

Little Dukes Government Funding Policy

Current version: Adopted June 2025 **Next review due:** May 2026

Reviewed by:

Ben Murray, Marketing and Admissions Director - Little Dukes Nurseries

Rik McShane, Operations Director - Little Dukes Nurseries

Please note:

This document applies to all nurseries within Little Dukes, part of the Dukes Education Group, including:

- Hove Village Day Nurseries
- Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nurseries
- Miss Daisy's Nursery Schools:
 - Miss Daisy's Nursery Schools Hyde Park Ltd
- The Kindergartens Nursery Schools
- Reflections Nursery and Forest School
- Riverside Nursery Schools:
 - Bright Beginnings (Twickenham) Ltd
 - Twickenham Park Day Nursery Ltd
- Pippa Pop-ins Nursery Schools

Any reference to 'the nursery' applies to the nursery named above to which you are applying for a place for your child.

What Is Government Funding?

What is Extended Free Entitlement Funding?

Eligible parents can claim further Government funding in addition to the Universal FE Funding. Extended FE Funding covers an additional 570 hours per year/15 hours a week of childcare during term time (38 weeks a year). This equates to 1140 hours per year / 30 hours per week. Again, this is available for all three and four year old children in England. Extended Free Entitlement also offers 15 or 30 hours a week for eligible families for children aged 9 months plus.

You may be eligible to claim Extended FE Funding if:

- Both parents are working (or the sole parent is working in a single-parent family)
- Each parent earns a weekly minimum equivalent to 16 hours at national minimum wage, and less than £100,000 per year.
- This includes parents who are employed and self-employed.

A decorative black swirl graphic in the top left corner of the page.

What can you claim?

Children aged 9 months to 2 years:

Available for eligible families only:

- 15 hours from September 2024
- 30 hours from September 2025

Children aged 2 to 3 years old:

Available for eligible families only:

- 15 hours from April 2024
- 30 hours from September 2025

Children aged 3 to 4 years old:

Available for all families:

- 15 hours

Available for eligible families only:

- 30 hours from September 2025

When will my child be eligible?

Children will be eligible to receive funding from the start of the next full term after turning 9 months old or following their second or third birthdays.

A child born between:

1st January and 31st March will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from the 1st April.

1st April and 31st August will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from the 1st September.

1st September and 31st December will be eligible for the Free Entitlement from the 1st January.

What does funding include?

The FE funding only covers the cost of the provision of childcare and the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The funding does not include any of the other services that our nurseries provide.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Meals and snacks
- Nappies, formula and consumables
- Additional Hours

- Early starts or late finishes
- Uniform
- Enrichment activities
- Laundry Services
- Forest School and Beach School
- Access to our parent app - *As well as all those little extras that make our nurseries so special!*

Government funding does not cover the cost of food, nor the delivery of the experiences and services that Little Dukes nurseries provide for both our children and parents. We therefore ask parents to pay for these with our consumables charge, called an 'Extras and Essentials' charge, per session or day. This ensures that the quality of care and service we offer is protected for all our children and parents.

Whilst this charge remains voluntary, if parents refuse or are unable to pay the 'Extras and Essentials' fee, then they will need to speak with the Nursery Manager to discuss further. There is both an operational and financial impact on the nursery when this is not paid.

Fully funded or Funded Entitlement Only spaces, or spaces where attendance is for reduced hours will be offered to all families where possible, subject to availability.

Consumables:

Government funding does not cover the cost of our additional services and all of those wonderful things which make our nurseries so special. Therefore, like most nurseries, we will ask parents to pay for these so we can carry on providing the very best care and experiences.

Funded entitlements will be subject to an optional 'Extras and Essentials' charge, shown on your monthly or termly invoice. These will be shown as a sessional, daily or weekly charge.

Funding at Little Dukes nurseries:

Universal FE and Extended FE funding are both structured to cover the 38 weeks a year of term time. Many of our settings do not offer term time only places and are booked for the period of the 50 weeks of the year that we operate.

Therefore, we 'stretch' the Government funded hours to cover the full number of weeks that the nursery is open.

If your chosen nursery is open for:	Your 15 hours entitlement becomes:	Your 30 hours entitlement becomes:
33 weeks of the year	15 hours each week	30 hours each week
38 weeks of the year	15 hours each week	30 hours each week
48 weeks of the year	11.9 hours each week	23.8 hours each week
50 weeks of the year	11.4 hours each week	22.8 hours each week

Please note, in line with our admissions policy, the minimum days per week for attendance at most of our nurseries is three days per week or five sessions per week, so there will be a number of hours that are not covered fully by your entitlement.

Little Dukes nursery fees:

Our fees are calculated on the number of operating weeks per year at your chosen nursery, averaged into 12 monthly payments or three termly payments depending on the setting.

The funded hours claimed will be shown on your invoice as ‘nil value’ hours. We will then detail the ‘Extras and Essentials’ charge for applicable sessions, for items not included in the FE funding, as well as any hours that are not part of your funding eligibility.

Headcount day:

Headcount day is the cut off each term where children wishing to claim funding must be in attendance in order to receive the funding for that term. This applies to all children with the exception of Local Authority funded 2 year olds (with a valid 6-digit eligibility code) who can start at any point during the term. The exact date for headcount is set by the Local Authority and dates can vary. They are however usually towards the end of January, April and September.

If you wish to join after this day and are not currently attending another nursery, we may not be able claim any funding until the following period, however most Local Authorities are making changes to ensure this does not affect your eligibility. Please check with us directly for details on whether this will affect you.

If we cannot claim Local Authority funding for part of the term in which your child starts, all sessions will therefore be charged at their respective full rates.

If you are wishing to move to one of our settings from another provider, then we will be able to claim any unused funding from your previous provider.

Headcount is also the cut off for those wishing to increase their funded sessions. If you are an existing parent and are planning on increasing the number of sessions in your booking pattern, this needs to be in place by headcount day. Increases after headcount day may not be eligible for funding until the following term. All sessions will therefore be charged at their respective full rates.

A decorative black swirl graphic in the top left corner.

FE Only placements:

We offer Funded Entitlement (FE) Only placements, subject to availability. These allow parents can assess their FE Only hours without any additional costs. These hours are offered in a standalone pattern but may not necessarily provide the full care requirements you might be looking for.

Typically, this is as follows:

For our nurseries which offer split AM and PM sessions, funded hours can be claimed each day for the PM portion of the day, or for the standard afternoon sessions each week as per our booking options with the remaining entitlement (if any) used on an alternative day - subject to availability, or with another provider.

For our nurseries which do not offer split AM and PM sessions – so full days only, funded hours can be claimed on Mondays and Fridays for a full day, with the remaining entitlement (if any) used on an alternative day - subject to availability, or with another provider.

Whilst our additional services are not included in these offers, consideration will be made regarding the inclusion of all children.

The number of these placements available will be dependent on location and availability. Placements which require no additional costs do have an operational and financial impact on our nurseries. Therefore, places such as these are subject to availability. This is to ensure the care we provide for all our children isn't affected, and that our nurseries can continue to operate sustainably.

For more information about FE Only placements, please speak to the Admissions Manager.

The Little Dukes Bursary:

At each of our nurseries, we offer a select number of Bursaries. Bursary places are completely funded and will require no additional fees to be paid. These are extremely sought after and will need to be applied for well in advance. Bursaries are usually awarded termly to families who need additional support, however, are open to all families to apply for.

For more information about The Little Dukes Bursary, please email admissions@littledukesnurseries.com