



Dear Parent/Carer

The Mulberry Bush (TMB) 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.

Funding is in place for all eligible 9-month-olds, 2-year-olds, and 3-year-olds at the Mulberry Bush. Children become eligible the TERM after they turn 9 months old, 2 years old or 3 years old depending if they are applying for 9-month, 2 year or 3-year funding. Funding is applied in the same way across all age groups.

How your 9-month, 2 year and 3-year Funded Hours works at TMB.

All eligible children are entitled to 22 hours free childcare the term after they turn 9 months old and again at 2 and again at 3. At TMB/LA 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 application of free hours and relevant fees are calculated as follows:

1. Children will be entitled to funding from the term after they turn 9 months old, 2 years old and 3 years old.
2. Each child will be entitled to 22 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/consumables charges for the days when the MAJORITY of hours are funded, but not for other days.
5. Other than the above charges, there will be no other charges for the days when the majority of funding is claimed.
6. There will be an hourly charge for all hours not included in funding on days where some funded hours have been applied, but not enough funded hours to make up a full session. This rate will be approximately the same as the current day rate when multiplied by the hours in the current session.
7. Any sessions with no funding applied will be charged at the current sessions rate.
8. 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.
9. Please note that **it is the responsibility of the parent/carers to inform the setting if they are eligible for 9-month-old funding, 2-year-old funding or 3 year funding.**

10. 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 Funded Hours at TMB.

When a child 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.**

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

1. Monthly savings on average in EXCESS of 60% of any unfunded invoice amounts, when the '30 hour' offer is applied; and
2. An Additional Services charge.

What Are Additional Services?

1. The Additional Services consist of food charges and a consumables charge.*
2. The charge is set at 10 per day or 5 for a half day.
3. 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, trips out of the setting, continuity of sessions and a **free benefit of a guaranteed place**.

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

1. Your child's booked days are benefit from a free guarantee for as long as your child needs them. The unfunded government scheme does not guarantee sessions. As such funded only sessions may be subject to change as per Option 2 below.
2. You will be eligible for the following benefits through the consumables charge. If you choose not to pay the charge these will need to be provided by you:

Personal Care Items:

- Nappies
- Baby wipes
- Cotton wool
- Nappy sacks for dirty nappies
- Barrier creams (e.g. Sudocrem)

- Sun cream
- Tissues (used for personal hygiene)
- Cow's milk or milk alternatives
- Bottled water (if applicable)
- Bibs (if single-use or frequently replaced)
- Beakers or bottles (if replaced often or single-use)

Miscellaneous Individual Consumables:

- Disposable aprons (used individually)
- Disposable gloves (used for individual children)
- Plasters or minor first aid items (used individually)
- Single-use bedding (e.g., cot sheets or sleep mats that are changed per child daily)
- Individual face cloths/sponges

Optional Activity Items (per session/child):

- Ingredients for baking/cooking activities
 - Special event materials (e.g. craft packs for Mother's Day, Christmas cards)
 - Trip-specific consumables (e.g. packed lunches, activity kits)
3. No change in your contract or Terms and Conditions, including calendar month notice period for the duration of your time at TMB.
 4. The big change will be in your much reduced monthly invoice, versus an unfunded session price, as the value of your child's funding, spread across the whole year, is deducted off each month.
 5. You will continue to receive your monthly invoice showing you the days attended and any additional charges.

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. There contract will be a 1 month rolling contract terminable on 2 weeks' notice by either party.
3. Free Funded Places are subject to availability and our Admission Policy. There is no guarantee of a place.
4. Requests for Free Funded Places will be taken during the term preceding the term requested.
5. Free Funded Places are for 51 weeks over 3 terms; autumn, spring & summer.

6. 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.
7. Parents cannot request/reserve a particular day/session/times for their child.
8. Applications by parents to change their child's day/session will not be considered.
9. 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
10. Additional session/days cannot be purchased.
11. 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 **9-month-old, 2-year-old and 3 & 4-year-old funded hours** here for all types of sessions that we provide.

9 m, 2yr and 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 2025, 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 with and without funding

Fee structure

- Full Day (07:30-18:00): £64
- Morning Session (07:30-13:00): £32
- Afternoon Session (13:00-18:00): £32
- Food & Consumables (Full Day): £10
- Food & Consumables (Half Day): £5
- Additional 30-Minute Charge (due to funding cap): £3
- Full Hour Rate (if applicable): £6

What this means for your invoice:

- Non-funded Full Day: £74
- Non-funded Half Day: £37
- Fully Funded Full Day: £13 (food, consumables, and 30-minute charge)
- Fully Funded Half Day: £5 (food and consumables only)
- Partially Funded Full Day (e.g., 2 hours of funding used): £51 (8.5 hours x £6) + £10 (food and consumables) = £61

Discounts, bank holidays and INSET days:

- We offer a 10% sibling discount
- We offer a 10% full time discount
- We do charge for bank holidays however the costs will be set against a funded day and so will be much reduced
- We do not charge for those days that are not bank holidays which we are closed
- We are closed for 2 INSET days a year. They will be set for the first work day we are open in the new year (usually 2 Jan) and the first work day on or after 1 September and should coincide with INSET days of local schools. As these are direct nursery expenses and of benefit to the children parents will be charged for these days.

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 attending the setting for more than 22 hours (for example if a child is attending for 2 full days a week).

*As per government guidance additional food charges food or supplementary charges are not mandatory. To avoid paying these, please discuss with the nursery about accessing an Option 2 fully funded place as detailed above.