

## BRIGHTSTART MONTESSORI NURSERY CHARGING POLICY

Brightstart Montessori Nursery is listed with Norfolk County Council as a provider offering the Early Education funding entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year-olds. We have agreed to meet the requirements of the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance (Mar 17) [A1.20 – A1.27], Operational Guidance (Apr 17) [Pg30 & 31] and Local Authority Funding Agreement (Sept 18 – Aug 19) [2.47 – 2.54].

**Early Education Funding** All children are eligible for Norfolk LA Early Education Funding from either the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> April or 1<sup>st</sup> September following their third birthday, whichever date comes first. We also accept “Take2” funding for eligible 2 year olds. This entitlement is for up to 15 hours per week (over a minimum of 2 days). Funded entitlement is offered as flexibly as possible but is constrained by available places and staff:child ratios.

Parent/carers are not required to pay for the hours attended as part of the funding entitlement. Parent/carers are not charged “top-up fees” despite our setting’s hourly rate being greater than the rate received from the Local Authority. No conditions are imposed on parent/carers wishing to access the funded entitlement. The funded entitlements will be delivered consistently so that all children accessing any of the funded entitlements will receive the same quality and access to provision, regardless of whether they opt to pay for optional hours, services, meals or consumables. Parents/carers are required to complete a Parent/Carer claim form each term to receive 2-year-old funding and 3 & 4-year-old funding.

### **Additional Hours**

*“Government funding is intended to cover the cost to deliver free, high quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the cost of meals, consumables, additional hours or additional services.” (Norfolk CC, Early Education Charging Policy Guidance, April 2017)*

Any additional hours over and above the free funded entitlement or for non-funded children are charged at a rate of £6.00 per hour. (2021/22 rate.) A small increase is made in our hourly rate each September. We notify parents/carers of this small increase in our June newsletter each year. If a child is absent due to holiday/illness etc., fees will still be charged.

**Invoicing and Payments** All families will be issued a termly invoice unless the balance equals zero. The invoice will be itemised to provide clear and transparent information concerning the charges as agreed in the parent contract. It will allow parents/carers to see that the entitlement is received completely free of charge and understand additional fees that have been applied. Detailed receipts will be issued for all cash and cheque payments.

Invoices will be issued during the second week of each term and we will offer the option of paying in three instalments. Our invoices clearly show the funded entitlement and the additional services being charged for. We accept payment for Nursery fees by BACs payment or cheque. We also accept payment for Nursery fees from “childcare voucher” companies. We are registered with companies including Edenred, Sodexo, Computer Voucher Services and Kiddivouchers for this purpose. If an invoice is not paid by the due date, a reminder will be

issued and a 10% late payment fee may be added to the following term's invoice. Should any fees become more than two months overdue, we reserve the right to take court action to recover the fees.

**Snacks** Milk, water and a healthy snack are provided for the children during each session. We ask that parents/carers make a voluntary payment of £10 per term to help fund the purchase of snacks. These payments are voluntary but regrettably, should not enough payments be forthcoming, we reserve the right to discontinue the provision of snacks.

**Nappies/sun cream** Parents/carers are expected to provide their children with nappies and sun-cream as required. A small voluntary charge may be made if nappies/suncream are required but haven't been provided by the parent/carer.

**Deposit** We require a deposit of £15 to secure a place on our register. This is non-refundable except in the case where children start Nursery and all their sessions are funded by Early Education Funding. In this case, the deposit will be returned in full at the end of the child's first half term at Nursery.

**Registration Fee** We administer a voluntary registration fee of £25. Most parents choose to pay the registration fee to secure the specific sessions they require on our register more than a month in advance of their child's intended start date. Parents/carers who choose not to pay the voluntary registration fee will be consulted shortly before their child is due to start Nursery and mutually convenient sessions will be allocated, subject to availability.

**Retainer Fee** A retainer fee is charged where a parent/carer wishes to ensure their childcare arrangement is secured during a long absence when the setting would normally be open for business. In most cases, funded hours will not be claimed during a long absence. We would charge at our usual hourly rate in this situation.

**Notice periods** A minimum of six weeks' notice or six weeks' fees in lieu of notice is required from the parent/carer to terminate a child's place or reduce the number of sessions normally taken by the child.

**Late collection charges** Whilst the Nursery supports working families and understands the difficulties of balancing work and family commitments, it reserves the right to charge additional fees for children who are collected late. A fee of £10 will be charged per 15-minute period. This will be charged in arrears and added to your next invoice.

**Setting Closure** No charges will be made when our Nursery is closed. In the event of the Nursery being closed unexpectedly, e.g. adverse weather, staff absence, any payments made in advance would be deducted from future invoices. Parents/carers would be informed if their child will not receive their full entitlement because funding has been claimed when the setting has been closed.

*This policy was discussed and agreed in June 2021. It will be reviewed on an annual basis.  
The next review will be no later than June 2022.*