

Preschool Admission & Fees Policy

Playtime Preschool Admission & Fees Policy

This policy outlines the admissions, registration procedures, funding structures, operational hours, and fee rules for Playtime Preschool at Time Childcare (TCC).

1. Statement of Intent, Accessibility, and Community Partnerships

Playtime Preschool is committed to being open and accessible to all families within the local community.

- **Age Range:** Welcomes children aged 9 months to 5 years.
- **Inclusivity:** Open to all families regardless of gender, SEND, background, religion, ethnicity, or English fluency.
- **Toilet Training:** Children do not need to be toilet trained or out of nappies to attend.
- **Accessibility:** Information is provided in written and spoken forms, in alternative languages, or via Braille/interpreters upon request.
- **SEND Support:** Tailored arrangements are managed via our dedicated SEND/Inclusion Policy to help families choose the right path.
- **Data & Partners:** We work with the local authority and external organisations to improve child outcomes. Information is handled strictly under GDPR regulations.
- **Flourish Pledge:** Our setting proudly holds a Norfolk Flourish Pledge, aligning with the county-wide ambition to help children succeed.

2. Waiting List and Over-Subscription Priority

Places are primarily allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. If the preschool faces over-subscription, priority is assigned using the following order:

1. **Siblings:** Children with brothers or sisters currently in the school or preschool.
 2. **Residency:** Children living within Poringland.
 3. **School Pathway:** Children expecting to attend Poringland Primary School.
- *Note: Emergency spaces are kept vacant whenever financially viable.*

3. Admissions and Registration Procedure

A strict three-step process must be completed before a child can officially start.

Step 1: Expression of Interest

- Parent/carers email admin@timechildcare.org.uk with details: child name; age; telephone details.
- Parents/carers are invited to tour the running session to meet staff and view the setting.
- Mutual tour appointments are booked within two weeks of the initial enquiry.

Step 2: Visiting the Setting

- Visitors must sign in upon arrival.
- Routines, available spaces, and session structures are explained.
- Following the visit parents/carers email admin@timechildcare.org.uk requesting registration details.
- Registration information, policies, and the Parent/Carer Handbook are emailed.
- Families are directed to the official website (www.timechildcare.org.uk).

Step 3: Formal Registration

- Completed registration and booking forms must be emailed or returned to admin@timechildcare.org.uk.
- A phone call is placed to arrange a mutually convenient home visit.
- Staff set up Tapestry learning journey accounts and issue policies digitally.
- **ID Check:** Parents must provide a birth certificate or equivalent ID to verify the child's age for free entitlements. Copies are stored securely and deleted when no longer required.
- **Status Check:** If a time lapse occurs between the enquiry and the actual start date, families must re-verify that the funding and fee information remains current before the contract is formalised.
- Children cannot be left unattended until all registration paperwork is complete.

4. Operating Hours and Age Restrictions

The preschool operates Monday through Friday during term times. Hours vary by day,

and age restrictions apply to extended care:

- **Monday:** 15:00 – 18:00
- **Tuesday:** 08:30 – 18:00
- **Wednesday:** 15:00 – 18:00
- **Thursday:** 08:30 – 18:00
- **Friday:** 08:30 – 18:00
- **Under 3s:** Children under 3 years old are limited to standard preschool sessions between **08:30 and 14:30 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.**

5. Funding, Split Providers, and Additional Streams

Early education funding is delivered entirely free of top-up fees, strictly within national parameters.

Government Funding Basics

- **Universal Funding:** 15 hours weekly for all 3 and 4-year-olds.
- **Working Families:** 15 to 30 hours available from 9 months old.
- **2-Year-Old Funding:** Available via benefits criteria or working family tracks.
- **Terms:** Funding claims start the term after the relevant milestone birthday:
 - *Born 1st Jan – 31st Mar:* Starts April term.
 - *Born 1st Apr – 31st Aug:* Starts September term.
 - *Born 1st Sep – 31st Dec:* Starts January term.

National and Institutional Funding Rules

- **No Top-Ups:** Local authority funding shortfalls are never billed to parents.
- **Session Windows:** Maximum 10 hours per single session, running between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm.
- **Site Limits:** Maximum of two operating sites per day.
- **Lunch Period:** Funding can be claimed during the preschool lunch period.
- **38 vs 40 Weeks Shortfall:** Funding covers 38 weeks per year. Because the preschool days can run for 40 weeks, a small shortfall of hours occurs during some terms. These extra hours are invoiced directly to parents.

Split Providers and Transitions

- Funding can be split between a minimum of two providers.
- To ensure a smooth transition, we work closely with families to discuss and agree on how split overall care works in practice.
- This collaborative approach also applies when families transfer their funding claim entirely from another setting.

Additional Funding Streams

- In partnership with families, we actively identify children who qualify for extra financial support.
- With prior parental consent, applications will be submitted for:
 - Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)
 - Disability Access Fund (DAF)
 - SEND Inclusion Fund
 - Locally available funding streams

6. Invoiced Sessions, Voluntary Fees, and Pricing

For children who are not eligible for funding, or for hours utilised over and above the government allowance, the following rules apply:

Hourly Rates by Age

- **0–2 Years Old:** £10.50 per hour
- **2–3 Years Old:** £8.35 per hour
- **3–4 Years Old:** £7.30 per hour

Invoicing and Payments

- **Advance Billing:** Fees are payable monthly in advance via QuickBooks invoices.
- **Transparency:** Invoices are fully itemised to show childcare contract terms, proving the funding entitlement is received completely free alongside clear breakdowns of any extra hours applied.
- **Holidays & Sickness:** Normal fees apply during child sickness. No credits are issued for family holidays during term time unless 4 weeks' written notice is given.

- **Fee Reviews:** Fees are reviewed annually in April. Families receive at least 4 weeks' written notice before any changes take effect.

Consumables and Meals

- **Voluntary Fee:** Fully funded families are requested to pay a voluntary fee of 50p per session (capped at £10 per half term) to cover snacks, sun cream, and wipes.
- **Packed Lunches:** Parents/carers must provide a healthy packed lunch for children staying over lunchtime, in accordance with our Healthy Eating Policy.

7. Deposit Policy (Applies to All Bookings)

To secure a registered place at Preschool —parents or carers must pay a refundable security deposit.

- **Deposit Amount:** The deposit amount is equivalent to the cost of two (2) scheduled sessions.
- **Payment Deadline:** This deposit must be paid within seven (7) days of a place being offered and before the child's placement is officially guaranteed.
- **Holding Period:** The deposit is held by Time Childcare for a fixed duration of 14 weeks from the child's start date.
- **Refund Terms:** The deposit will be fully refunded or credited to your account after 14 weeks, provided all scheduled fees have been paid in full and on time.
- **Forfeiture:** TCC reserves the right to retain the deposit if the placement is cancelled before the 14-week period ends, or if there are outstanding fees on the account.

8. Contract Termination and Complaints

Terminating a Contract

- **Settling Period:** A 2-week settling-in period applies when starting.
- **Notice Period:** Should you choose to cancel the contract after these 2 weeks, a strict **4-week written notice period** applies.
- **Holidays:** Notice periods can include scheduled school holiday periods if they fall within the 4-week window.

Complaints Procedure

- If parents or carers feel the free entitlement is not being administered correctly according to statutory guidelines, a complaint can be filed directly with the manager.
- The full Complaints Policy is provided to all families during registration.

Review Date: 30th September 2027