

## Fees and Grants, Including Early Years Grant Funding

### Policy Statement

Sessions are held at Raef Limited T/A Chuggers and Choo Choo's Day Nursery, Preschool and Club from 8am – 5:30/6pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks per year. Choo Choo's Day Nursery and Preschool can provide a maximum of 47 places for children aged between 3 months to 5 years old. Chugger's Day Nursery and Preschool can provide a maximum of 72 places for children aged between 3 months and 5 years old. We provide children with flexible sessions throughout the week dependent on demand, and we respond by providing the required staff to child ratio.

We are able to receive the Early Years Entitlement (EYE) government funding, as we are registered with Ofsted, and comply with the Early Years Foundation Stage Welfare Requirements. These Standards promote a good quality of childcare, but they demand a great deal from the setting staff. Many hours are spent meeting requirements in record keeping, form filling, planning, evaluating and updating/writing policy documents. Staff are required to attend various training courses which the setting funds. Raef Limited is required to address Special Educational Needs issues and may need to fund these. As the COVID-19 pandemic has developed we have new factors that as a business we have had to contend with. We work closely with the Local Authority and our parents to ensure we can remain open and operational for all children to attend. As a result of COVID-19 we have had to review our fees policy in line with new government guidelines, in the case of having to shut down the setting for anything other than adverse weather conditions, staff training days, Bank Holidays and the Christmas closure.

### Procedures

The EYE is provided for every eligible two, three and four year old, and is intended to fund a maximum 15 or 30 hours (eligibility dependent) per week during the school terms or a maximum of 11 or 22 hours (eligibility dependent) per week for 51 weeks per year (all year round).

We cannot be flexible in how government funding is used, other than stretching it for the children who attend all year round, rather than term time only. Once a child exceeds EYE hours or the maximum amount of funding per term, fees will be charged per session as per the current fee structure. (Appendix 1)

Once government funding has started and a child exceeds their weekly allowance, the latest hours added to their attendance shall be fee paying e.g. a child attends five hours per day Monday, Tuesday and Friday = 15 hours. The child then adds Wednesday PM which makes a total of 20 hours. Fees will be charged for the Wednesday PM session. Meals are optional and are provided by the setting at an additional charge (appendix 1). If you choose not to have meals provided by the setting you are required to inform the manager and provide your child with a healthy balanced lunch box.

If a child attends an ad hoc session, these hours can be added to the funding but if the child exceeds 15 hours in that week, despite having available grant for the term, we shall have to charge for the extra hours.

### Early Years Pupil Premium

Funding is available for all children from lower income families. To find out if a child qualifies the parent/carer must complete the online application form on the Somerset County Council website:

**<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/childrens-services/early-years-for-families/early-years-pupil-premium/>**

This funding goes directly to the preschool to enhance your child's preschool learning and is extra to grant fee payment. This funding cannot be used against invoicing for sessions.

### Early Years Entitlement

Funding is available for some children from 2-5 years. 2 Year funding must be applied for by the parents and can be applied for via the Somerset County Council website: **<https://services.somerset.gov.uk/funding-for-2-year-olds>**

Once you have applied, a decision letter will be sent to your home address or via email. If you are eligible then you will be able to access funding the beginning of the term after your child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. You will need to bring your county hall eligibility letter and your child's birth certificate or passport and completed registration form to the setting to secure

your place the setting. 2-year-old funding is a maximum of 15 hours per week (term time only) but can be stretched to 11 hours a week for children who attend all year round.

The universal 15 hours a week funding (11 hours all year round) for 3-5-year-old children does not require a parent to apply for it, as all children in England are eligible for this funding. However, parents/carers wanting to apply for the 30 hours (term time) 22 hours (all year round) funding, can be claimed via this website: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-30-hours-free-childcare>

Both of these funding types starts the term after the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday. For example, if child X has a date of birth of 25/02/2018 then they would be able to access the funding from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021. EYE funding payments are paid directly to Raef Limited. You will be required to sign a parent declaration form to confirm funding payments on a termly basis.

## **Food**

Breakfast and Tea are provided by the setting for an additional cost to parents that are receiving the EYE (appendix 1). Setting meals are optional, and children can have breakfast at home, and bring in a packed lunch for tea. All children must be provided with a packed lunch for lunchtime.

## **Registration Fees**

There is a registration fee on joining the nurseries of £60.00 (for children in receipt of two or three-year-old government -funding the £60.00 registration fee will not be charged.). This registration fee is non-refundable, and covers the costs of the 3 settling sessions, peg creation, learning journal creation and place holding. This fee is not applicable to children who attend breakfast club, afterschool club or holiday club.

## **Nursery Fee Paying Parents/Carers (this is not applicable to club children)**

For fees payable by parent or carers for children or sessions not covered by government funding, the following applies:

The fee for each session is laid out on the fee structure (appendix 1). These rates will be subject to change. If fees are increased, then you will be informed in writing with a minimum of one calendar months' notice.

- Fees are non-refundable in cases of absence, holiday or illness, unless there is a planned operation for an illness and notice is given. This is subject to circumstances and open to the manager's discretion.
- Invoices are issued between 15<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> of every month. Invoices are sent via email and through the Blossom Parent App.
- Fees are payable by the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month, although flexible payment arrangements can be agreed individually with the setting directors. A letter should be addressed to the nursery director, India Fear, and a response will be given in writing, either agreeing or disagreeing your request. This letter must state the reason for your request and whether it is permanent or temporary.
- Should fees not be paid and alternative arrangements not agreed with the nursery director in writing prior to the due date of 28<sup>th</sup>, then a late fee charge of £10 will be added to your account, and 5% of the total bill each day thereafter. If your balance becomes 7 days overdue, then a letter will be sent to you requesting payment. Failure to make this payment by the requested payment date, will result in refusal of entry until the balance is paid. If this becomes frequent, then the account will be reviewed and if there have been more than 3 late payments on the account, then a late charge of £50 will be applied to your account once your payment becomes overdue on the 29<sup>th</sup>, or the agreed payment date. The director will then review the case and make a decision on how to go forward. In most cases, if payments are not regularly made late, then entry will be refused until the invoice is paid in full. If this payment is not made within 7 days from when the invoice became overdue, then entry to the nursery setting will be refused, and your child's place withdrawn immediately, and the balance will then be sent to debt recovery. However, if it appears that payments are regularly made late, then your contract may be terminated immediately, and the balance will then be sent to debt recovery.
- Payments can be made by via BACs, cash, through the Blossom Parent app, voucher payments and tax-free childcare. Please ask managers for further information relating to your payment choices.
- Bank transfer details are detailed on the bottom of every invoice
- If your child leaves and you still have an outstanding balance, then you will not have access to your child's learning journal and artwork until the balance has been paid in full.

## **COVID-19 Closure**

At Raef Limited, it is our duty to ensure we take Health and Safety seriously. In light of the current Coronavirus pandemic we have put together some advice and information which we hope you will find useful if we were to close in the future due to COVID-19 or any other outbreak. We as a nursery are monitoring the situation on a daily basis and will continue to update on new developments.

As per the current guidance, children, staff members or parents are not required to isolate if they have COVID-19. Therefore, children are able to attend nursery as normal and staff members can work too. However, as per the sickness policy, if the child has a temperature, or is showing symptoms which suggest they are not well enough for nursery, then they will be sent home until they are well enough to attend. Staff members must follow the sickness procedure as normal for COVID-19.

However, if in future, the current rules change and as a country, isolation periods are introduced, then we will review our policy and update parents of changes.

*Up until February 2022, the policy read as follows:*

*If we were to close in future due to a confirmed case of COVID-19 with a child or staff member, or another lockdown, then we have come to the decision to charge parents 30% of their expected fees for that period. We will be charging a lesser rate to enable us to stay in business and hold your child's space upon opening. You will not be charged for food, just 30% of your expected session costs.*

*During the event of a closure, we will be providing all children with activities that will be sent out via Blossom and Facebook daily, that staff will be planning for targeted age groups and topics, just as they would if the setting was open.*

*If a parent/carer or another household member is isolating, and you decide to temporarily bring your child out of nursery, then you will still be charged 100% of your fees, as per our sickness policy, as we would still remain open as a business. Should the setting have to close as a result of a positive Covid-19 result or a national lockdown is enforced, from this point, all parents/carers will be charged 30%, rather than 100%.*

*As soon as the setting reopens, all parents/carers will be charged 100% of their expected fees, even if you decide you do not want your child to return at that point. If you would like to give notice on your place during the closure or after, then this would be one calendar month and you are expected to pay your bill up until this point.*

## **Termination of your nursery childcare place (both funded and fee-paying parents)**

If one full calendar months' notice is given, then only fees shall be discounted for the relevant days. If parents do not inform the setting that they wish to leave in writing, then funding will be drawn down for the one calendar months following the day they inform the setting formally as per the contract or one full calendar month following the date the setting managers confirm that the child is no longer attending the setting. Parents and carers are required to give at least one calendar months' notice in writing if a place is no longer required for their child. Government funding will be retained if notice is not served, as will other fees due for the same period.

## **Late Collection Charges**

If a parent is late and does not contact the setting within 15 minutes of the agreed collection time. Then they will be charged a late fee of £10.00 per every 15 minutes. If, however the parents call's for example is stuck in traffic, we will waiver the fee as long as it is not a reoccurring situation. Late collection charges are up to the manager's discretion. This applies to all children, including club children.

## **Changing Yours Child's Nursery Hours**

If you wish to change your child's session hours you are required to give one calendar months' notice in writing to notify us of the change. The managers will review the availability of the new hours and will confirm in writing whether the change is possible.

## **Legal framework**

1. Relevant Acts of Parliament that form the foundation of the legal requirements for this policy or procedure:
2. Equalities Act (2010)
3. Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
4. Children Act (1989 s47)

5. Protection of Children Act (1999)
6. Data Protection Act (1998)
7. The Children Act (Every Child Matters) (2004)

### **Further guidance**

8. Can be found at [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk), or [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk), or, on the Government website.

### **Club Payments and Overdue Balances**

9. All payments must be made through *magicbooking*.
10. Types of payment available are Credit/Debit card, Childcare Voucher or Tax-Free Childcare. We do not accept any other form of payment.
11. When paying by Childcare Vouchers or Tax-Free Childcare, please use your child's full name as the payment reference.
12. Having an overdue balance may lead to the termination of your child's place within the club and you will not be able to make future bookings until your account balance is paid in full.
13. Raef Limited will pass any unrecovered fees to an external debt collection agency. Any fees associated with the debt collection will be passed on to the debtor.
14. Breakfast club is currently charged at £6 per session. Afterschool club is split into two sessions – 3:15-4:30 session is £7.10 and 3:15-6:00 session is £14.20. Tea is an additional charge of £2.80 (optional). Holiday Club is charged at £30 per session. Breakfast is an additional charge of £1.25 (optional) and tea £2.80 (optional). For children who are attending any club session who are not yet 60 months in age, the hourly rate of £6.77 will be charged.