

Pilton Pre-school Sessions & Fees Policy (April 2024)

Background Information

Pilton Pre-school operates a service which is fair and competitively priced, offering a high quality, safe and stimulating environment. It is our aim to provide an affordable service to all local families.

We review and set our fees at regular intervals in line with Somerset Council funding levels, taking into account current economic factors. We manage our setting's finances responsibly in order to ensure our service remains fair to our service users.

Sessions are available Monday-Friday 8.45am-4.00pm and can be taken as mornings, afternoons or whole day sessions. The setting operates term time only for 39 weeks of the year in line with the Somerset Schools' Academic Calendar. The setting is usually closed for four days during June when the Glastonbury Festival is running due to inaccessibility.

In order to support children in settling and building positive relationships with their key person, we operate a three session minimum policy. One session constitutes a morning or afternoon of 3.5 hours; a full day constitutes two sessions. We appreciate that some younger 2 year olds may find 3 sessions a challenge initially upon starting at preschool so we are happy to discuss on an individual basis how to best support your child in working towards the required three sessions.

Extra sessions can be purchased in addition to regular weekly hours, where space is available. Extra hours can also be purchased to extend a morning or afternoon session where space is available.

Booking, Fees and Invoicing

A booking administration fee of £30 will be made payable on confirmation of a place or reservation of a future place. This fee can be paid via cash, cheque or bank transfer. Places will not be secured until payment is received. After your child has completed at least two full terms, the booking administration fee will either be deducted from your child's fees invoice (if applicable) or refunded (if in receipt of Early Years Entitlement funding). The fee will be retained if you choose to withdraw your place before two full terms have been completed.

Please read all the information below relating to fees payable for children enrolled at Pilton Pre-school. Parents are asked to sign the agreement form at induction (included in registration pack) confirming that the Fees Policy has been read, understood and accepted. Failure to comply with the agreement may result in your child's space being temporarily suspended or cancelled.

Fees (as of 1st April 2024)

Children aged 2 years: £5.50 per hour

AM session 09:00-12:30 = £19.25

Extended AM session 09:00-14:00 = £27.50

PM session 12:30-16:00 = £19.25

Whole day 09:00-16:00 = £38.50

Children aged 3+ years: £5.10 per hour

AM session 09:00-12:30 = £17.85

Extended AM session 09:00-14:00 = £25.50

PM session 12:30-16:00 = £17.85

Whole day 09:00-16:00 = £35.70

Extra sessions can be purchased in addition to regular weekly hours, where space is available.

Extra hours can also be purchased to extend a morning or afternoon session where space is available.

Extra sessions / hours will be invoiced separately each month and must be paid by the date stated on the invoice.

Invoices are calculated termly in advance. Fees will be adjusted to the lower rate from the month following the child's 3rd birthday. For example, if a child's 3rd birthday is in October, they will be charged the 3 year old rate from November.

Additional charges

Early Starts (08:45-09:00) can be added to AM sessions at an additional charge of £2.50 per session.

Session times

Our standard sessions are Morning 09:00-12:30, Afternoon 12:30-16:00 and All Day 09:00-16:00. We also offer flexible afternoon collection times to support families with school/work hours.

Start times

We ask that children be dropped off promptly in the morning and arrive no later than 09:15.

Please do not arrive before 09:00 unless you have booked an 'Early Start' session (at a cost of £2.50) which covers the time period 08:45-09:00. Children who have not booked for an Early Start but arrive before 09:00 may be permitted to start earlier subject to sufficient staff being present. In this case, the Early Start fee will be charged to you in your next Extra Session Invoice.

Staff are unable to admit children before 08:45 in **any** circumstance as our registered hours of operation with Ofsted only permit us to have children on the premises after this time.

Collection times

Please arrive on time for collection. If you would like feedback from staff at the end of the session, please allow time for this. For example, if your session finishes at 4pm, arrive a little earlier to allow time to talk with staff while getting your child ready to go home.

Late collections will be charged a late collection fee as outlined in the 'late collection fee' section below.

In unforeseen circumstances and at short notice, it is possible for us to extend finishing times where space is available but not beyond 4pm. Our registered hours of operation with Ofsted only permit us to have children on the premises until 4pm.

Funding help for childcare

All parents are advised to check the governments's Childcare Choices website at <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk> to see what forms of funding assistance is available to help pay for childcare.

There are various options depending on your child's age and your family circumstances. As the options do change from time to time, we recommend that you always check this website first for the most recent information. We will endeavour to keep the information below as up to date as possible, but for recently changed funding schemes this may not always be possible.

Universal Early Years Entitlement (EYE) Funding for ALL 3 and 4 year olds

Pilton Pre-school is a registered provider with Somerset Council and is therefore able to offer Universal Early Years Entitlement funding for 3 and 4 year olds. Children are automatically eligible for the Universal Entitlement from the funding period (academic term) after their 3rd birthday.

Universal Entitlement provides funded childcare hours for up to 570 hours per year, delivered in term-time settings as a maximum of 15 hours per week for 38 weeks a year. As the Somerset Schools academic year operates for 39 weeks of the year, this means that 1 week's attendance in an academic year is not funded. If your child also attends a 'year round' setting you may be able to 'stretch' the Universal Entitlement meaning that you can claim no more than 11 hours per week for example if they operate for 51 weeks.

Children in receipt of Universal Entitlement are able to claim a maximum of 10 hours per day for a maximum of 15 hours per week (term time only settings) or 11 hours per week (if your child also attends a 'year-round' setting). Universal Entitlement funding is paid directly to Pilton Pre-school by Somerset Council.

Parents can take up their funded place with more than one provider, up to the allowed maximum of two sites per day and not more than three providers in any one week. No more than 15 hours per week may be claimed across all providers used. **Parents must inform Pilton Pre-school if your child attends any other settings so that we adhere to the conditions specified by Somerset Council and do not overclaim for funded hours.** Any hours attended over the maximum permitted weekly hours will be charged at our standard rate – please refer to the above fees. Your termly invoice will clearly state which hours are funded and which are chargeable.

In order to receive Universal Entitlement, you need to present Pilton Pre-school with an original copy of your Child's birth certificate and complete a 'Child Registration' form in advance of your first claim: you will be asked to provide both during your child's induction. If not received with 2 weeks of your child's start at Pilton Pre-school to allow us to register your entitlement claim with Somerset Council, then you will be charged at the standard hourly rate until the documents are received.

Each subsequent term, you will need to sign a Parent Declaration Form which Pilton Pre-school will then submit to Somerset Council. All forms are available upon request. This form will include the total number of hours claimed from all settings your child attends. It is the signing parent's responsibility to ensure that the total hours claimed by all settings are correct. Should Somerset Council refuse to pay any overclaimed funded hours, the parent becomes responsible for paying them.

Further information about Somerset Council's offer for Universal Entitlement can be found at www.somerset.gov.uk/eye

Working Families Entitlement

Eligible working families of 3 and 4 year olds (and, from 1 April 2024, 2 year olds) can apply for Working Families Entitlement at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>. From 1 April 2024, working families of 2 year olds may be able to claim up to 15* hours funded childcare (30 hours from September 2025) and working families of 3 and 4 year olds may be able to claim up to 30* hours of funded childcare.

**This applies for 38 weeks of the year only, so if your child also attends a year-round setting and you wish to claim at both settings, the funding will need to be 'stretched' accordingly (see above).*

How to apply:

1. Parents must apply for Working Families Entitlement at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>.
2. If your application is successful, you will receive an 11 digit eligibility code starting with 500 generated by the Childcare Service.
3. Parents must then complete the consent form found at <https://www.piltonpreschool.co.uk/useful-documents> so that we may validate your application with Somerset Council. The consent form is also available as a paper form on request from the Pre-school.
4. Pilton Pre-school will confirm your funding is secured once your code has been validated. Should your code not be verified, then any hours booked will be chargeable at our standard fee rates above.

Parents can start to access the Working Families Entitlement in the funding period after eligibility has been confirmed with Somerset Council by Pilton Pre-school. For example, a parent applies for and is awarded the extended entitlement in October. Even if the child is already claiming the Universal Entitlement, the Working Families Entitlement cannot be claimed until the following funding period, commencing in January.

Parents will only be able to claim Working Families Entitlement while they remain eligible. Every 3 months parents will need to re-confirm their eligibility. There will be a grace period of funding for children whose parents cease to meet the eligibility criteria. If a parent ceases to be eligible at the end of the grace period, the child will only be eligible for the Universal Entitlement (if applicable, e.g. children aged 3 or 4) and if the hours continue to be used beyond this time they will be charged at our standard fee rates above. The Somerset Council Entitlements Team will be able to access information about whether a child has ceased to meet the eligibility criteria and will inform Pilton Pre-school in these circumstances. Should this be the case, Pilton Pre-school will contact you to confirm if you wish to continue to use the hours on a chargeable basis.

Claims for the Working Families Entitlement funded hours are made through the completion of a termly Parent Declaration Form, in the same way as the Universal Entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds. If attending more than one setting, parents may decide how hours are to be claimed at each provider. The Parent Declaration form must include the total number of hours claimed from all settings your child attends. It is the Parent's responsibility to ensure that these hours are correct and all settings' claims are included and accurate – should Somerset Council withhold payment due to an overclaim between multiple settings, the liability of paying the fees falls on yourself and not the Pre-school when we have not been made aware of the other setting's claim.

Early Years Pupil Premium

Early Years Pupil Premium is additional funding for some 3 and 4 year olds. If your family meets certain criteria (e.g. are in receipt of Income Support) you may be eligible to claim. Claims are made by parents/carers directly to Somerset Council via a paper or online application form which we can provide for you. Please ask for further information. All extra funding received by us via Early Years Pupil Premium would be re-invested into the service we provide by way of additional resources and/or services.

Supported Families Funding for 2 year olds

As an Ofsted rated 'Outstanding' setting, we are eligible to receive Supported Families funding for eligible 2 year olds from the funding period after their second birthday. If your family receives some additional form of government support (examples include Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Child Tax Credit, Disability Living Allowance) you may be eligible to claim up to 15 hours per week fully funded for up to 38 weeks of the year. You can check your eligibility at <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds> and if you need more information, please speak to a member of staff.

The Somerset Council website information and application page for Supported Families Funding can be found at <https://www.somerset.gov.uk/children-families-and-education/early-years-and-childcare/funding-for-2-year-olds/>

For children who qualify for Supported Families Funding, the funding will be available from the date stated on the acceptance letter/email. This will not be earlier than the first day of the funding period after their second birthday.

If eligible, in order to make a claim, Pilton Pre-school need to see a copy of your acceptance letter/email and your child's original birth certificate. You will then need to complete a registration form in advance of your first claim. If not received before that funding period's Adjustment Form deadline set by Somerset Council, then you will be charged at the standard hourly rate for that funding period. Each subsequent term you will need to sign a 'Parent Declaration Form which Pilton Pre-school will then submit to Somerset Council. All forms are available upon request. This form will include the total number of hours claimed from all settings your child attends. It is your responsibility to ensure that these hours are correct, in the case of an overclaim the liability of paying the fees falls on yourself and not the Pre-school.

Other sources of funding assistance

Parents are strongly advised to visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> for full information regarding various schemes to help parents/carers with childcare costs including Tax Free Childcare, Tax Credits for Childcare, Universal Credit for Childcare and Childcare Vouchers (through your employer).

Emergency Closure

If Pilton Pre-school has to close, or we take the decision to close due to events or circumstances beyond our control (e.g. extreme weather conditions, failure in the utilities – please note this list is not exhaustive), fees will continue to be payable in full and we shall be under no obligation to provide alternative childcare.

Additional Provisions

Pilton Pre-school may offer additional provision to support the programme, such as Forest School and Yoga. Where services are acquired from outside agencies that incur an additional cost, parents who sign up to sessions on these days will be required to sign an agreement for the related additional charges to be applied to their termly invoice.

We will always endeavour to seek funding and grants to assist with the costs of such additional provisions so that we can offer them at a discounted rate to parents, but this may not always be possible.

If Pilton Pre-school should change the day on which these chargeable additional provisions take place, parents of children who already attend on that day will be informed in advance so that they may choose to agree to the additional charges or switch sessions to an alternative day (subject to availability).

Pilton Pre-school may, at the committee's discretion, waive the additional charges in certain circumstances such as the child being in receipt of Early Years Pupil Premium or Supported Families Funding, should attendance on alternative days not be possible. In such situations, parents would be asked to make voluntary contribution towards these additional provisions at a level affordable to them.

Payment of Fees

Pilton Pre-school fees are calculated termly in advance and invoices are usually distributed within the first week of the term.

Payment must be made in full or in monthly instalments as indicated by the dates stated on the invoice. If sessions start part way through the term, payment of fees will be requested in full for that part month period.

Extra sessions or changes to sessions must be notified in writing using the 'Change to Sessions request' form and must give reasonable notice. We will always endeavour to accommodate extra sessions as soon as possible. We will inform you if there is a waiting list for any sessions.

Please note, there is a minimum notice period of 4 weeks for cancellation of any or all sessions. During this 4 week period, agreed sessions will be charged or Early Years Entitlement funding claimed at the full rate. Non-attendance during this period will still be charged. (Please see Notice Period section below for full details)

If you have difficulty in paying your invoice you must contact the pre-school Business Manager immediately to arrange an instalment payment plan. Pilton Pre-school is sympathetic to financial difficulties; we will actively encourage a mutual agreement.

Payment can be made by:

- BACS (preferable) – details are included on each invoice or can be provided on request
- Cheque (made payable to Pilton Playgroup)
- Childcare vouchers – please inform us of your chosen provider
- Cash
- Card

Fees are reviewed at regular intervals (at least annually) each financial year, in line with Somerset Council's grant funding. Parents will be given reasonable written notice of any changes, usually a minimum of 4 weeks.

Late collection fee

We ask that all parents/carers arrive promptly by the agreed collection times to allow for a relaxed collection and handover, and in order not to incur a late collection fee. A minimum charge of **£10** will be made for **the first 10 minutes you are late, and £5 for each 5 minutes thereafter.** Further charges may be applied depending on length of time, staff cost and reason for lateness – if a staff member incurs personal costs (e.g. childcare/travel) due to a late collection, it is reasonable for us to pass these on.

Please note: late collections may impact on the setting's legal child to adult ratios and could put staff in jeopardy of breaching the setting's Ofsted registration. If you know you are going to be late please inform a member of staff ASAP so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Non-payment of fees

- 1) Fees may only be outstanding for 5 days after the due dates stated on invoices unless otherwise agreed with the Business Manager.
- 2) If payment of fees remains outstanding a further reminder will be sent and a late payment charge of £15 will be applied if payment is not received within 7 days of this reminder. If this is not feasible, an instalment payment plan should be agreed with the Business Manager and prompt payments are expected.
- 3) Should the fees continue to remain unpaid 7 days after the reminder is sent, payment in full – including the late payment charge - will be due 14 days from the date of the letter. Proceedings through the small claims court will be instigated to reclaim the outstanding amount.

Please note continued non-payment of fees will be transferred to the Committee Treasurer and may result in your child's place being temporarily suspended or losing your child's place at Pre-school.

While reminders are being sent for any overdue payments, we will expect all subsequent payment deadlines to be met on the date they become due. Please ensure your payments are up to date and if you are unable to meet the required time scale for payment, speak to a member of the Pre-school team as soon as possible. We will always endeavour to support individual's needs and are happy to work together to resolve issues.

Absence / sickness:

There will be **no concessions** for periods of sickness or holidays taken during term time.

In the case of a child's legitimate long term sickness, please contact the Pre-school and Committee management team. The Committee will review individual circumstances and may come to an arrangement concerning fees.

Public holidays that fall during term time are not charged as the provision is not open.

Notice period:

If you wish to reduce or alter the number of hours or days your child attends Pilton Pre-school, or to terminate your contract, a minimum notice period of four weeks is required in writing. Time is calculated from the day notice is received.

Where no notice or insufficient notice is provided the deemed date of notice shall be the date that your child ceased or reduced his / her attendance at Pilton Pre-school.

Whether your child attends the setting during the four weeks' notice period or not, you will be liable to cover the fees for the duration of this period. If you choose to remove your child from the setting without giving four weeks written notice or before the four weeks' notice has expired, an invoice will be sent to your home address and payment will be expected within 7 days of the date of the invoice.

If your child is funded you will be liable for any fees that we cannot claim from Early Years Entitlement funding. Legal advice will be sought for the recovery of any outstanding payments of fees through the small claims court.

Changes to sessions

Extra sessions or changes to sessions must be notified in writing using the 'Change to Sessions request' form and must give reasonable notice. We will always endeavour to accommodate extra sessions as soon as possible if space is available. We will inform you if there is a waiting list for any sessions.

Pilton Pre-school reserves the right to charge an administrative fee of £2.50 for processing session change requests. This fee will cover the office administration required i.e. recalculating and reissuing termly invoices and/or adjustments to Early Years Funding claims.

Changes to agreed sessions (e.g. permanently changing attendance days) may not always be possible. Staff rotas are set termly in advance depending on the number of children attending, and your child's Key Person is assigned prior to them starting depending on which days they attend. We appreciate that parents' personal circumstances and/or working patterns may alter at short notice and this may result in a request to change sessions. We will endeavour to accommodate changes if possible.

Extra sessions can be purchased in addition to regular weekly hours, where space is available. Extra hours can also be purchased to extend a morning or afternoon session where space is available.

Extra sessions / hours will be invoiced separately. Extra session invoices are raised on a monthly basis and must be paid for as soon as possible, and no later than the payment date stated on the invoice. If payment remains outstanding for more than 5 days after the payment date, the non-payment procedure outlined above will be followed.

Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate short term changes to Pre-School sessions such as changing from a Wednesday morning to a Thursday afternoon for one week only, as this can make planning appropriate staffing cover very difficult and increases administrative time and costs. Mitigating circumstances may be considered and staff will endeavour to accommodate these if possible.

Termination of the Contract: *The setting reserves the right to terminate the contract without notice in the event of unsuitable behaviour from parents or non-payment of fees following the non-payment procedure.*

Revised February 2024 – this policy will be reviewed again in February 2025. An interim review may also take place in July 2024

Hannah Johnson (Manager)

Teresa England (Business Manager)

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

Pilton Pre-school

Held in

February 2024

Date to be reviewed

July 2024

Signed on behalf of the management committee

Name of signatory

Sophie Kenny-Levick

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

Chair

Once you have read the attached policy please sign below and return one copy to Pilton Pre-school.

Please keep the other copy (including policy) for your records

Pilton Pre-school Parent Agreement of Fees Policy

(version issued April 2024)

THIS DOCUMENT IS A BINDING AGREEMENT

Name of child: _____

- I have received a copy of Pilton Pre-school's Fees Policy. I have read and understood the Fees Policy and accept and agree to the terms and conditions stated within it.

FOR ALL FUNDING ENTITLEMENT CLAIMS

- I am aware that if I do not complete a registration form and produce my child's birth certificate within the time period requested for Pilton Pre-school to make Early Years Funding Claims (Universal, Working Families or Supported Families), I will be charged at the standard hourly rate.

WORKING FAMILIES ENTITLEMENT CLAIMS

- If claiming Working Families Entitlement, it is my responsibility to reconfirm my eligibility code every 3 months directly with HMRC. I understand that if I fail to do so within my allotted time (the grace period), I will fall out of eligibility for Working Families Entitlement.
- I am aware that I am responsible to pay for any hours which cannot be claimed if I fall out of the grace period, and do not give sufficient notice about changing my child's hours. I agree to pay for any hours which cannot be claimed.

ADDITIONAL CHARGES

- If my child attends Pilton Pre-school between 08:45am and 09:00am, I am aware of the additional 'Early Start' charges for this time and agree to be invoiced for them.
- I am aware of other additional charges such as late collection fees, late payment fees, session change fees and agree to be invoiced for them.
- If my child attends on a day when additional provisions such as Forest School and Yoga are taking place, I agree to be invoiced for these activities as detailed within the Fees Policy.

Parent/guardian signature: _____

Print name: _____ Date: _____

Relationship to child: _____

- Original copy to be filed in Child's file by Pilton Pre-school
- Copy to be given to parent/guardian for their records