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## ACE Day Nursery Fee Policy

### 2023/24 academic year (from April 2024 following changes to Early Years Funding entitlements)

Proposed by:	The Finance Sub-Committee comprising: Caspar Rebling (Chair), Salman Mohammad (Treasurer), Lisa Tuohy (Headteacher), Hanna Ochalik-Baca (ACE Day Nursery Manager) and Sarah Ransome (Office Manager) on 26 February 2024.
Approved by:	Full ACE Parents' Committee on 28 February 2024
Period covered:	2023/24 academic year (from 1 April 2024 – end of the summer 2024 term).
Next review due:	1. Full policy review in the Summer Term 2024, before commencement of the new school year 2024/25. 2. Monthly during the course of the 2023/2024 academic year as part of the financial review process.

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Session times: Full day: 8.30am-5.30pm

Minimum attendance: We require a minimum attendance of two days per week.

Fee rates: The following daily fee rates are applicable to one year old children at ACE Day Nursery:

	2 days/week	3 days/week (approx. 7% discount)	4-5 days/week (approx. 14% discount)
Full day (8.30am – 5.30pm)	£91.60	£84.80	£78.57

The following daily fee rates are applicable to two year old children at ACE Day Nursery who are not entitled to early years funding:

	2 days/week	3 days/week (approx. 7% discount)	4-5 days/week (approx. 14% discount)
Full day (8.30am – 5.30pm)	£81.80	£75.60	£70.20

The following hourly fee rates are applicable to two year old children at ACE Day Nursery who are entitled to early years funding:

	2 days/week	3 days/week (approx. 7% discount)	4-5 days/week (approx. 14% discount)
Full day (8.30am – 5.30pm)	First 12.6 hrs/wk cost £1.08/hr and balance costs £9.08/hr	First 12.6 hrs/wk cost £0.40/hr and balance costs £8.40/hr	First 12.6 hrs/wk are free and balance costs £7.80/hr

## Calculation and payment of fees:

For the children who are not eligible for early years funding, fees are payable for the period of the year that the Day Nursery is open, divided into twelve equal monthly payments. Fees are charged on a calendar month basis and are payable on or before the first day of each calendar month in advance. Monthly fees are calculated as follows:

1. Calculate a weekly fee total by multiplying the relevant daily fee rate for your child by the number of days per week he/she attends e.g. if your child is 18 months old and attends 3 full days per week, the daily rate for your child is £84.80. The weekly fees due (for attending 3 days per week) are therefore £254.40 (3 x £84.80).
2. Multiply the weekly total from above by 4 (being the 48 weeks of the year that we are open divided by 12 months) to arrive at a monthly total. In our example above, this gives monthly fees due of £1,017.60.

Monthly payments should be reduced from the month after your child's second birthday. If you have twins or triplets, the days attended by both/all the children will be combined and fees calculated at the rate for the total number of days taken per week e.g. twins attending two days per week will pay at the 4-5 days per week rate.

For the children who are eligible for early years funding, parents must obtain an eligibility code from HMRC prior to 31 March 2024 and let us have that so we can claim funding from the Council. For eligible children attending two days per week, the first 12.6 hours per week are charged at £1.08/hour and the balance of 5.4 hours per week are charged at £9.08/hour. For eligible children attending three days per week, the first 12.6 hours per week are charged at £0.40/hour and the balance of 14.4 hours per week are charged at £8.40/hour. For eligible children attending four or five days per week, the first 12.6 hours per week are free and the remaining hours are charged at £7.80/hour. The financial administrator will advise you of your monthly payments from April – August 2024, taking into account the funding.

Monthly payments will include bank and public holidays as well as any inset days which are payable in full in spite of closure as our monthly staffing costs remain the same.

The majority of children start at the Day Nursery in September each year. Settling in visits (usually two) are arranged for the first week or two in September and new children are given staggered start dates to ease the settling in process, as well as allowing staff to give the new children one-to-one attention. Fees are charged from the earlier of the child's start date or Friday 15 September 2023.

Our Ofsted registration dictates that we can only take children once they are 12 months of age, so if a child's first birthday falls in the middle of October, for example, she/he would not be able to start until then. However, financially we cannot leave a place open for a child from the beginning of September until his/her first birthday, so should a child wish to start in say mid-October, parents are liable for fees from Friday 15 September 2023 to secure the place.

For any children starting part way through the academic year, we are usually able to organise the settling in visits to take place before the child's first full day and therefore fees are normally charged from the first full day onwards.

Fees may be paid by one of the following methods:

- online** to our Lloyds bank account (sort code: 30-13-55, a/c no. 03026919), please give your child's name as a reference;
- via the government's Tax-Free Childcare scheme; and
- via childcare vouchers

## Use of childcare vouchers:

Payment of fees can be made by childcare vouchers. However, to ensure that payment by this method does not lead to excessive extra administration or a delay in ACE receiving the money, parents are required to:

- notify us of their intention to pay by voucher, specifying which voucher provider is to be used and the amount and frequency of payments;

- ensure all voucher payments for a particular month are received before or on the first day of the month;
- where payment is not received within this timescale, then the outstanding balance will immediately become due, and will need to be paid by bank transfer.

**Neither childcare vouchers nor the Tax-Free Childcare scheme can be used to pay for deposits, registration fees or co-op hours, due to the tax treatment of the payments at source.**

**Refunds:** No refunds are available for sessions missed due to illness, holidays or other absence. There will be no refunds if ACE Day Nursery is closed due to adverse weather (e.g. snow), heating failure, public health outbreaks or other similar circumstances.

**One-off extra days:** Subject to availability, it may be possible for a child to have an extra day and this will be charged at your usual daily rate. (i.e. if your child is under two years of age, usually attends ACE two days per week and has an extra day, it costs £91.60)

Extra days must be paid for on the day (or earlier if you prefer).

If a parent notifies ACE that their child will be absent for a particular day or days (e.g. due to a holiday during term-time) these day(s) may be allocated to another child. Should your plans change after notifying ACE of absence, for example the holiday is cancelled, the original day may have already been allocated to another child.

If a child is not present for a particular day, it is not possible to swap that for a different day (e.g. where a child has a medical appointment on Tuesday and misses her/his regular Tuesday at ACE, it is not then possible to swap that for say Thursday). If there happens to be availability that Thursday, it is possible to book an additional day which must be paid for as set out above.

**Unpaid fees:** Should fees remain unpaid at the appropriate time as set out above, the following action will be taken:

- Day Nursery Manager and/or financial administrator will contact the parent by email, telephone or in a written note requesting immediate payment;
- should the fees remain unpaid for a further 7 days after this action, a formal letter requesting payment of the outstanding fees will be sent;
- should the fees still remain unpaid 7 days after the date of the letter described above, a final letter requesting payment of outstanding fees will be sent stating that if the fees remain unpaid 7 days after the date on the 2<sup>nd</sup> letter, the child's place will be withdrawn and offered to another child; and
- we may pursue the unpaid fees through the small claims court and/or take other legal action to recover the debt.

**Registration Fee:** A registration fee of £50 is payable upon acceptance of a place, together with the deposit referred to below. Registration fees can be paid by online bank transfer, but not by childcare vouchers or the Tax-Free Childcare scheme.

**Deposits:** A returnable deposit equivalent to one month's fees is required when a place is accepted. The deposit will be returned when the child leaves ACE, if one month's written notice has been given and fee payments and co-op hours are up to date. If this is not the case, the outstanding amounts will be deducted from the deposit and the net amount repaid.

If the child moves up to ACE Nursery School, the deposit (less any outstanding fees or co-op hours due at the Day Nursery) will be transferred to the Nursery School and will be deducted from the first term's fees. No deposits are held at the Nursery School.

If a child increases the number of days he/she attends nursery, an additional deposit will become payable to reflect the increased number of days.

Deposits are to be paid by online bank transfer, but not by childcare vouchers or the Tax-Free Childcare Scheme.

**Co-op hours:** The parents of each child are required to undertake four co-op hours per term at the Day Nursery (i.e. one hour per month). Those parents with children at both ACE Nursery School and ACE Day Nursery, or with two or more children at the Day Nursery, will only need to complete one set of co-op hours. Staff with children at ACE are exempt from co-op hours.

Parents who are not able to complete their co-op hours for some reason will be invoiced at £18.00/hr for co-op hours not completed. Neither childcare vouchers nor the Tax-Free Childcare scheme can be used to pay for co-op hours due the tax treatment of the payments at source.

**Late collection charge:** If a parent is late to pick up a child, a late collection fee of £25 is applicable. This charge is at the discretion of the Day Nursery Manager and a phone call to explain any delay may avoid the charge. See our Late Collection Policy for further details.

**Written notice:** Each child is expected to attend ACE Day Nursery for at least two months. Parents must give one month's notice in writing (this excludes closure periods) before withdrawing their child from the Day Nursery or reducing their child's sessions. The one month's notice does not include closure periods, so for example if notice is given by email on say Monday 21 August 2023, the nursery is closed that week and only re-opens on Friday 1 September, so the one month of notice starts on 1<sup>st</sup> September. If the appropriate notice is not given, fees for the following month will become chargeable (and will be deducted from the deposit in the case of a child leaving the setting).

**Withdrawal of place:** A child's place will be withdrawn if fees are not paid in accordance with this policy document or if a child does not attend the Day Nursery for two weeks or more without explanation.

**Moving to ACE Nursery School:** Children attending ACE Day Nursery will have the opportunity to move to the Nursery School at a mutually agreed date, usually in September (subject to the paragraphs below). However, the Nursery School is unable to guarantee that a child will be offered the same days that she/he has had at the Day Nursery or different days that a parent may wish her/his child to have at the Nursery School. Admissions at the Nursery School are dealt with by the Headteacher who will do her best to accommodate parental requests, but availability depends on demand in any particular year and the allocation of days is at the sole discretion of the Headteacher. First priority is given to children already at ACE Nursery School, then to siblings of current and ex-ACE children and children moving up from ACE Day Nursery, and then to the outside waiting list. Parents are encouraged to speak to the Headteacher about admission to the Nursery School and may also wish to seek backup childcare arrangements if they have specific requirements.

A child will only be given the opportunity to move to ACE Nursery School if she/he has attended ACE Day Nursery right up until the point of transfer, with the same days that he/she has had at the Day Nursery for the Summer Term prior to the transfer. If this is not the case, the child will not be offered a place at the Nursery School.

The opportunity to move up to ACE Nursery School is most likely to be offered from September each academic year. This is because the Nursery School is usually full from September each year and there are very limited opportunities to move up at any other time during the year.

A child can remain at ACE Day Nursery until the end of the term in which she/he turns three years old. If your child turns three part-way during the Summer Term, she/he can remain until the end of August and then move on to ACE Nursery School or another setting. If a child turns three during the Autumn or Spring Terms, they will be required to leave ACE Day Nursery at the end of that term and

will not then have any automatic rights to move up to the Nursery School the following September. A new application will need to be made to the Nursery School which will be treated as an outside waiting list application.

Children whose second birthdays fall between 1 September and 31 March will be offered the opportunity to move up to the Nursery School in the September following their second birthday. Children whose second birthdays fall between 1 April and 31 August will stay at the Day Nursery for the following academic year and then be offered the opportunity to move up to the Nursery School in the September after their third birthday.