

Community Pre-school



‘Playing enables a child to put into practice what they are learning’

Buttercups encourages children to develop their imaginations, advance their skills and build friendships through creative play, imaginative play and active play all in a happy and safe environment

About Buttercups

Buttercups is a community Pre-school located in the grounds of the Meadow Primary school in Balsham. It provides care and education for children from two years up to school age.

Fees Policy

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Policy approved by: Charlotte Vallins

Date approved: 21/07/25

1. Aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the fees policy are:

- To set fees and charges at a level that allows Buttercups to remain financially viable, whilst providing a service that best meets the needs of its users
- To ensure that fees and charges are set at a level which allows Buttercups to be accessible to all members of the local community
- To comply with the terms and conditions of the government's Early Years Funding policy
- To ensure that fees are collected as promptly and as fairly as possible

This policy covers the academic year starting in September 2025. The fee policy will be reviewed in June 2026 before the start of the following academic term.

2. Setting of Fees

Fees are reviewed and set in the summer term for the following academic term in September. When reviewing fee levels, the following factors need to be taken into account:

- Current and predicted running costs of Buttercups Community Pre-school
- Current and predicted levels of government funding for Early Years funded places
- Fees and charges at other settings in the area
- The general economic environment and outlook

All revisions to fees must be agreed by the Pre-school Committee, which is made up of parents and carers of children attending/who have attended the Pre-school.

Fees may be reviewed and revised at other times of the year if the Pre-school is subject to exceptional circumstances that could adversely affect its financial position i.e. imminent changes to Early Years Funding.

Parents will be informed of fees and charges applicable from the new academic year (from September) in the summer term. The Pre-school will give as much notice as possible to parents for changes introduced during the academic year and not less than half a term's notice.

If parents/carers then want to change/reduce their child's sessions they are able to do so if they give the required 5 weeks' notice. Fees and charges are payable for this 5-week period.

3. Early Years Funding

Universal Early Years funding is available the term after children turn 3, subject to eligible birth dates and guidance set by the Local Authority. Eligible children can currently claim a maximum of 15 hours per week for a maximum number of weeks per term, set by the Local Authority. If the academic term contains additional days not funded by the grant, parents/carers will be advised of the shortfall and billed accordingly, or the Pre-school may take the decision to close on these days.

To claim the funding a 'parent/carer declaration' must be completed at the start of the academic year, stating the hours your child attends pre-school and the number of hours you wish to claim funding for. Evidence of the age of the child (birth certificate/passport) is also required.

The funding can be split between 2 providers and is currently payable over 38 weeks, or over an extended period.

Fifteen hours funding is also available to 2-year-olds from families with a low income or in receipt of certain benefits. A 'parent/carer declaration' must be completed and include the authorisation code issued by Cambridgeshire County Council Education Welfare benefits Service to eligible children.

Two, three and four-year olds of working parents may be eligible for extended entitlement (up to 30 hours of free childcare a week) if specific criteria are met. However sessions at the pre-school are limited to a maximum of 24 hours/child to enable the pre-school to offer places to as many children in the community as possible. If claiming the extended entitlement you will need to provide us with the 11-digit eligibility code issued by HMRC, which will need to be checked before funding can be guaranteed. HMRC will then contact parents every 3 months to confirm that they are still eligible for the extended entitlement.

Changes to sessions part way through a term may incur session fees until funding can be claimed in the following term.

4. Fees and Charges

Current fee rates are £7.50 per hour for children over 3. For children under 3 and up to the term after they turn 3 fees are £8.50 per hour. The sessions available to parents and carers are stated in pre-school literature and on the website.

There is a fee of £3/day for any child that attends Meadow Out of School Club (MOOSC) and stays at Buttercups between the pre-school closing and MOOSC starting. It will not be possible to use Early Years funding to cover this period.

For children claiming Early Years funding, fees will only be charged for attendance at pre-school for sessions in excess of entitlement, or for sessions not covered by the funding i.e. where the number of weeks in a term covered by funding is less than the number of weeks the pre-school is open/the interval between Buttercups and MOOSC.

Children not eligible for Early Years funding are charged fees for the sessions they have requested.

Fees are generally not refunded in cases of absence. Consideration to refunds may be given by the Committee in exceptional circumstances.

Fees are not charged for staff professional days or bank holidays, as the pre-school is not open on these days.

Fees will not be refunded in the case of exceptional pre-school circumstances, for example closure due to snow, serious staffing difficulties, electrical failure or structural problems, unless at the discretion of the Committee.

Additional sessions are chargeable at the pre-school's current hourly rate.

Five weeks' notice must be given, in writing, to the pre-school if you want to remove your child from the setting, otherwise payment will still be due.

5. Payment of Fees and Charges

Invoices for the half term will usually be issued 1 week after the start of each half term. As invoices are issued after term has started, they will cover the weeks that have already elapsed.

Invoices will detail the number of sessions attended and include a payment date 2 weeks from the date of the invoice. The invoice will also state that if there is difficulty in paying fees, parents/carers should approach the Admissions/Finance Officer or the Chair of Buttercups to discuss alternative payment schemes.

Fees can be paid in cash, cheque, bank transfer, tax-free childcare payments or childcare vouchers. Please contact the Admissions/Finance Officer for further information regarding the latter two options.

If you receive Working Tax Credit you may be able to get help towards the cost of childcare. For further details contact the tax credits helpline on 0845 300 3900 or visit the HM revenue & customs (HMRC) website (www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits)

Fees for ad-hoc sessions and other charges such as late pick up fees, special parties etc will be invoiced throughout the term as required.

Parents/Carers of children attending morning sessions that are not funded by the Local Authority will be billed for a contribution of 75p/session toward the cost of providing their child with a healthy snack. This charge will normally be included on the invoice for the sessions attended.

Parents/Carers of children attending morning sessions that are funded by the Local Authority will be asked to make a donation of 75p/session to assist the pre-school in covering the costs of providing their child with a healthy snack.

Children who are eligible for funding but do not claim it at Buttercups Pre-school, or attend additional sessions over and above their funded sessions, will be billed 75p/morning session for the snacks provided.

A voluntary donation of £10 per child per half term will be included on each invoice. This is a contribution to the ongoing running costs of the pre-school which are not currently met by the government funding hourly rate. If you do not wish to make this donation then this amount can be deducted from the total owing.

5. Non-Payment of Fees

The pre-school will try and assist parents/carers with alternative payment schedules as far as possible i.e. weekly/monthly payment of fees and charges.

In cases where payment is not received by the payment date, or alternative payment arrangements have not been agreed, a second/reminder e-mail/letter requesting immediate payment will be sent. If fees are not paid within two weeks of receiving this e-mail/letter, a late payment fee of £25 will be applied to your account. A further letter will then be sent stating that the child's place will be withdrawn the week after the letter is dated and the place offered to another child on the waiting list, unless payment is received immediately.

Non-payment of fees for additional sessions or other miscellaneous items will result in that child not being able to attend any further ad-hoc sessions or attend specific events.

If fees are not received from a parent/carer who is a member of the pre-school committee he/she will be asked to stand down from the Committee.

6. Contact Information and Further Details

For more information about Buttercups Pre-school or the fees policy please contact:

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