



Fees, Funding and Payment Policy

Statement of Intention

It is our intention to provide a clear and concise policy of how Stockton House Pre-School handles and manages the receipt of fees as well as the various funding options available.

Stockton House Pre-school understands that the cost of registered childcare may seem expensive to a parent. However, providing a high quality, safe and stimulating service for children is not cheap, and to ensure the continued high standards and sustainability of the Pre-School, we must ask that parents respect our policy regarding fees. Stockton House Pre-school values its relationship with parents/carers and will be sympathetic towards any difficulty a parent/carer may have in paying their child's fees. However, we are unable to function effectively without these payments paid on time and in full.

Fees are reviewed annually in the Spring Term, with any changes coming into effect from 1 April that year.

Section 1 – Due dates for payment

Fees for children already attending are due prior to the start of each term and therefore must be paid in advance. This applies to all payment methods, including childcare vouchers and tax-free childcare. The invoicing dates are issued in accordance with the funding dates as per Hampshire County Council. Therefore, even if the Spring Term ends on a date in April, invoices for the Spring Term will only bill for sessions up to and including the 31st March, and for Summer Term invoices, these will bill for sessions from 1st April onwards (even though the Easter Holidays fall during this period).

Term Dates	Due Date*
1 st September – 31 st December (Autumn Term)	25th August
1 st January – 31 st March (Spring Term)	31st December
1 st April – July (Summer Term)	31st March

*or Friday prior is date falls on a weekend

Section 2 – Administration charges for all fees

- 2.1. Payment of fees in full on or before the due date will not incur any charges. Payment can be made via bank transfer, childcare vouchers and/or the Government tax-free childcare voucher system. **We do not accept cash or cheque payments**
- 2.2. Each week (or part thereof) that fees remain unpaid (except by prior arrangement) will incur an automatic £25 late payment fee.
- 2.3. Fees paid by instalment ("payment plans") **by prior arrangement only**, will incur a one-off administration charge of £25 per term or part thereof. **Please note: Payment plans are not available to fully-funded children (i.e. their session costs excluding lunches and optional extras are fully-covered by the Government funding).**
- 2.4. Non-attendance due to child holiday, illness and/or other reasons does not see a refund of fees, which are still payable in full.
- 2.5. EYE funding cannot be used to cover the cost of lunch, Music and Movement, Muddy Acorns, insurance, ad-hoc sessions, trips or uniform purchases.
- 2.6. Ad-hoc sessions are hours a child attends that are one off hours / sessions outside the child's regular booking pattern.
 - 48 hours' notice (excluding the day of notice and day of the additional

hours) must be given to cancel the ad-hoc session or payment in lieu of the hours must be paid.

- No refunds will be given for payments received and appropriate notice given for cancellation of ad-hoc hours; but a credit will be raised and will sit on the account for future invoices.
 - If the child does not use the ad-hoc hours for whatever reason and the appropriate notice has not been given, no refund / credit will apply.
- 2.7. Please inform the Early Years' Manager ASAP if you have difficulties in paying your fees so alternative arrangements can be made (payment plans).
 - 2.8. Any bank charges incurred by Stockton House Pre-school due to non-honoured cheques or other payment methods, **for any pre-school fees**, will be charged back to the payee and the late payment fee may also be incurred in accordance with our Late Payment Policy.
 - 2.9. If you have a query on your invoice, payment of the element **not** in question is still due. **Failure to pay this will incur a late payment fee for unpaid fees in accordance with this policy until all monies are paid.** Amounts you are querying on your invoice are due for payment in full **within 7 days of the invoice query being rectified** or by the invoice due date; whichever is later.
 - 2.10. Funded children who exceed the weekly funding allowance (15 or 30 hours) will be charged at the full hourly rate for those hours not covered by the funding.
 - 2.11. Children in receipt of the Early Years' Funding are entitled to either 570 or 1140 hours per year depending on the type of funding they receive. If your child exceeds these hours within that year, the outstanding hours will be charged at the applicable hourly rate. If your child is on split provision the amount of hours is still the same and has to be split over the settings; the funding **is not per setting**.
 - 2.12. Childcare vouchers / tax-free childcare can only be used for the care and education of your child. Sundry items such as uniform may not be paid for using childcare vouchers / tax-free childcare so please ensure payment is made via another accepted method.
 - 2.13. Persistent non-payment of fees (without good cause and prior notification) for children who are entitled to receive Early Years Funding and who attend for additional hours above the 15/30 funded hours; extracurricular activities and/or have lunch (all of which are invoiced) will result in those children not being allowed to attend these activities until the invoice has been cleared in full.
 - 2.14. Persistent non-payment of fees (without good cause and prior notification) of children who are not funded may result in the child's hours being reduced in order for the outstanding balance to be settled without further debt.

Late Collection Charges

As per the Non-Collection and Late Collection of Children Policy, the following unauthorised* late collection fees will apply if you are late collecting your child (i.e. you collect your child past the hour they are due to be collected) **and have not notified the pre-school beforehand:**

- a charge of £30 for the first 15 minutes (of part thereof), will be applied; and
- a charge of £2 for every 1 minute (or part thereof) in excess of the initial 15 minutes will be applied.
- **Notified** late collections will be charged at the appropriate ad-hoc late finish rate for the child's year group with a minimum of 30 minutes.

unauthorised = no notification received, or notification was received **after the child's scheduled finish time*

Section 3 – Removal of a child from a setting / lunches / extras

At least 20 working term days' notice excluding the day of the notice, in writing, must be given to remove a pupil from the setting. Failing this, a full term's fees will be charged. This also applies to the removal of your child from extracurricular activities and/or lunches.

If you decide to withdraw your child from Stockton House Pre-school prior to their start date and you have already paid your termly fees, then a £50 administration fee will be deducted from your refund prior to payment.

Removal of children from extra-curricular activities and/or lunches requires at least **20 working term days' notice excluding the day of the notice** to be given, in writing, or payment made in lieu of the requisite notice period.

Section 4 – Deferring your child's start date

Although we understand that occasionally a parent/carer may need to defer their child's start date this creates **session voids** for the setting, which has a serious financial impact on the pre-school so please ensure you have read and understood our terms and conditions found below.

4.1 – Holding Deposits for 'Skipped Terms' prior to the start of term

Once we have received payment of the Registration Fee, your child's place is then confirmed and sessions will be allocated as per the details provided on the Registration Form.

Depending on your child's start date, you will then receive an invoice for the holding deposit for each 'skipped' term payable in advance prior to starting, where applicable.

The holding deposits required are as follows:

- **Autumn Term Start Date:** no holding deposit required
- **Spring Term Start Date:** £250 holding deposit for the Autumn Term of the same academic year
- **Summer Term Start Date:** £500 holding deposit for the Autumn and Spring Terms of the same academic year

Providing that your child starts within that same academic year then your holding deposit will be held on account and used to offset your invoice once your child starts.

Note: The above does not apply to 2-year-old funded children (commonly known as the disadvantage 2 year old funding which is only 15 hours per week NOT the working parents funding)

Note: Funded children cannot start in the Summer Term except in certain circumstances (see Admissions Policy).

4.2 – Delaying your child's start date after the start of term

If you delay the start date for your child for an entire term **after** the start of term, i.e. a delay from the Autumn Term to the Spring Term, or the Spring Term to the Summer Term **once the term has started, we have a session void**. This causes the pre-school a problem as no other child can fill this space as it had been set aside for your child.

Should you need to delay your child's start date for any reason then you must contact the pre-school as soon as possible.

You will then be charged £250 as per section 4.1 above.

Note: The above does not apply to 2-year-old funded children (commonly known as the disadvantage 2 year old funding which is only 15 hours per week NOT the working parents funding)

Note: Funded children cannot start in the Summer Term except in certain circumstances (see Admissions Policy).

4.3 – Deferring for more than two terms and crossing academic years

If you delay your child's start date by a full academic year after your registration fee has been paid and your sessions are confirmed **and before the start** of that academic year, we will move your child's start date to the following academic year and release those sessions for the original academic year to other families.

If, however, you delay your child's start into the next academic year during the academic year your child was due to start after your registration fee has been paid and your sessions have been confirmed, then any payments made as holding deposits for the original terms are **non-refundable**. We would have kept this space aside for your child for an entire year therefore payment must be made for it.

4.4 – No contact ahead of start date

If your child was due to start at Stockton House Pre-school during any given term and despite various email correspondence sent out to you, we receive no communication, no payment for fees, and no completed requisite forms prior to starting then we will contact you with a deadline by which to reply otherwise you will forfeit your child's space for that academic year, your child will be removed from our list of registered children and you will lose any credit balance (if applicable) held on account.

We would be keeping this space aside for your child at the expense of placing another child and as much as we understand that circumstances change we kindly ask you to extend to us the courtesy of keeping us informed.

Should you wish to re-register your child at a later date then you will need to pay the applicable Registration Fee even if you have already paid this prior to being removed from our register.

Section 5 – Recovery of unpaid fees

The Directors of Stocktonia Ltd and the Early Years' Manager of Stockton House Pre-school will, as far as is reasonably possible, work with parents/carers in cases of difficulty in paying fees. Therefore, parents/carers are urged to contact the Early Years' Manager as soon as possible should such circumstances arise and well before the situation becomes irretrievable.

Stockton House Pre-school will take all necessary steps to recover all monies outstanding in the event of non-payment of fees.

- Step 1.** First reminder sent to the billpayer via email requesting immediate payment of the outstanding balance
- Step 2.** Second reminder sent to the billpayer via email if payment is not received within 7 days of the first reminder
- Step 3.** First written warning issued to the billpayer by email if payment is still not received within 7 days of the second reminder warning that they will receive their second written reminder
- Step 4.** Second written warning issued to the billpayer by email if payment is not received within 7 days of the first written warning that you will forfeit your child's place (i.e. the child will be removed from the pre-school) and that legal advice will be sought
- Step 5.** Final written warning issued to the billpayer by post if payment is not received within 7 days of the second written warning with statement declaring that legal advice is now being sought.

The Directors reserve the right to charge interest on unpaid fees at a rate of 8% or 3% above base rate (whichever is the greater) plus any admin and/or legal costs. Interest will be charged one week after the date of the final written warning letter.

Section 6 - Funding

There are three main types of funding provided via Hampshire County Council

"2-year-old" funding (known as disadvantaged funding);

“**Universal**” funding for 3/4-year-olds (known as the “15 hours’ funding”); and

“**Working Parents**” funding. As of 01/09/2025 this is 30 hours for all families who qualify whose child/children are aged 9 mths to the August prior to starting school.

2-year-old funding and the working parent funding are subject to the child/family meeting certain criteria to qualify. The universal 15 hours for 3/4-year-olds is available to everyone.

The 2-year-old and universal 3/4-yr-old funding **starts the term following the child’s second or third birthday** so please refer to the below table to see from when your child is eligible to receive funding:

Birth Dates Fall Between	Funded from
1 Sep – 31 Dec	1 Jan
1 Jan – 31 Mar	1 April
1 Apr – 31 Aug	1 Sep

6.1 2-Year-Old Funding

If you believe that your child may qualify for the current 2-year-old funding (either on economic or non-economic grounds) in accordance with the eligibility criteria please use the link below or see Mrs Moore, Early Years’ Manager and she can check your eligibility and apply for the code on your behalf. 2-year-old funding can only be applied for during the term in which the child turns two years’ old.

Once eligibility has been obtained, this will not be removed from the family if circumstances change.

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/childcare/payingforchildcare/feechildcare/2yearoldoffer>

6.2 Working Parents Funding

Parents/carers will need to check their eligibility for the working parents funding online at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> and provide Stockton House Pre-school with a copy of the email confirmation showing the unique code. You also must provide the Pre-school with the National Insurance number that was used for the application in order for Stockton House Pre-school to verify the code. Until the code is verified, the additional hours are not guaranteed.

HMRC should notify the parent/carer when the code of eligibility for the funding needs to be re-validated. Re-validation happens every 3 months. It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to ensure that the re-validation takes place. Failure to do so will result in your code being rejected and an invoice issued at full-rate for the unfunded hours.

If re-validation results in the code becoming ineligible for funding, parents must inform Mrs Moore immediately so that hours can be renegotiated. Failure to do so will result in an invoice issued at full-rate for the unfunded hours to the parent/carer for the child(ren).

Section 7 - Refunds

7.1 Refunds for Cancellation of Extra Curricular Activities

If, for some reason, we have to cancel the extracurricular activities (Muddy Acorns and Music & Movement) on a given day and an alternative time cannot be sought to make up for the missed sessions, then billpayers will automatically receive a pro-rata credit to their account for that session.

7.2 Refunds due to Delayed Start

If you decide to delay your child’s start date and have already paid your fees, then any refunds will be processed AFTER your child has started here at Stockton House Pre-school and not before. You also have the option to retain the money on account here at Stockton House Pre-school to offset future invoices.

If you decide to delay your child's start date and have not yet paid your fees then we require payment of whichever is the greater of 50% of your termly fees or £250 as a minimum by the due date of the prior term.

7.3 Refunds due to a prolonged or forced closure

In the event of a prolonged or forced closure due to an unforeseen event of 7 days or more as defined in the Emergency Closure Policy, we must ensure that Pre-school remains financially viable. We have fixed costs to pay which continue even when the pre-school is closed. If the closure is forced upon us by an event that is covered by our insurance, we will not charge for sessions while we are closed. Unfortunately, not all events can be insured against, so in situations that are NOT covered by our insurance, full fees will still fall due.

7.4 Refunds due to Government-enforced closure *(expected to last more than 2 weeks, excluding pre-school holidays)*

At no time will a child's place need to be reaffirmed via payment during a pandemic/epidemic. All child places will be automatically secured.

Faced with a sudden, unpredicted drop in fee income is a difficult and precarious situation for any setting to find itself in. Whether or not the emergency closure/loss of income clause in the Pre-School's insurance policy can be activated depends entirely on the contributing factor behind the pandemic/epidemic. For instance, during the initial lockdown in March 2020 due to COVID-19, the insurance clause of the Pre-School could not be activated as COVID-19 was not listed as a notifiable disease on the policy.

However, a lockdown due to a government-enforced pandemic/epidemic impacts almost everyone, including the families of children who attend Stockton House Pre-school. Our priority therefore is to ensure the continued survival of the pre-school along with job security for the staff as well as being empathetic of the financial situation of parents.

It is not possible to simply "close" the pre-school at a moment's notice as there are many administrative jobs that still need to be carried out during this time, one of which is frequent communication with parents regarding the status of the pre-school as well as correspondence regarding possible refunds of fees.

Management and administration duties still continue; utilities and outstanding/ongoing supplier invoices still need to be paid, and payroll obligations must still be met.

Having suffered a significant and detrimental financial impact during the lockdown in March 2020, and in order to ensure the continued viability of the Pre-School, the Pre-School has amended its Fees, Funding and Payment Policy to include a separate clause regarding refunds following a government-enforced pandemic/epidemic.

Should we find ourselves faced with another local/national government-enforced lockdown whereby the pre-school is obligated **by law** to close to all children by the UK Government, Public Health England ("PHE") and/or local authorities, then from the first official date of closure to the official end of closure ("refund period") all invoices above £150 that apply to the term in question will be eligible for a refund.

Example 1

The Autumn Term invoice for 1 Sept – 31 Dec is issued on 6 July 2020 for a total of £260 covering 13 weeks (£20 per week). Lockdown is announced as effective from the start of October half-term. Therefore 7 out of the 13 weeks are prior to lockdown so you would potentially be eligible for a refund for up to £20 per each full week of enforced closure less any admin charge for refund type*.

Example 2

The Autumn Term invoice for 1 Sept – 31 Dec is issued on 6 July 2020 for a total of £99 covering 13 weeks. You would not be eligible for a refund.

7.5 Types of Refunds Available

If the pre-school is ordered to close to all children by the UK Government, Public Health England ("PHE") and/or local authorities then parents/carers have the following options open to them:

- Full refund of fees that were payable for the duration of lockdown (bank transfer to parents account or direct to the voucher company depending on payment method)
- Partial refund of fees that were payable for the duration of lockdown (parents deciding what % went where either on account or as a donation to the pre-school)
- Donation of fees that were payable for the duration of lockdown to the pre-school
- Fees that were payable for the duration of lockdown to remain on account to offset future invoices

*If a parent chooses a full or partial refund via bank transfer, a £10 administrative charge to process and set up the payment will be deducted from the refund.

Refunds are not immediate as we do not know at the point of lockdown the duration that the pre-school is to be closed to all children. Any qualifying refunds/credits on account will be processed en masse from the point of reopening to all eligible children.

Section 8 – Reopening after closure

8.1 Partial Reopening for Children of Key Workers/Essential Workers

If the pre-school is ordered to close to all children by the UK Government, Public Health England ("PHE") and/or local authorities bar those of key workers / essential workers as defined by the UK Government and/or PHE / local authorities then all children of key workers / essential workers will be invited to remain attending Stockton House Pre-school for as long as is financially viable for the pre-school. We will endeavour to remain open for as long as possible; however, it is not financially viable to open the pre-school for just one or two children and in this instance the decision will be made by the Early Years' Manager regarding complete closure and the parents/carers of those children still attending and/or eligible to attend notified.

For those children who are not classed as being key workers / essential workers then the refund policy as per Section 6 applies.

If any parent/carer who qualifies as a key worker and/or essential work does not want to have their child attend despite eligibility, then they would also qualify for a refund as per Section 6.

8.2 Reopening of the pre-school following a Government-enforced closure due to a pandemic/epidemic

As soon as the pre-school is able to reopen, we will immediately notify the parents/carers with our "return to pre-school" procedure. If the pre-school is open and able to provide a service, then normal fees resume and the refund period as per Section 6 will immediately cease.

Refunds as per Section 6 will be processed for payment/credit on account and the parent/carer notified of a payment/credit date.

Any parent who does not want their child to return despite the pre-school being open and able to provide a service will still incur fees as they would were the child absent from pre-school due to holiday, illness, etc. It is parental choice to have their child not return and so fees, lunches, extras are still payable from the date of reopening. The space has been set aside for your child and cannot be refilled therefore there are no exceptions.

If you are in doubt about your financial situation then please speak to Mrs Moore, Early Years' Manager as soon as possible.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Admissions Policy.

Review

This Policy has been reviewed and updated on **31st July 2025** by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenny Moore', is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Jenny Moore, BA EYPS
Early Years' Manager
Stockton House Pre-school