

Acre Schools Federation

Nursery Fees Policy

Date Reviewed	29 th January 2026	Review Date	Spring 2027
Signature of Chair of Governors	Mr. John Knight and Ms. Hannah Sheehan  		
Signature of Headteacher	Mr. James Broad 		

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NB: Throughout this policy, headteacher refers to the executive headteacher or, in his/her absence, the head of school.

Statement of intent

Acre Schools Federation aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary school.

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to nursery fees such as working tax credits and free childcare entitlement.

This policy has been established to provide transparent fee information and set procedures for the payment of fees.

Parents should be aware of, and given access to, this policy and the nursery's procedures. It will be included on the nursery's website and made available to view at the nursery on request.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016 (as amended)
- DfE (2025) 'Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guidance 2025 to 2026'
- DfE (2025) 'Early education and childcare'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Debt Recovery Policy
- Nursery Admissions Policy

2. Fees

Government funding will deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free childcare. These hours are able to be accessed free of charge to parents, and there will be no mandatory charges for parents in relation to free hours.

Government funding will not cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.

The nursery may charge parents for the following extras in connection with free hours; however, these charges will be voluntary for parents:

- Consumables to be used by the child, e.g. nappies or sun cream
- Meals
- Extra optional activities, e.g. events, celebrations, specialist tuition, or other activities that are not directly related or necessary for the delivery of the EYFS statutory framework

The nursery may also charge parents for any additional, private paid hours according to its usual terms and conditions and with the condition that taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a free place.

The nursery will deliver funded hours as follows:

- **Universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds** – all three- and four-year-olds are eligible for this entitlement from the term after they turn three through to starting school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year.

- **Working parent entitlement for three- and four-year-olds** – this entitlement is available for all eligible working parents of children aged three and four until they start school. Parents are entitled to an additional 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year and this can be combined with the universal entitlement to make up 30 hours

Any provision that goes beyond the funded entitlements for eligible parents will incur a charge, and parents will be responsible for covering the additional cost.

The nursery will not charge parents for the following in connection with entitlement hours:

- Top-up fees, i.e. any difference between the nursery's normal charge to parents and the funding it receives from the LA to deliver free places.
- The supply of or use of materials or learning resources that are necessary for the effective delivery of childcare.
- Business running costs.
- Registration fees.
- Non-refundable deposits.
- General charges or any other supplementary charges on top of the free hours.
- Any additional fees that are not specifically identified and itemised as being for chargeable extras.

The above will only apply in relation to the Government's free entitlement hours. Where a child attends provision beyond their funded entitlement, additional charges may apply. These charges, however, will never be a condition of accessing the free hours and will be clearly itemised as payable extras. The charges will be as follows:

- £30 per additional session morning or afternoon session, where one session is three hours (AM or PM).
- £3 for each lunch provided, the nursery does not charge for lunch time supervision

3. Universal entitlement for three- and four-year-olds

All children aged three and four will be eligible to receive 570 hours free childcare per year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year. These hours are usually taken as 15 hours a week.

'15 hours' free childcare is available from the term following a child's third birthday.

The nursery may ask parents to complete a form to help ensure they receive their free childcare hours.

4. Working parent entitlements

Three- and four-year-olds

Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, children of working parents agreed three- and four-years-old may be entitled to the 30-hour entitlement. The working parent entitlement takes account of the universal entitlement and offers eligible parents an additional 15 hours of early years provision per week.

Parents' eligibility for this entitlement will depend on the following:

- Parents will need to apply for free childcare in order to work
- Parents will need to be in qualifying paid work. This means they will expect to earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage each week, averaged over the next 3 months
- If one or both parents are on family leave (such as maternity, paternity, adoption, or shared parental leave) or receiving statutory sick pay, they will be treated as meeting the income requirement for a limited time
- If one parent in a couple is receiving certain disability or caring-related benefits, they will be treated as though they are in paid work
- If a parent is newly self-employed, they will not need to meet the income requirement for the first 12 months
- If either parent has an adjusted net income above £100,000, the household will not be eligible for the entitlement

Further information on free childcare for working parents can be found via the GOV.UK website: <https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/check-youre-eligible>

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlements upon reconfirmation, a place will continue to be funded for the child for a limited 'grace period'.

5. Eligibility for working parent entitlements for children in foster care Payment information

A child in foster care will be entitled to free early years provision if they have reached the required age, are under compulsory nursery age, and the following conditions are met:

- The LA will need to be satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work (other than their role as a foster carer) is consistent with the child's care plan, ensuring the child remains at the centre of all decisions
- In single foster parent households, the foster parent will need to hold additional paid employment outside of their fostering role
- In two-foster-parent households, both foster parents will need to hold additional paid employment outside their fostering role, or one foster parent will need to be in such employment while the other is either:
 - On family leave (such as maternity, paternity, or shared parental leave), or
 - In receipt of certain forms of statutory pay.

6. Payment information

Payments must be made in advance for all non-statutory sessions and lunches that parents have booked for their child that week.

Payments will be made via an online payment direct into the school's bank account. To obtain the details and discuss the procedure, please contact the school office.

Payment will be required when a child is on holiday or absent due to illness, as the nursery must hold the child's place during this period and staff rotas are fixed.

If a child is absent for a long period due to illness, the nursery will decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether fees will need to be paid for the period. The nursery's decision is final.

One month's notice and payment will be required to withdraw your child from the nursery.

7. Difficulty with payments

The nursery will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.

The nursery understands that parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties will contact the school office as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

8. Debt collection

The governing board will have a duty to ensure the nursery receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including nursery fees.

All debts will be handled in accordance with the Debt Recovery Policy.

9. Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

The school will ensure that:

- Letters requesting money are accurately recorded and well-maintained.
- Evidence of the steps taken in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters and phone calls.
- A final reminder is sent by recorded delivery to the debtor.
- The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
- The level of outstanding debt can be determined at any time.

The governing board will:

- Prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery.
- At its discretion, refer uncollected debts to the LA for consideration for legal action.
- Record all approved action in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Adhere to privacy arrangements.

- At its discretion, delegate its responsibilities under this policy to a suitable individual.

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher in conjunction with the governing board.