.

This discount applies as follows:

- A sibling discount is applied to the eldest child's nursery place, commencing from the first full month in which multiple children from the same family are enrolled.
- The discount is only available for children attending full days, five days per week.
- This offer cannot be combined with any other discounts or promotions.

Our sibling discount aims to support families while ensuring we continue providing high-quality childcare with experienced staff, enriching activities, and a well-resourced learning environment.

Please speak to the accounts team for details on eligibility and how this discount is applied.

FEE STRUCTURE AND COMPLIANCE WITH FEEE GUIDANCE

As an early years provider offering places to families accessing government funding and families paying privately for their childcare, Holly Trees is committed to maintaining a fee structure that is clear, consistent, fair and compliant with relevant Local Authority and Department for Education guidance.

OUR STANDARD ATTENDANCE STRUCTURE

Holly Trees operates one standard attendance structure for all fee paying places, whether or not a family is accessing government funded hours.

Our standard full day session is 7:30am to 6:00pm, and children attending under our Blended or Independent Plans are required to attend a minimum of three full days per week.

Families who do not receive government funding therefore access the same standard full day session structure as families who receive government funding. We do not operate a separate or reduced session structure for private paying families.

The Fully Funded Plan operates separately, as this is specifically designed for families accessing government funded childcare without purchasing additional private childcare hours.

GOVERNMENT FUNDED HOURS

All eligible funded hours are delivered free at the point of use and without any mandatory charge for the funded childcare hours.

We do not assign a private monetary value to funded hours or charge parents a top up fee for their funded entitlement.

Where a child attends for longer than their funded entitlement, the remaining privately chargeable childcare is calculated in accordance with the nursery's published fee structure.

Any charges for meals, consumables or additional services are dealt with separately in accordance with the relevant sections of this policy.

A CONSISTENT PRICING STRUCTURE

Holly Trees uses a Published Hourly Rate when calculating applicable private childcare fees.

The same pricing methodology applies regardless of whether a family receives government funding.

Government funding is applied according to the child's eligible entitlement, with the remaining privately chargeable childcare calculated using the applicable Published Hourly Rate.

This provides a consistent and transparent basis for calculating fees across the nursery.

ATTENDANCE PATTERN PROTECTION

Government funding provides a fixed number of funded hours. As a child's attendance increases across the week, the number of privately chargeable hours may also increase.

In some circumstances, calculating all privately chargeable hours using the Published Hourly Rate could result in the calculated invoice exceeding the nursery's applicable monthly fee for that particular attendance pattern.

To address this, Holly Trees operates Attendance Pattern Protection (APP). Please see the Attendance Pattern Protection section within this policy for more information.

FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

The introduction of Attendance Pattern Protection enables Holly Trees to operate a consistent full day session structure for both funded and non funded fee paying families.

This means that a family's access to government funding does not require them to be placed on a different private childcare session structure in order for the nursery to maintain a fair and sustainable pricing model.

We regularly review our fee structure to ensure that:

- government funded hours remain free at the point of use
- families are charged consistently under the applicable pricing structure
- Attendance Pattern Protection is applied where required
- private paying families are not disproportionately affected by the operation of government funded childcare
- parents receive clear information about their attendance pattern and monthly fees before accepting a place

Parents and carers who require further information about their fees, funding entitlement or Attendance Pattern Protection should contact the accounts team.

ATTENDANCE PATTERN PROTECTION (APP)

Holly Trees operates an Attendance Pattern Protection (APP) mechanism as part of its applicable fee structure.

Our Published Hourly Rate is used consistently when calculating childcare fees. However, because the number of funded and privately payable hours can vary depending on a child's attendance pattern, applying the Published Hourly Rate alone may, in some circumstances, result in a monthly charge that is higher than the applicable monthly fee for that attendance pattern.

Where this occurs, Attendance Pattern Protection is applied to the invoice to reduce the amount payable to the applicable monthly fee for the child's agreed attendance pattern.

Attendance Pattern Protection:

- is applied where applicable according to the child's agreed attendance pattern, funding entitlement and pricing plan
- is calculated by the nursery in accordance with its published and applicable fee structure

- is applied after the child's fees have been calculated using the Published Hourly Rate
- does not change the Published Hourly Rate
- is not a discount, promotional offer or reduction to the value of a child's funded entitlement
- does not have a cash value and cannot be exchanged, transferred or carried forward

The amount of Attendance Pattern Protection may therefore differ between families depending on their attendance pattern and funding arrangement. Some attendance patterns may not require Attendance Pattern Protection because the fee calculated using the Published Hourly Rate already corresponds with the applicable monthly fee.

CHANGES TO ATTENDANCE

Attendance Pattern Protection is linked to the child's agreed attendance pattern. If a family increases or reduces their contracted attendance, changes their funding arrangement, or otherwise moves to a different pricing plan, their fees and any applicable Attendance Pattern Protection will be recalculated in accordance with the fee structure applicable to the new arrangement.

Any change to contracted attendance remains subject to the nursery's required notice period and availability.

GOVERNMENT FUNDED HOURS

Attendance Pattern Protection does not reduce, replace or place a monetary value on a child's government funded entitlement. Eligible funded hours continue to be provided free at the point of use in accordance with the applicable funding requirements.

APP relates only to the calculation of the final amount payable under the nursery's applicable pricing structure where an adjustment is required.

Parents and carers will not need to apply for Attendance Pattern Protection. Where applicable, it will be calculated and applied automatically by the nursery.

FREE EARLY EDUCATION ENTITLEMENT (FEEE)

QUICK GUIDE TO FEEE

Holly Trees offers the following Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE), subject to eligibility and availability:

- **FEEE1W:** Up to 30 funded hours per week for eligible working parents of children from 9 months old
- **FEEE2W:** Up to 30 funded hours per week for eligible working parents of 2 year olds

- **FEEE2:** 15 funded hours per week for eligible 2 year olds who meet the applicable eligibility criteria
- **FEEE3&4 Universal Entitlement:** 15 funded hours per week for all eligible 3 and 4 year olds
- **FEEE3&4 Working Parent Entitlement:** Up to 30 funded hours per week for eligible working parents of 3 and 4 year olds

At Holly Trees, funded hours are offered on a stretched basis across 51 weeks of the year. This means:

- A 15 hour weekly entitlement equates to approximately 11.2 funded hours per week when stretched
- A 30 hour weekly entitlement equates to approximately 22.4 funded hours per week when stretched

Working parent eligibility must be maintained and reconfirmed with HMRC every three months. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their eligibility code remains valid in order to continue accessing their working parent funded entitlement.

Holly Trees operates a sole funding policy. Where a funded place is accepted, families are expected to use their full applicable entitlement with Holly Trees, unless an alternative arrangement has been agreed by the nursery in exceptional circumstances.

Early years providers are not required to offer FEEE places, and entitlement to government funding does not guarantee a place at a particular provider or a particular pattern of provision. All places and attendance patterns remain subject to availability and the provider's applicable admissions and attendance requirements.

FEEE is at the heart of the Government's vision for all children to have access to high quality early years education. Evidence shows that regular good quality early education has long lasting benefits for all children.

The FEEE for three- and four-year-olds (FEEE3&4) is a universal funded provision for every child from the term following their third birthday up until they reach statutory school age, or they are registered in a maintained school or academy reception class.

WORKING PARENT ENTITLEMENT

Eligible working parents may be entitled to up to 30 funded hours per week for children from 9 months old until they reach statutory school age, subject to the Government's eligibility requirements.

At Holly Trees, the 30 hour entitlement is offered on a stretched basis across 51 weeks of the year, equating to approximately 22.4 funded hours per week.

To access the working parent entitlement, parents must apply through the Government's childcare service and receive a valid 11 digit eligibility code. This code must be provided to Holly Trees so that eligibility can be validated with Essex County Council before funded hours can be applied.

CHECKING ELIGIBILITY AND APPLYING

Parents can find information about the different types of Government childcare support available through Childcare Choices:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Parents can check what help they may be eligible for with childcare costs through GOV.UK:

<https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>

Further information about funded early education and childcare in Essex is available through Essex County Council:

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare>

Once an application has been approved, parents will receive an eligibility code which must be provided to Holly Trees. We will validate the code with Essex County Council before applying funded hours to the child's place.

APPLYING FOR FUNDING

Parents are responsible for applying for their entitlement within the required Government timescales and ensuring that a valid eligibility code is in place before the relevant funding period begins.

Government funding cannot normally be backdated. If a valid eligibility code is not obtained within the required timescale, the funded entitlement may not commence until the following funding period.

Where a child is already attending Holly Trees and funding is not available for their booked hours, the applicable private fees will remain payable in accordance with this Fee Policy.

MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY

Working parent eligibility must be reconfirmed with HMRC every three months. It is the parent's responsibility to reconfirm their eligibility within the required timescale and to notify Holly Trees of any changes that may affect their entitlement.

Parents should not assume that funding will continue automatically. Holly Trees will validate eligibility through Essex County Council and funded hours can only be applied where the required eligibility has been confirmed.

Where eligibility ends, a code expires, or a parent enters a grace period, the provisions set out within the Funding Eligibility and Grace Periods section of this policy will apply.

FUNDING ELIGIBILITY AND GRACE PERIODS

ELIGIBILITY CODES

Parents wishing to access the 30-hour entitlement (22.4 hours per week when stretched) must apply through HMRC using their Government Gateway account. HMRC issues an 11-digit eligibility code which is valid for three months. Parents must reconfirm their eligibility every three months to keep the same code active. HMRC does not backdate late reconfirmations.

PROVIDER DEADLINES AND VALIDATION

- We set internal deadlines (usually 6–8 weeks before each term) for parents to provide or reconfirm codes so that we can check them on the Essex County Council (ECC) Provider Portal.
- The Portal shows if a code is valid, in a grace period, or expired.
- Funded hours are only free at the point of use while a code is valid or in grace period.

LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY

- If a parent fails to reconfirm or loses eligibility, private fees at our standard hourly rate will apply for all of the hours their child is booked to attend from the date the funding stops.
- Parents cannot avoid private charges by immediately reducing their child's booked sessions when funding ends. The standard one full calendar month's written notice must be provided before any reduction or change in contracted attendance takes effect. Until the notice period has been completed and the new attendance pattern takes effect, the applicable private fees will remain payable.
- HMRC will not backdate funding if a parent's reconfirmation is late.

GRACE PERIODS

- Essex County Council may allow a short grace period where funding continues temporarily after eligibility lapses.

- Once the grace period ends, parents are liable for private fees for all booked hours unless a new valid code has been confirmed.
- For the latest grace period rules and dates, parents must check the Essex County Council Early Years and Childcare website (www.essex.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare) or contact the nursery for guidance.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Apply for and maintain a valid HMRC code before the start of each funding term.
- Reconfirm eligibility every three months.
- Notify us promptly of any changes in circumstances that may affect entitlement.
- Give the required one full calendar month's written notice for any permanent change or reduction in contracted attendance.

Version	Updated	By	Authorisation Status
1.1	03/2024	Area Manager	
1.2	09/2024	Area Manager	
2.0	05/2025	Area Manager	
2.1	09/2025	Area Manager	
2.2	10/2025	Area Manager	
3.0	08/2026	Director	