



## **A guide for Settings creating an Admissions and Fees Policy**

**The information listed below is a useful guide as to what needs to be included in an admissions and fees policy for a setting offering Funded Entitlement places in Buckinghamshire. Your policy must provide clear and transparent information so parents can understand how funded hours are applied**

**You must start by stating the below information:**

- As an Ofsted registered early years provider you are legally bound to meet the requirements of the Ofsted regulations, and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework published by the Department for Education.

Detail your criteria for admitting children into your setting and managing your waiting list (if applicable) by explaining how places are prioritised. This may be, for example, by:

- Children in need
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Siblings of children already in your setting
- Disadvantaged 2-year-old funded children.
- Children within a certain catchment area

The criteria you choose is entirely at your discretion. It must be available for any parent who wishes to see it and it needs to be adhered to.

### **Opening hours of setting and hours when funding is available**

- State the opening hours you will be available to parents. For example:
  - 9am – 3pm Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year (term time only)
  - 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday 51 weeks of the year

State the days and times that your setting will make funded hours available to parents. It must be clear to families which days and times funded hours are available to use; and must cover the maximum number of funded hours offered, e.g. 15 or 30, if your opening hours allow this.

There must be no artificial breaks for the funded hours e.g. 9am-12pm and then 1pm-4pm. A parent can request to use funded hours, without the purchase of private hours, at the funded times that are stated within the policy.

This is an example of a compliant offer, but your offer may vary:

- 9am – 3pm Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year (term time only)
- 8am to 6pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday 45 OR 47 OR 51 weeks of the year (one of these can be offered alongside term time if you choose)

State the funding streams you offer:

- Disadvantaged (Families in Receipt of Additional Support (FRAS)) 2-year-olds (15 hours per week/570 hours per year)
- Universal entitlement for all 3- & 4-year-olds (15 hours per week/570 hours per year)
- Eligible Working Parent Entitlement for 9 months – 2 years old (30 hours per week/1140 hours per year)
- Eligible Working parent 3- & 4-year-olds (additional 15 hours per week/570 hours per year on top of the Universal entitlement)

## Weeks per year – Term time and Stretched

You can offer funding for 38 weeks (term time) or choose to stretch the funding claim over either 45 or 47 or 51 weeks of the year. You can offer term time alongside one stretched offer only; or one stretched offer only if you are open for longer than 38 weeks. If you offer stretched weeks, then there will be some unused residual hours. Please see the below table as to how these are worked out. You need to state whether and how these would be offered, so parents are aware that they may not be able to access these. These should be offered as hours only and cannot be shown as a cash value.

The table below shows how the exact hours are calculated:

	<u>45 weeks offer</u>	<u>47 weeks offer</u>	<u>51 weeks offer</u>
<u>570 hours per year</u>	12.5 hours per week $12.5 \times 45 = 562.5$ hours Leaves 7.5 residual hours (2.5 hours per term)	12 hours per week $12 \times 47 = 564$ hours Leaves 6 residual hours (2 hours per term)	11 hours per week $11 \times 51 = 561$ hours Leaves 9 residual hours (3 hours per term)
<u>1140 hours per year</u>	25 hours per week $25 \times 45 = 1125$ hours Leaves 15 Residual Hours (5 hours per term)	24 hours per week $24 \times 47 = 1128$ hours Leaves 12 Residual Hours (4 hours per term)	22 hours per week $22 \times 51 = 1122$ hours Leaves 18 Residual hours (6 hours per term)

You can only claim for the residual hours when the child is with you for more than their Funded Entitlement hours. To claim these residual hours you need to put a "Y" in the residual hours box on the claim form. If you do not put in a "Y" in the box then you will not receive the funding.

## Consumables and Chargeable Extras

- These are all additional charges that parents may incur when accessing funded hours. These costs should be clearly detailed within the policy with a breakdown of the individual cost of the following areas, which have been accessed by the child, where these are offered.
  - *consumables to be used by the child, such as nappies or sun cream.*
  - *meals and snacks consumed by the child.*
  - *extra optional activities such as events, celebrations, specialist tuition (for example music classes or foreign languages) or other activities that are not directly related or necessary for the effective delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.*
  - *Providers can also charge for any additional, private paid hours according to their usual terms and conditions provided taking up private paid hours is not a condition of accessing a free place.*
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It should not include items and activities, such as arts and crafts, staffing, which are covered by the [EYFS \(Early Years Foundation Stage\)](#).

- Parents cannot be made to pay for extra services or hours in order to have a funded place. Payment for the consumables and chargeable extras is voluntary. Providers are responsible for setting a clear policy on stating options for alternatives to payment for consumables, such as waiving or reducing the cost of meals and consumables or allowing parents to supply their own. A lunch policy should be in place.
- By 1 January 2026, the cost of all chargeable extras should be published on a providers' website or [BFIS](#).
- **Please note:** You may need to explain to parents that Funded Entitlement is not intended to cover the cost of meals, other consumables, additional hours, or additional activities. Providers can request a fee for these additions, but clear alternative options to payment must be offered. You may need to refer them to the "Charging" section on Page 8 of Buckinghamshire Council Guidance on: Local Management of the Funded Entitlement which can be found on the [Early Years website](#). 'Government funding is intended to deliver 15 or 30 hours a week of free, high quality, flexible childcare. The 15 or 30 hours must be able to be accessed free of charge to parents. There must not be any mandatory charges for parents in relation to the free hours. Government funding is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.'
- Clearly state your fee payment plan including information about when you will invoice, the amount of any

deposits that may be required, and the action you will take around non-payment of fees.

- Deposits for funded only children must be returned within 6 weeks of the place being taken up.
- No registration fee can be applied for funded only children.
- Consumables are not intended to be used as a “top-up.”

The DfE defines a top up as “any difference between a provider’s normal charge to parents and the funding they receive from the local authority to deliver free places.”

There may be other items you wish to include in your admissions and fees policies, but you must ensure that everything stipulated above is included in order to be compliant with [Buckinghamshire Council guidance](#) on providing Funded Entitlement places. **Buckinghamshire Council cannot sign off policies which are not DfE (Department for Education) compliant, and this may delay the application process.**

### **Eligible Working Families**

It is not essential to include the following; however, it is highly recommended in the event that a parent falls out of eligibility for the working parent entitlement and then challenges any subsequent fees they may be liable for.

- Eligible working parent funding can be applied for on [Homepage | Best Start in Life](#)
- It is eligible parents’ responsibility to apply for their [Eligibility code](#) before the fixed deadlines 31<sup>st</sup> March, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 31<sup>st</sup> December and to reconfirm their codes every three months.
- Families remain eligible at a current setting if they fall into their grace period. However, they cannot start with a new setting until their code has been reconfirmed and prior to the cut-off date.
- New or lapsed codes will show as eligible once confirmed but cannot be claimed for until the next cut-off date. E.g. A new code confirmed on 2<sup>nd</sup> January may show the child as eligible, but it has missed the cut-off date of 31<sup>st</sup> December and cannot be used until the Summer term.
- Codes can only be used for the term after a child becomes eligible and cannot be used once the child has started at reception in school.

**Please note:** A new child on a claim form will not be funded if their code is in the grace period **BEFORE** the term starts. This is still applicable even if the child was attending the setting for private hours prior to eligibility.

### **2 Year funding for parents in receipt of certain benefits**

Eligibility is applied for with [BFIS \(Bucks Family Info Service\)](#) and the code verified by Early Years. This code does not need to be checked again and remains valid until the term after the child turns three where they will qualify for the universal three-year-old funding of 15 hours.