

## Nursery Fees Policy

### Background information

Somerset Bridge Nursery creates a happy, safe and fun environment for all children, which will nurture curiosity, independence, confidence and a love of learning. We aim to deliver a flexible and inclusive service that provides excellent value for money.

### Opening hours

The Nursery is open Monday to Friday, term time only. We offer the following sessions:

Morning Session	09:00 until 12:00
Afternoon Session	12:00 until 15:00
All Day Session	09:00 until 15:00

### FUNDING OPTIONS:

The funding periods are:

Autumn	1 September to 31 December
Spring	1 January to 31 March
Summer	1 April to 31 August

In order to claim funding, the following documentation is required:

- Child's legal documentation (birth certificate or passport)
- A signed nursery registration form
- A Parent Declaration Form which has been completed and signed by a Parent/Carer indicating the number of hours they wish to claim at each setting

If these hours are not able to be claimed in full or a child's legal documentation is not produced within the agreed time period to enable the funding to be claimed, then Parents/Carers will be charged the usual fees (set out below).

Further information regarding all funding options can be obtained from the Nursery Management Team or via Childcare Choices <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

### Funding for Supported Families

Families with 2 year old children who are receiving additional Government Support can apply for this funding.

If eligible, Somerset Council will write to Parents/Carers to confirm. This letter must be passed to the nursery, as proof of funding. Somerset Council will then fund up to 570 hours, over the year. A maximum of 15 hours per week is available.

Children will become eligible in the funding period after their second birthday.

## **Funding for Working Families**

Eligible working families with children aged between 9 months up to school age, will be able to receive 30 hours a week funded childcare.

Somerset Council will fund a place for up to 1140 hours over the year and children will become eligible the term after they turn 9 months old.

Parent/Carers will receive an eligibility code, which they must renew every 3 months by re-confirming their details.

Somerset Bridge Nursery must verify this code before offering a funded place. If a child becomes eligible after the start of a funding period, they must wait until the following period to access their extended entitlement place.

Failure to obtain or renew an eligibility code, within the time frame given, will result in Parents/Carers being charged our usual fees (set out below).

Somerset Bridge Nursery is unable to accept this funding without parental consent to share information.

## **Early Years Entitlement (EYE)**

All three and four year olds (who are not in receipt of the Working Families Funding) are entitled to up to 15 hours of funded early education or childcare a week, for up to 38 weeks a year, or 570 hours a year. This is known as the 'universal entitlement' and parent/carers do not need to apply for this.

This will start the funding period after a child's third birthday and will last for 3 funding periods (equivalent to one year).

The next entitlement year, (starting the funding period after your child's fourth birthday) the child will receive another automatic allocation of 570 hours, which will also last for another 3 funding periods.

A Parent/Carer can use their universal entitlement at Somerset Bridge Nursery to fund childcare for up to 6 hours per day and 15 hours per week, dependent on availability.

A Parent/Carer can claim at a maximum of three childcare providers at any one time. The total universal hours claimed cannot exceed 15 per week combined or the 570 over the year.

## **Fee Rates**

Hours in addition to funded hours will be charged as follows:

From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 the following fees apply -

- Children who are two years old will be charged £6.50 per hour
- Children who are three, four or five years old will be charged £4.75 per hour

## **Reviewing fees**

Somerset Bridge Nursery's fees will be reviewed annually and if changes are made, a half-term's notice will be given in writing.

## **Accepting a place**

When Somerset Bridge Nursery offer you a place for your child, the offer of the place must be taken up within two weeks of the dated letter. Failure to do this, may result in your child's place being withdrawn.

## **Exceptional Circumstances**

At Somerset Bridge Nursery, we are aware that sometimes there may be exceptional circumstances where parents are unable to accept their child's place or that they need to have a break in provision. These cases will be reviewed on an individual basis and will be at the manager's and Head's discretion. Somerset Bridge Nursery reserves the right to charge a full retainer fee.

## **Holidays, Sickness and Emergency Closures**

Fees will be charged and Early Years Entitlement will be claimed when children are absent, on holiday, and in the case of short term sickness.

Fees will also be charged for emergency closures.

Fees will not be charged for planned closures such as inset days or bank holidays.

## **Invoices**

Invoices will be produced and emailed at the beginning of each term.

Payment is due within 28 days of the date of the invoice or to payment plans agreed in advance, in writing, with the Nursery Management Team.

New starters will be invoiced on registration.

Invoices are calculated by deducting the available EYE funding first and any additional hours will be invoiced at our usual hourly rate.

Payment is accepted by BACS, cash or cheques made payable to Somerset Council. Somerset Bridge Nursery also accepts Tax Free Childcare payments and employers' childcare vouchers.

Receipts will be provided for payments received.

## **Changes to a child's hours**

Changes can be made to a child's hours, subject to the following:

- A change of hours form is completed and returned to either increase/decrease/amend a child's hours.
- The notice period for Parents/Carers to reduce a child's hours is four weeks.
- An increase in a child's hours will be accommodated as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Confirmation of a child's change of hours, and the date it will take effect from, will be given in writing.
- Somerset Bridge Nursery will provide four weeks' notice of any change of opening hours.

## **Notice period to cancel a child's place**

A Parent/Carer may terminate a child's place at Somerset Bridge Nursery at any time, subject to the following provisions:

- Written four weeks' notice must be given to the Nursery Management Team
- If four weeks' notice is not provided in writing, then fees will be charged in lieu (four weeks)
- If notice is given part way through a term, and the whole term's invoice has been paid in full, a refund will be given for any sessions after the contract end date.

In the case of a serious breach of our Code of Conduct or in the case of non-payment of fees or not keeping to a debt payment plan (as described in the section below "**non payment of fees**") it may be necessary for the Nursery to cancel a child's place. In this case Somerset Bridge Nursery will provide Parent/Carers with four weeks' written notice.

## **Late Collection Fee**

Parents/Carers will be charged in the event of late collection.

Late fees will be charged as follows:

- Up to 10 minutes late = No charge
- 10 - 20 minutes late = £15.00 charge
- Every additional 10 minutes after the 20 minutes will be charged at £10.00 per 10 minutes.

The headteacher and manager's reserve the right to review exceptional circumstances on an individual basis.

## **Late Payment Fee**

Parents/Carers will be charged in the event of late payment. If an invoice is not paid in full within the specified 28 days, or a payment date is missed on a payment plan, then a late payment fee will be charged at a rate of £15.00. Any additional hours outside of the funded hours will be withheld until the debt has been cleared. Funded hours can still be used.

## **Debt Management**

### **Monitoring Payments in Arrears**

1. The due date is set for payment on the invoice.
2. The Nursery Administrator checks payments against invoices on the due date.
3. All parents/carers who have not paid by the due date on the invoice will be contacted by letter (DL1) and asked for payment to be made within 7 days or for a payment plan to be agreed.

### **Payment Plan**

1. A payment plan is agreed stating the outstanding amount due, how the fees were incurred, the time scale and dates of payments and it will also include the default procedure of what will happen if a payment is missed.
2. A payment plan is signed by the parent/carer and copy retained for their records

### **Non-payment of fees**

1. If the bill-payer does not clear the outstanding balance within 7 days of receipt of the letter (DL1), and no payment plan has been agreed, notice will be given in writing (DL2) for the child's place to be withdrawn.
2. If the bill-payer defaults on the payment plan, notice will be given in writing (DL2) for the child's place to be withdrawn.
3. If the bill-payer does not clear the outstanding balance within 7 days of receipt of this notification, the child's place will be terminated on the date given in the letter (DL2).
4. The recovery of outstanding debt will then be pursued through legal channels.