



Administration

Fees and Free Entitlement Policy

The Setting is registered with KCC for Free Early Education for three- and four-year olds for both the Universal and Extended offer.

Below are the various offers available. Offers are dependent on various factors, including age and income.

A useful tool to see which is available to you is pasted here:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/>

Universal Offer

The first 15 hours of Free Early Education for three- and four-year olds is the Universal offer. Parents are advised that a child's date of birth must fall into the eligible date ranges as shown below and that the child remains eligible until they reach compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday.

A child born in the period	Will become eligible for a free place
1 January to 31 March (inclusive)	The start of Term 5 following their third birthday (after the April holiday)
1 April to 31 August (inclusive)	The start of Term 1 following their third birthday (after the Summer holiday)
1 September to 31 December (inclusive)	The start of Term 3 following their third birthday (after the Christmas/New Year holiday)

The Setting must ensure that children are in attendance during the designated headcount week of the academic term unless they are known to be ill or on holiday. Failure to otherwise attend during headcount week would render the application for the child's funding invalid.

In order to access a funded place for the child the Setting must see proof of the legal names and date of birth of the child from either the birth certificate or passport to ensure eligibility.

The Setting must ask parents if they have already claimed at another provider for the current term. Funding for the term will be based on the first claim received and will not be transferred if a child moves from one setting to another. Parents do have a right to appeal and should contact Kent Children & Families Information Service (CFIS) in this instance.

The combined claims must not be greater than 15 hours a week. Where claims are received in excess of 15 hours, neither setting will be paid until the over claim is resolved.

The Setting must have a signed Parental Declaration with parents showing the weekly free hours they wish to claim. The number of funded hours claimed for a child cannot be changed after the week of the headcount until the start of the next academic term.

If a child moves into Kent from another local authority or from overseas, outside of the termly accounting period and/or headcount week, funding can be claimed provided the child has not been claiming funding in the current academic term at another setting in Kent.

If an eligible child starts at a setting after headcount week and they have not claimed funding at any other Kent setting in the current academic term then funding can be claimed.

Extended Offer for 3 & 4 Year olds of Working Parents

Parents must apply for the extended entitlement through the digital childcare service not KCC or the Setting. HMRC is responsible for checking whether a parent is eligible and issuing an 11-digit eligibility code. Providers and KCC are responsible for checking if the parent's code is valid.

Unlike the universal entitlement, which only has an age criterion, parents also need to meet income requirements in order to qualify for the extended entitlement. Parents are encouraged to apply to HMRC the term before their child meets the age criterion in order to ensure they can access a place at the start of the term after their child's third birthday. If not, they will need to wait until the following term to access their 30 hours place. Parents must provide the Setting with the 11-digit eligibility code along with the National Insurance number of the parent who made the application to HMRC and the child's date of birth. Before the Setting can verify the code, they must have written consent from the parent who made the application. If the parent bringing the child to the setting is not the one who made the application to HMRC they will need to bring both National Insurance numbers used in the application for validation. The Setting will submit this information to KCC who will confirm eligibility. Parents will be required to complete the Parental Declaration Form three times a year. Where the child uses more than one provider, the parent must ensure that the information on each of the different provider's Parental Declaration Form is the exactly the same, specifically regarding the division and allocation of the Universal and Extended hours. Inaccuracies could result in funding being delayed or in some instances refused completely by KCC. Where payment of funding by KCC is refused by them and the parent is at fault for the inaccuracies on the Parental Declaration Form, the parent will be presented with an invoice issued by the Setting to pay the full amount that has not been covered by funding. Parents must re-check their eligibility 3 times a year.

The *Grace Period* enables parents to retain their child's place for a short period if they become ineligible, for example, a parent loses their job.

Parents should be aware that if they cease to meet the eligibility criteria and the *Grace Period* has expired, they can continue to take up their child's universal entitlement to 15 hours Free Early Education.

Parents who split their 30 hours provision with more than one provider are advised to use the *Grace Period* time to discuss with providers which one will be their 15-hour place provider when they revert back to the universal entitlement.

If a child is taking up 15 hours of Universal Free Early Education and the parent becomes eligible for 30 hours part way through the term, the parent can claim the extended entitlement hours the term following the date on which they receive their code.

Eligibility Dates for Extended Funding:

11-digit code to be applied for by:	Terms Eligible
31 st August	1 & 2 (Sept-Dec)
31 st December	3 & 4 (Jan-March)
31 st March	5 & 6 (April-July)

The Setting is Registered with KCC for the Free for Two Scheme (FF2)

This is not a universal offer - parents are advised that a child's eligibility is based on whether: -

- the family receives Working Tax Credits and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190 per year;
- the family receives Universal Credit and have an annual net income of no more than £15,400;
- they have a current statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and care plan;
- the child is entitled to Disability Living Allowance;
- the child is looked-after by the local authority;
- the child is no longer looked after by the local authority as a result of an adoption order, a special guardianship order or a child arrangement order which specifies with whom the child lives.

Parents are advised that a child's date of birth must fall into the eligible date ranges as follows:

A child born in the period	Will become eligible for a free place
1 January to 31 March (inclusive)	The start of Term 5 following their second birthday (after the April holiday)
1 April to 31 August (inclusive)	The start of Term 1 following their second birthday (after the Summer holiday)
1 September to 31 December (inclusive)	The start of Term 3 following their second birthday (after the Christmas/New Year holiday)

Parents should note that once they have taken up a place, eligible two-year olds remain entitled to this place until the three-year-old funding starts even if their circumstances change.

Parents are advised that there is a rolling programme for two-year olds and children can be admitted appropriately throughout the term. Children are entitled to access FF2 funding the term after they turn 2.

Where parents have made an application for FF2, the child can only start at the Setting after eligibility has been confirmed by KCC. Parents should note that in accordance with the Setting's admissions policy, children will be entitled to start attending the Setting when they are 2.

Fees

A child who is not entitled to Free for Two funding or who claims their 15 hours Early Education for three- and four-year olds elsewhere or who requests hours in addition to their 15 hours, will be charged the following:

£6.50 an hour (sessions are 3 hours)

Invoices for the term (of which there are 6 in an academic year) are issued during the preceding term, parents are asked to pay the invoice in full by the date stated. This date will usually be at least 10 days from the date of issue and usually include an end of the month, to accommodate most peoples' pay dates. Flexible payment options are available on consideration of an individual's circumstances and must be agreed in advance with the Executive Manager.

Failure to pay a fees invoice by the stated deadline may result in the child's sessions being reduced or the offer of the place being retracted.

The Setting reserves the right to apply an additional charge for recurrent late payments.

Lunch Club

The Setting runs a Lunch Club every day and charges £6.50 per Lunch Club. Packed lunch should be provided by the parent/carer.

Invoices for the term (of which there are 6 in an academic year) are issued during the preceding term, parents are asked to pay the invoice in full by the date stated. This date is usually at the end of the month. Flexible payment options are available on consideration of an individual's circumstances and must be agreed in advance with the Executive Manager. Failure to pay a Lunch Club invoice by the stated deadline will result in the child no longer being able to attend Lunch Club and the place will be offered to a child on the Lunch Club waiting list.

- Places will be offered in accordance with our Pattern of Delivery for FEE and non-funded places. 3 & 4-year-old funded children, both universal and extended, may apply for hours throughout the week. All subject to availability.
- Younger children, both fee paying and FEE places, including FF2 may apply for hours throughout the week. All subject to availability.
- The Setting reserves the right to be flexible with session allocation should it be deemed in the best interest of the child.
- The Setting reserves the right to limit session allocation for extended hours, should it be deemed in the best interest of the Setting regarding sustainability.
- Parents already at the Setting wishing to increase or change their child's sessions should do so in writing, a waiting list is in operation for session requests.
- Any sessions offered in excess of the 15 hours of FEE will be offered at the discretion of the Setting and will be subject to availability. Any such sessions will be charged at the current hourly rate.

Absence

Holidays

Parents /carers should please note that holidays during term time does not entitle them to a reduction in fees or Lunch Club payments.

Illness

Parents /carers should please note that illness during term time does not entitle them to a reduction in fees or Lunch Club payments. In exceptional cases, a reduction for this is at the discretion of the Executive Manager and made on a case-by-case basis.

A reduction due to long term illness will be made at the discretion of the Executive Manager.

Forced Closure of the Setting

Forced Closure of the Setting, for example as a result of a local lockdown due to COVID-19, will not automatically result in the returning of fees already paid.

The Parents / carers may allow the Setting to retain the full invoice paid in order to support the setting during the period of closure.

Should pro rata reimbursement be requested, the Setting may ask to retain up to 33% as a contribution to cover direct costs during closure. The reimbursement will be applied as credit for the next term. The Parents / carers should contact the Setting if monetary reimbursement is requested.

The Setting highlights that these contributions are made on a voluntary and free basis, and reimbursement is offered.

Cancellation

The Parents / Carers always have the option to exit the contract with the Setting completely. This will amount to a cancellation. When the Parents / Carers request a cancellation, there is a notice period and possible cancellation fee. Notice period represents the usual time it takes to fill a child's space, which for the Setting is 1 Term (of which there are 6 in the year). Should the Parents / Carers choose for the child to continue during this period, no fee is applied. Should the Parents / Carers wish for their child not to attend during this time, a fee is applied in the form of an invoice already paid, or due, for that term. Please note that the notice period does not affect your funding in any way. For funded children the notice period is only relevant to any additional hours and /or lunch club. Notice periods may be voided at the discretion of the Executive Manager.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of		
Held on		(date)
Date to be reviewed		(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee		
Name of signatory		
Role of signatory		

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