

BLACK HORSE HILL INFANT SCHOOL



FOUNDATION 1 ADMISSION FEES POLICY

14th November 2024

Approved by Committee _____

28th November 2024

Approved by Full Governing Body _____

J Merrin

Signed _____ (Vice-Chair)

J Morris

Signed _____ (Headteacher)

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Statement of intent

Black Horse Hill Infant School aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition to primary school.

We will work with parents to claim benefit entitlement related to nursery fees such as working tax credits and free childcare entitlement.

This policy has been established to provide transparent fee information, set procedures for the payment of fees and create a framework for dealing with non-payment in a swift and fair manner.

Parents should be aware of, and given access to, this policy and the school's procedures. It will be included on the school's website and made available to view at the school on request.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Childcare Act 2006
- Childcare Act 2016
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014 (as amended)
- The Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) Regulations 2016 (as amended)
- DfE (2018) 'Early years entitlements: operational guidance'
- DfE (2024) 'Early education and childcare'
- DfE (2024) September 2024 early education and childcare entitlements expansion'

2. Fees

Parents will be charged for the care provided outside of the following entitlements to free childcare:

- **Working parents entitlement** – this entitlement is available for working parents of children from the term after they turn nine months until they start school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year.
- **Universal entitlement for three and four year olds** – all three and four year olds are eligible for this entitlement from the term after they turn three through to starting school. Parents are entitled to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks of the year and can be combined with the working parents entitlement to make up 30 hours.

The charges are as follows:

- £15.00 per additional session
- £3.00 for lunch time supervision and £2.91 for each lunch provided

Parents will book the required sessions termly in advance.

The free childcare offer cannot be used to pay for meals, other consumables, e.g. nappies or sun cream, additional hours or additional activities, e.g. trips. The nursery may charge a fee for these additions. If parents choose to pay for these, it will be an arrangement between the parent and the nursery.

Parents will not be required to pay any fee as a condition of taking up a '30 hours' place.

3. Universal entitlement for three and four year olds

All children aged three and four will be eligible to receive 570 hours free childcare per year over no fewer than 38 weeks of the year and up to 52 weeks of the year. These hours are usually taken as 15 hours a week.

'15 hours' free childcare is available from the term following a child's third birthday.

The nursery may ask parents to complete a form to help ensure they receive their free childcare hours.

4. Working parent entitlements

Three and four year olds

Provided that the eligibility criteria are met, children of working parents aged three and four years old will be entitled to the 30-hour entitlement. The working parent entitlement takes account of the universal entitlement and offers eligible parents an additional 15 hours of early years provision per week.

Eligibility

Parents will be eligible to claim the working parent entitlement if their child has attained the relevant age, is under the compulsory school age, and the parents:

- Are seeking the free childcare to enable them to work.
- Are in qualifying paid work and earn the equivalent of 16 hours at the national minimum wage rate over the forthcoming quarter.

Parents will be treated as though they meet the minimum income requirement if they are on certain forms of family leave from work or are in receipt of certain forms of statutory pay in connection with sickness or parenting. If one parent in a couple household is in receipt of, or could be entitled to, specific benefits related to caring, incapacity for work, or limited capacity to work, they will be treated as though they are in paid work and therefore eligible.

Parents that are newly self-employed will not be required to demonstrate that they meet the income criteria for 12 months in order to qualify for the working parent entitlement.

Any parent whose income exceeds £100,000 will not be eligible for the working parent entitlement.

Children in foster care will be entitled to free early years provision under the working parent entitlement if the child has attained the age of three, is under the compulsory school age and the criteria set out below are met:

- The LA is satisfied that the foster parent engaging in paid work other than as a foster parent is consistent with the child's care plan, placing the child at the centre of the process and decision-making

- In single foster parent families, the foster parent holds additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer
- In two-foster-parent families, both partners hold additional paid employment outside of their role as a foster carer or one partner is working and the other has a limited capability for work and work-related activity

If parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria for the working parent entitlements upon reconfirmation, a place will continue to be funded for the child for a limited 'grace period'.

5. Payment information

Payments will be made half termly in advance for all non-statutory sessions that parents have booked for their child. Lunches will be paid for weekly in advance.

Payments will be made via the schools' cashless system, ParentPay or via Childcare vouchers.

Payment will be required when a child is on holiday or absent due to illness, as the nursery must hold the child's place during this period.

If a child is absent for a long period due to illness, the nursery will decide on a case-by-case basis as to whether fees will need to be paid for the period. The nursery's decision is final.

Late payments will incur a £10 fine for each week payments are overdue. Parents can avoid this by ensuring the timely payment of fees.

One month's notice and payment will be required to withdraw your child from the nursery.

6. Late collection

Staffing ratios will be maintained at all times. If a child is collected late a cost will be passed on to the parents at £5.00 for the first 15 minutes and a further £1.00 for each subsequent five-minute period.

These costs may be waived in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher.

7. Difficulty with payments

The school will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored.

The school understands that parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties will contact the headteacher early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

8. Debt collection

The governing board will have a duty to ensure the school receives all the funds to which it is entitled, including nursery fees.

The governing board will not write off any debt that exceeds £500.

A full record will be kept of debts owed to the school for seven years. This will include all letters requesting money, reminders and invoices.

The school will not initiate legal action to recover debts; however, it will refer uncollected debts to the LA to consider such action.

9. Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

The headteacher and Secretary will ensure that:

- Letters requesting money are accurately recorded and well-maintained.
- Evidence of the steps taken by the school in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters and phone calls.
- A final reminder is sent by recorded delivery to the debtor.
- The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
- The level of outstanding debt can be determined at any time.

The governing board will:

- Prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery.
- At its discretion, refer uncollected debts to the LA for consideration for legal action.
- Record all approved action in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Adhere to privacy arrangements.
- At its discretion, delegate its responsibilities under this policy to a suitable individual.

10. The process for pursuing debts

The following procedure will be followed with regard to pursuing debts:

Informal reminder – Within two days of late payment, the debtor will be informally reminded in person or by telephone that they owe money to the school.

First reminder letter – If the debt is yet to be paid one week after an informal reminder, a formal letter will be sent to the debtor.

Second reminder letter – If the debt is yet to be paid one week after a first formal reminder, a second formal letter will be sent to the debtor. These letters allow the debtor every opportunity to settle their debt and ensure the school can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt should the issue proceed further.

Final reminder letter – If no response is received following the second reminder, the school will send a letter to the debtor advising them that they will be referring the matter to the LA to

consider legal action. This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure the debtor has had every chance to respond.

Possible legal action – If no payment is made, and the governing board decides to escalate the matter to the LA, the LA will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor.

11. The waiving of debts

The waiving of debts will be at the discretion of the headteacher and the governing board.

A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship or if all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and it is believed it would not be cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.

The headteacher will be authorised to waive debts off up to £100.

Debts between £100 and £500 will only be waived with the approval of the governing board. Debts of £500 or more will never be waived.

12. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher and School Secretary in conjunction with the governing board.

The next scheduled review date will be Autumn 2025.