

Free Entitlement Funding Policy

Statement of Intent

Our policy is based on the information, consultation and guidance issued by Suffolk County Council (SCC). Suffolk County Council's further consultations may result in changes, at which time we may review our policy.

It is our intention to deliver the Free Entitlement Funding in the way in which Suffolk intends, but also to ensure the future sustainability of our pre-school. The Government advertises this entitlement as free to parents, but the entitlement received by the pre-school is considerably less than the price it costs to run the session. In some instances therefore it is necessary to apply boundaries to the flexibility of the funding to ensure we do not detrimentally impact on the smooth operations of the pre-school and in the interests of all our children. Due to the popularity of our pre-school, on occasion we may not be able to offer funded only hours at parents preferred days or times. Depending on availability, we may offer funded only sessions in the afternoons only.

Our policy is applicable to eligible children who have or are about to apply for Free Entitlement Funding. They are currently entitled to a maximum of 15 hours of funded child care per week which can be split over a maximum of 2 settings. This funding is claimed from SCC based on the hours which Yaxley & Mellis Pre-school can offer.

A child who turns 2 (if eligible) or 3 years between:	Term they can receive funded early learning:
1 September and 31 December	Spring Term (January)
1 January and 31 March	Summer Term (April)
1 April and 31 August	Autumn Term (September)

A holding fee will not be charged if a child is being registered to join Yaxley & Mellis Pre-School at a date by which they will be entitled to free early education. However there is no guarantee that your child will be able to have the full 15 hours at pre-school as the hours which your child is offered is dependent on the level of children already attending at that time. Priority is given for these places to children who are already attending Yaxley & Mellis Pre-School.

Funding is currently available for a maximum of 570 hours which is divided into 3 funding periods. Funding can only be claimed at each of these 3 points per year and cannot be amended between terms. SCC will not allow or facilitate any amendments, as such should a parent wish to amend their child's hours midterm any additional costs for extra hours above the funding claimed will be due at the pre-school fee paying rates

Term 1 - September, Term 3 – January and Term 5 – After Easter.

This funding can be used during our opening session times (9am - 3pm) and also for lunch club. Extra hours (either due to parental choice or for hours exceeding the maximum available per claim period) will be charged at our normal rates. Funding follows Monday to Friday and does not roll over to the following week.

Our funded places are entirely free of charge without conditions and parents should be aware that any additional goods or services are not a condition of this entitlement. Your requested sessions are also subject to availability. We will always try to accommodate you when/where we can.

We offer flexibility to support parents to maximise the use of their child's funded place.

When planning your child's early education arrangements each term, please be aware the funding will not follow your child from us to another provider, should you decide to leave pre-school.

When a child is eligible to receive their free entitlement, the parent will need to complete a Parent Authorisation Claim form. This will be issued by our administration manager. Once completed, the form needs to be returned to the administration manager for the data to be sent to SCC. You will also need to show proof of your child's date of birth, for their initial claim form.

Further funded hour claims will only require a parental signature during headcount week.

If you wish to make alterations or amend you claimed hours for a new term period you will be required to complete another Parent Authorisation Claim form.

These claim forms are stored in a lockable cabinet at pre-school for 7 years.

Parents are not permitted to sign for additional funded hours in order to "store" these for a future time.

Replacement Funded Hours:

- In the event of closures due to exceptional circumstances some parents who claim their full 15 hours funding with the pre-school are occasionally unable to have full use of their hours during those weeks. In these circumstances parents are offered the opportunity to take their missed hours at an additional point within the same academic year.
- Replacement funded hours will not be offered if your child is absent from pre-school due to sickness or holidays.
- If you know your child has a hospital appointment and will be requiring time off, providing you have given us a minimum of 2 weeks' notice in writing, we will offer you a maximum replacement of 3 hours. To be used as and where we have session availability.
- If your child is absent from pre-school due to hospitalisation, we will offer you a maximum replacement of 6 hours. To be used as and where we have session availability.
- At the discretion of the pre-school directors these replacement hours maybe available to be carried over and used in lieu of lunch clubs for the following term.



Free early learning for 2 year olds

Suffolk County Council has launched a 'Golden Ticket' campaign, informing parents of eligible 2 year olds they're entitled to 570 hours of free childcare a year. Currently 2 year olds who meet the eligibility criteria are entitled up to 15 hours of free early education from the term after their second birthday right up until they start school.

Parents may still be eligible for 2 year old funding even if they **did not** receive a golden ticket.

Eligibility can also be checked online at www.suffolk.gov.uk/two. If your child is eligible, you the parent/carer will be given a reference number, which you need to pass onto our Administration Manager.

30 hours extended entitlement for Early Years Children September 2017

The government has committed to doubling the amount of free childcare from 15 to 30 hours a week for working parents of nursery age pupils from September 2017. They want the 30 hours extended entitlement to have a real impact on the lives of families, supporting parents who wish to work, or to work more hours, to be able to do so.

At Yaxley & Mellis Pre-School we are able to offer a provision for 10 children to access the extra 15 hours. These will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

Who is eligible?

Parents will be able to check eligibility in late spring 2017.

Eligibility for the additional free entitlement will include households where:

- all parents (whether two-parent family or lone parent) are working and earning a minimum of the equivalent of 16 hours a week at the National Minimum or Living Wage (includes income received from tax credits or Universal Credit) and one parent's income does not exceed £100,000
- one or both parents are on leave (parental, maternal etc.)
- one or both parents are on statutory sick pay
- parents on zero hours contracts and those who are registered as self-employed
- one parent is employed and the other parent has either:
 - substantial caring responsibilities and or a disability
 - is a foster carer with their own 3 and 4 year old children

Further information can be found on the government website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility>

Once the government have opened the eligibility checking service you should go online to obtain your authorisation code. Once you have this code please let pre-school know so that we can put this into our systems to enable your claim to be made.