



Funding Information 2024/25

Bitterne Park

Dear Parent/Carer

The Mulberry Bush provides early years care and education primarily for working families who require these provisions for their children all year around. These families want our services from when their children are as young as a few months old, right up until they start Primary School. We do this by providing them with a guaranteed full day of 10.5 hours per day and morning or afternoon sessions of 5.5/5 hours, both for up to 5 days per week, 51 weeks a year. We prioritise these children as they have been accessing our services prior to becoming eligible for government funded hours.

Funding is in place for all 2 year olds and 3 year olds at the Mulberry Bush. Children become eligible the TERM after they turn 2 for 2 year funding or the TERM after they turn 3 for 3 year funding. How funding is calculated is different for 2 year old and 3 year olds. This is because the funding rate received by the nursery is different for 2 year olds and 3 years olds. As a consequence of this fees for parents will increase when a child goes into the pre-school if parents wish to guarantee their sessions. See below for a full description of this.

Using Your 2 year Funded Hours at The Mulberry Bush.

All children are entitled to 11 hours free childcare the term after they turn 2. At the Mulberry Bush the hours are stretched over 51 weeks. The nursery is not a term time only setting. Upon receipt of funding parents will receive a breakdown of their fees that will be payable once funding is in place. The fees are a set amount for each month. The application of free hours and relevant fees are calculated as follows:

1. Children will be entitled to funding from the term after they turn 2.
2. Each child will be entitled to 11 hours of funding a week (as we are a 51 week a year setting).
3. A maximum of 10 hours funding can be claimed in a day. (Please note our full day is 10.5 hours)
4. There will be food costs for the days when the MAJORITY of hours are funded, but not for other days.
5. Other than food, there will be no other charges for the days when the majority of funding is claimed. The guarantee charge (used in 3 and 4 year old funding) will currently be set to 0 charge for 2 year olds. This will be reviewed when business needs require depending on cost inflation and funding rates. Historically the funding rates have not increased in line with cost inflation and specifically the national living wage increases. Any changes will be given with a month's notice.
6. There will be an hourly charge for all hours not included in funding. This rate will be approximately the same as the current day rate when multiplied by the hours in the current session.
7. Parents must ensure they renew their code before the end of each term, this is usually prompted in a reminder email to the parent by HMRC.
8. Please note that it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the setting if they are eligible for 2 year old funding.
9. If/when eligible, please contact the setting who will provide you with a 'parental declaration form' to complete. This is where you write your code which is then checked by the setting on Hampshire County Council's funding portal.

Using Your Pre-school Funded Hours at The Mulberry Bush.

When a child, either already attending or as a new starter, becomes eligible for government funding, parents will be offered a choice of two different Childcare Offers, giving them two ways of using their funded hours here with us. Both offers allow up to the maximum of 22 hours of free childcare per week to be claimed. This is equivalent to 30 hours per week for term time (38 weeks) but stretched over the full 51 weeks we are open. The legal maximum number of funded hours that can be offered in one day is 10 hours, which we accommodate.

The offers are: **Standard Childcare Offer** or **Free Funded Hours Offer**

Option 1

The **Standard Childcare Offer** is the option that most families want for their child and is the contract that all children will be on if they started prior to becoming eligible for funded hours.

If you choose this option we will use the value of your funded hours to reduce the cost of your childcare each month throughout the year.

Existing parents will see no noticeable procedural change when their child starts to receive their funded hours except for:

1. A VERY significant reduction in your monthly invoice (**see table at end of document for indicative charges**);
2. Monthly savings on average in EXCESS of 50% of current, unfunded, invoice amounts, when the '30 hour' offer is applied; and
3. A charge added for Additional Services.

What Are Additional Services?

1. The Additional Services consist of Food Charges and a Guarantee Charge.
2. The Guarantee Charge is only applied to the funded hours a child is claiming. This charge guarantees the child has the same sessions in the pre-school as they have attended throughout the nursery. It will also guarantee any agreed new changes to session patterns whether made before or after a child joins the pre-school.
3. The Guarantee charge is set as an hourly amount and charged on your monthly invoice.
4. The Guarantee charge per funded hour will vary depending on the session. Current prices for the Guarantee charge can be found on the website and will also be e-mailed out with the initial pre-school invoice, which details how charges are calculated.
5. The maximum that any parent will pay for the guarantee will be 22 hours at the school day rate (being the most expensive Guarantee charge cost).
6. Food charges are applied to all sessions to which your child attends in the pre-school.
7. Additional Service charges are to cover the cost of many of the services and quality levels we offer as standard but the government

does not fund and include items such as meals, higher staff ratios, qualifications & training above requirements.

8. Any additional hours outside the funded hours will be charged at the relevant hourly rate. All current rates are on the website.

If you agree to Option 1 what will you be eligible to?

1. No change in your contract or Terms and Conditions.
2. You will continue as you have been, enjoying the ability to attend the guaranteed days/sessions you require throughout the year.
3. The big change will be in your reduced monthly invoice as the value of your child's funding, spread across the whole year, is deducted off each month.
4. Your child's booked days are guaranteed for as long as your child needs them.
5. You will continue to receive your monthly invoice showing you the days attended and you will also receive a one-off breakdown of the monthly fees in the month before your child begins in the pre-school.

Option 2

The **Free Funded Place Offer** may suit non-working parents or parents that do not require their child to attend nursery for regular sessions. Please note you will not be entitled to full 30 hour childcare if you work less than 16 hours a week. This contract is not offered until a child is eligible for funded hours.

If you choose this option as an existing family you will be required to cancel your current contract and apply by completing a 'Request for a Free Funded Place Application Form' in the same way as if you were a parent of a child who is not currently attending our nursery.

If you wish to apply for Option 2 you will be offered a Free Funded Place in the following manner:

1. Free Funded Places will not have any charges normally attached to them.
2. Free Funded Places are subject to availability and our Admission Policy.
3. Requests for Free Funded Places will be taken during the term preceding the term requested.
4. Free Funded Places are for 51 weeks over 3 terms, autumn, spring & summer.

5. Parents will be notified of a successful application for a Free Funded Place and informed as to which days/sessions their child has been allocated no later than two weeks prior to the start of the new term.
6. Parents cannot request/reserve a particular day/session/times for their child.
7. Applications by parents to changes their child's day/session will not be considered.
8. Free Funded Places are only for one term at a time. Applications for Free Funded Places in future terms must be made in the normal way prior to the start of each term
9. Additional session/days cannot be purchased.
10. Meals can be purchased during the hours a child attends. Charges are monthly to be paid in advance.

Government Funded Hours – Who Gets Them

The Government provides a limited number of 'funded' hours to eligible children. At the Mulberry Bush we allow all children eligible for funding to use their **2, 3 & 4 year old funded hours** here for all types of sessions that we provide.

2 year old children funding is subject to eligibility and parents need to apply for this funding from Southampton City Council. If your child is already attending our nursery when your child becomes eligible which is the term after their second birthday, please send your voucher in to a member of the management team. Please check your eligibility at:

<http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/family.page?familychannel=9-14-6>

3 & 4 year old children funding has two sets of hours.

- a. There is the 'universal' **15 hours** (570 per year) available to all 3 & 4 year olds the term after their third birthday. Term cut off dates are 31st December, 31st March and 31st August.
- b. From September 2017, some children are eligible for up to **30 hours** (1140 per year). Parents need to meet the eligibility criteria. If you are eligible then you must ensure you receive your eligibility code. **Valid codes MUST be received by the last day of term in the proceeding term.** Note that codes need to be updated every 3 months.

Please check your eligibility at:

<http://sid.southampton.gov.uk/kb5/southampton/directory/family.page?familychannel=9-14-6>

Table of indicative costs of sessions after funding is applied

NOTE: The legal maximum free hours that can be claimed in a day is 10 hours. The Mulberry Bush, unlike many other nurseries, allow you to claim this full allowance. However it does mean that in some cases that the full 22 hours cannot be claimed **DESPITE** a child actually attending the setting for more than 22 hours (for example if a child is attending for 2 full days a week).

Session type	Number of sessions	Monthly cost with standard 11 hours applied (£s)	Monthly cost with additional 11 hours (30 hour offer) applied (£s)
Full day	1	81	81
	2	415	163
	3	777	469
	4	1139	831
AM	1	72	72
	2	108	108
	3	358	180
	4	607	216
PM	1	47	47
	2	94	94
	3	285	141
	4	512	188
Full time	5 days	1337	1061