

Admissions, Fee-paying and Session-changing Policy

Our preschool is committed to providing a fair and open admission system that offers a competitively priced and good value service. As a provider of registered childcare, we both encourage and actively support eligible parents/ carers using Childcare Vouchers. Mount Scar Cygnets Playgroup currently offers sessions to children aged 2 - 5 yrs (they may start the term after they turn 2) during term time Monday to Friday between the hours of 8.45am-3.15pm as follows:

Morning session – 8.45am-12.15noon (3.5 hours)

Alternative morning session – 9.15am-12.15 (3 hours)

Lunch session – 12.15noon-12.45pm (1/2 hour)

Afternoon session – 12.45pm-3.15pm (2 1/2 hours)

Alternative Afternoon session – 12.15pm-3.15pm (3 hours)

All day session – 9.00am-3.00pm (6 hours)

Admissions

When a parent/ carer contacts the preschool enquiring about a place for their child, they will be given all the relevant information they require including details of the Admissions, Fee-paying and Session-changing policy, and informed of whether there is currently a suitable place available for their child.

If a suitable place is available, the parent/ carer and where possible, the child will be invited to visit the preschool and speak to members of staff. Parents/ carers will need to complete and sign the Emergency Medical Treatment Form (see Forms) and all relevant admission forms must be completed before the child joins the setting.

Admissions will normally start at the beginning of each term i.e. September, January and after the Easter Holidays, unless in the case of an extraordinary circumstances, this should be agreed between parents/carers and the preschool leader/ committee.

Once the admission is secure, the Leader, or a designated member of staff, will contact the parent/ carer concerned to arrange a date for the child's first session at the setting. At this stage, the provisions of the Settling In policy will come into operation.

Waiting List

To ensure that admissions to the preschool are offered on a fair and transparent basis, the following procedure will apply to the management of waiting lists:

- If, on making an enquiry about a place for their child, a parent/carers is informed that there is not currently a suitable place available, the preschool's waiting list procedure will be explained and then activated on the parent/ carer's behalf.
- Parents/carers will be encouraged to submit their request for a place for their child to the preschool in writing. The details of this request will be placed on the waiting list, in the order that they are submitted.
- The waiting list will be kept and used on a 'first come first served' basis. The preschool will advise the parent/ carer of how long they are likely to have to wait before a suitable place

becomes available. This information will only be an estimate and will not constitute a binding guarantee from the preschool.

- When a vacancy at the preschool becomes available, the Administrations Assistant, will contact the parent/ carer whose child is suitable for the place and is highest up on the waiting list.
- If that parent/ carer still wishes to take up the place for their child, they will be asked to complete the Admissions Form and follow the remaining steps of the admissions procedure outlined above.
- If the parent/carers concerned no longer wishes to take up a place, the parent/carers of the next suitable child on the list will be contacted.

Fee-paying

The preschool understands that the cost of registered childcare may seem expensive to a parent/carers. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating service for children is not cheap and to ensure the continued high standards and sustainability of the setting, it must ask that parents/carers respect its policy in respect of fees.

The Government will fund a child from the term after their third birthday. Mount Scar Cygnets currently offers up to 15 hours funded sessions per week (including lunch hour) for 38 weeks of the year. Occasionally a school year exceeds 38 weeks and in this case parents/carers will be given the option of self funding their child for these additional sessions at the appropriate hourly rate.

If a child attends more than 15 hours a week, uses some of their funding elsewhere or is under the age of three and not in receipt of two year old grant funding the playgroup will charge for sessions at a rate of £5.30 (£5.80 for 2 year olds) per hour. Cygnets is also able to offer 30 hours funded places for eligible children where sessions are available. Other funding options including 2 year funding can be found at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

To access funded session, parents are to complete Dorset County Council funding form provided by the pre-school along with a deadline for returning to pre-school completed. Failure to return the completed form within the agreed timescale will result in the potential funded hours being charged at full rate.

Invoice and payment

An invoice will be issued during the first week of each half term which should be settled within three weeks. Payment should be made by bank transfer or childcare vouchers preferable, or the correct cash or cheque which should be placed in a sealed envelope clearly marked with the child's name and the amount enclosed then place in the 'post box' in the cloak room. A receipt will be issued upon request, and all payments will be visible on the following invoice.

In some cases parents/ carers will need to pay fees on a weekly basis which should be by prior arrangement with the Playgroup Administrator. When paying weekly, fees are still due in advance and payments must be made before the child begins the first session of the week.

Non payment of fees

Late payment of fees adversely affects our cash flow and increases our administration costs. This part of the policy sets out how we handle unpaid invoices to protect the financial position of the preschool, for the benefit of all the children in the preschool.

Non payment of fees will be dealt with promptly and all arrears must be paid before the next half term. Reminder letters will be sent out after the third week of the half term requesting payment. If outstanding fees are not paid within seven days of the reminder letter being sent out, a £10 administration fee will be added to the bill for each week that payment is late.

If fees remain unpaid, the preschool will issue a formal warning to the parent/carer in the first week of the next half term informing them that continued late payment will result in their child's non-funded hours at the preschool being forfeited. This letter will state the final date by which outstanding monies must be paid, which will be three weeks from the letter of warning. If payment is not made by this date, the preschool will be forced to withdraw the child's non-funded hours. The preschool will pursue payment of unpaid fees in the small claims court.

The preschool will be sympathetic to parents/carers who are having or who anticipate having difficulty in paying and it may be possible to arrange an individual payment plan. However, this must be negotiated between the Administration Assistant, and parents/carers in advance. Any family in this situation should contact the Administration Assistant at the earliest opportunity to arrange a confidential meeting. All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.


It should be noted that when sessions are booked it secures a place for the child which is either funded or chargeable at the hourly rate and fees continue to be payable if a child is absent for any reason (including holiday/illness). The exception to this is for long-term illness and this should be discussed with the Playgroup Leader.

Changing Sessions

Should you wish to withdraw your child from our sessions, you are required to give four weeks' notice in writing. If this notice is not given we reserve the right to charge fees for a maximum of four weeks. This period of notice is also required for children only attending government funded sessions.

Parents/ carers are encouraged to speak to a member of staff or the Leader if they have any query about the fees policy, or if for any reason, they are likely to have difficulty in making a payment on time. Parents/ carers are strongly advised to arrange a meeting at the earliest possible opportunity, to avoid jeopardising their child's place at the setting.

Adopted by the Cygnets Committee and is subject to review on an annual basis or earlier if the need arises.

Signed: 

Printed: B. HARRISONChairperson