Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy

Nursery Charging Policy

Policy agreed: December 2025

Policy Review:

January 2027

As Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy is part of the First Federation Trust, the Trust is the admission authority and has responsibility for setting these admission arrangements and for making decisions regarding admissions applications. The Trust set its own oversubscription criteria, taking into account the recommendation from its schools.

These arrangements seek to comply with the government's School Admissions Code, the Local Conditions of funding the Early Years Education for two, three and four year olds, the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2014 and the Co-ordinated Admissions schemes of Dorset Council, the local authority (LA) for this area.

First Federation Trust

1.0 Free entitlement

1.1. Free entitlement for all families

The school must comply with Dorset Council's Local Conditions of Funding. A charge cannot be made if a child is only attending the FSU as part of their Early Years Education Funding. This currently is 570 hours over no fewer than 38 weeks (i.e. 15 hours per week) for all parents.

1.2. Extended entitlement for eligible families

Children whose parents are working, and meet the relevant criteria, are entitled to 1140 hours a year. We will need the 11-digit code beginning with '500' given to parents to confirm they are eligible.

The maximum number of funded hours per day currently is 6 hours.

1.3 Information about eligibility

Parents can find more information at:
https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

You should allow plenty of time to apply to ensure that a valid code is received well ahead of the deadline.

All eligible parents MUST reconfirm their 30 hours entitlement every 3 months.

1.3. Additional charges:

There is no charge for applying for a nursery place, or for admission.

Thorncombe St Mary's CE Primary Academy will not request donations before or during the admissions process and any donations made to the school following admission are entirely voluntary. No bought activities, such as visits, are compulsory.

2. Additional session charges

The charge for additional sessions, i.e., sessions in addition to the Early Years Education Funding entitlement, currently stands at £6 per hour for two-year-olds and £5 per hour for three- and four-year-olds. From January 2026 the charge will be £6.50 per hour for two-year-olds and £5.50 per hour for three and four-year-olds.

The shortest session that children can attend daily is a three-hour long session.

These charges are reviewed annually.

Additional sessions are subject to availability and will be allocated as described in our Nursery Admissions Policy.

Additional sessions and charges will be added to the parent/school contract. Once additional sessions have been allocated, they will continue to be included in the termly session allocations unless:

- Parents have given a half term's notice that they wish to cancel the additional Sessions
- The child leaves the FSU
- Payment of additional sessions is overdue
- The child has not been regularly attending the additional sessions (regardless of whether the additional sessions have been paid for or not).

3. Additional sessions payment

An invoice will be issued half-termly, in advance. This includes the number and cost of chargeable sessions, and a deadline for payment.

Tax free childcare vouchers are accepted, as per our Nursery Admissions Policy. Parents must make clear that they wish to pay using childcare vouchers when booking a Fee-paying session.

In exceptional circumstances, individual payment plans may be agreed – this can be discussed with the Senior Administrator.

Parents must inform the school as soon as possible if their child is unable to attend for the whole or part of a day when they are due to attend. The nursery will require a minimum of two weeks' notice, or parents may be subject to paying the full cost of the care, regardless of whether or not their child attends nursery that day. This is because the school must hold the child's place during this period and staff rotas are set in advance.

Parents must give a minimum of four weeks' notice if they wish to reduce the level of provision their child receives. This requirement applies both before and after provision begins.

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

4. Additional sessions payment arrears

If the cost of additional sessions is not paid by the deadline stated in the invoice, a reminder will be sent. If payment remains outstanding, a formal warning letter will be issued. This may result in the allocation of the additional sessions being

withdrawn. We will follow our debt recovery policy to recover outstanding payments.

Please contact the school office as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in paying for your nursery sessions so that we can discuss setting up a payment plan.

If at any stage fees are two weeks overdue and there is no payment plan agreed, the provision of extended hours sessions will be withdrawn. A letter will be issued, stating the date from which sessions will be withdrawn and which funded sessions will remain available.

5. School meals

Children can either bring a packed lunch or purchase a school meal. This will be charged at the same rate and following the same procedure as for school age children.

6. Intimate care items

We will ask parents to provide nappies, wipes, nappy sacks, and/or a change of clothes, etc for children who are not yet toilet trained or are prone to accidents.
We will also ask you to provide suncream for your child during hot weather.
We do not share those items with other children.

7. Voluntary contributions

We may ask parents for voluntary contributions, to help cover the costs of activities and trips and make school funds go further. Children of parents who are unable or willing to pay voluntary contributions will not be treated differently from children whose parents have paid and will still be able to take part in the activity/trip. However, the activity/trip may be cancelled if insufficient contributions are received.

8. Policy version

This policy template was last updated by the Trust on: September 2025
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