

Admissions, Fees & Funding

Policy & Procedure

Policy statement

At Goldilocks Nurseries, it is our intention to make our settings accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We are committed to ensuring open, fair, and clearly communicated procedures so that every family feels welcomed and included. We operate a competitively priced, high-quality childcare service in a safe and stimulating environment where the individual needs of all children are met. Goldilocks Nurseries are open 51 weeks of the year, Monday to Friday, from 7:30am to 6:00pm.

Procedures

- We ensure that the existence of our setting is widely promoted in locations accessible to all sections of the community.
- We provide information about our setting in plain, easy-to-understand English. Where appropriate, we offer translations in community languages and alternative formats upon request.
- Our waiting list operates on a **first-come, first-served** basis. However, we may also consider the following factors:
 - ⇒ The child's age.
 - ⇒ The length of time on the waiting list.
 - ⇒ Proximity of the child's home to the setting.
 - ⇒ Whether siblings already attend the setting.
 - ⇒ The setting's capacity to meet the child's individual needs.
- We offer funded places in line with the Kent County Council (KCC) Code of Practice and any current local authority funding conditions.
- Where financially viable, we may hold a place vacant to accommodate an emergency admission.
- We ensure that our environment and practices are welcoming and inclusive of all family members—fathers, mothers, carers, and extended family.
- We actively promote positive regard and respect for diversity and difference, including gender, family structure, socioeconomic background, religion, ethnicity, ability, and English language proficiency.
- We support children and/or parents with disabilities to fully participate in all aspects of nursery life.
- We monitor the backgrounds and needs of all children via the Registration Form to ensure that no unintentional or unconscious bias occurs.
- We regularly promote and share our Children's Rights, Equality and British Value Policy.
- We consult with families regarding our opening hours to ensure that we meet a wide range of family needs.
- We aim to be flexible with attendance patterns to support individual children and family circumstances, provided that such flexibility does not compromise continuity or stability for others in the setting.
- Persistent failure to comply with the nurseries terms and conditions may result in the withdrawal of a childcare place.

Funding

Accessing Funded Places at Goldilocks Nurseries – Key Information

Eligibility for funded childcare (Free for 2 (FF2), Universal 15 Hours for 3 & 4-year-olds, and 30 Hours Funding) does **not guarantee a place** at Goldilocks Nurseries. All places are subject to availability, and we cannot guarantee specific session patterns or delivery models.

- **Using Funded Hours:** You are not required to take the full funded hours if you feel this is too much for your child. Funded hours may be split between up to two KCC-registered childcare providers per day, but total hours cannot exceed the entitlement.
- **Start of Funding:** Funded hours can only begin from the start of the week in which eligibility is confirmed, funding cannot be backdated.
- **Transfers and Changes:** Goldilocks Nurseries does not transfer funding to another provider during the funding term. If you choose to move your child mid-term, you will be responsible for paying fees at the new setting. If you disagree with a funding decision, you have the right to appeal through the Kent Children and Families Information Service (CFIS).
- **Ongoing Eligibility:** Once a child has started their funded place, they will remain eligible for the remainder of that funding term, even if family circumstances change. **30 Hours Funding (Working Parents):** If you are no longer eligible after re-confirming your details, your child can continue to receive the 30 hours until the end of the current funding term. It is the duty of parents to ensure they maintain and submit their funding codes within the appropriate timeframe set out by HMRC and KCC. **Free for 2 (FF2) Funding:** Children remain eligible for FF2 funding until they transition to the next stage of funding, such as the universal 15 hours for 3-4-year-olds or 30 hours for working parents, regardless of any changes in circumstances during that period.
- **Eligibility code for working parents funding:** Parents must provide Goldilocks Nurseries with their **11-digit eligibility code** before their child starts using funded hours each term. It is the duty of parents to ensure they apply and submit their 15/30 hrs funding code within the appropriate time frame set out by HMRC & KCC to ensure eligibility
- **Parental Declaration:** Before your child can begin funded sessions each funding term, you must complete and sign a Parental Declaration Form confirming eligibility and agreement with nurseries terms and conditions. This is mandatory and must be renewed each term.
- **Additional Costs:** Additional charges may apply for items such as meals or extra activities that are not covered by the funded entitlement, should you choose to opt in for your child.
- **Funded hours:** Can be used for any of the sessions offered at Goldilocks Nurseries. Any hours taken beyond your allocated funding entitlement will be charged at the standard nursery rate. Please note Goldilocks Nurseries does **not** currently offer stretched hours (funding spread over more than 38 weeks).

Sessions we currently offer are:

⇒ 8:00 am – 1:00 pm

⇒ 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm

⇒ 8:00 am – 3:30 pm

⇒ 8:00 am – 6:00 pm

When Your Child Can Start Funded Childcare

FF2, 15 Hours, and 30 Hours for Ages 2, 3-4

Child Born Between	Free for 2 (FF2) Eligibility & Start	15 Hours (3-4-year-olds) Start Term	30 Hours Funding 2-4's Start Term
1 April – 31 August	Eligible from age 2, start as soon as eligible and place available	Term 1 (September) after 3rd birthday	Term 1 (September) after 2 nd or 3 rd birthday
1 September – 31 December	Eligible from age 2, start as soon as eligible and place available	Term 3 (January) after 3rd birthday	Term 3 (January) after 2 nd or 3 rd birthday
1 January – 31 March	Eligible from age 2, start as soon as eligible and place available	Term 5 (April) after 3rd birthday	Term 5 (April) after 2 nd or 3 rd birthday

9+ Plus Funding

When your child turns 9 months old	When you can get your hours from	Deadline for applying
1 st September – 31 st December	Term 3 - January	31 st December
1 st January – 31 st March	Term 5 - April	31 st March
1 st April – 31 st August	Term 1 - September	31 st August

When to Apply for your 9 month+ 30 hours funding if Returning to Work or Starting a New Job

If you're returning to work after maternity, paternity, shared parental, or adoption leave, or starting a new job, the date you return or begin working will affect when you can apply for free childcare.

- You can apply once your child is 23 weeks old.
- You may start using the funded hours from the term after your child turns 9 months old, depending on when you return to work or start your new job.
- If you apply more than 31 days before you start work, you must contact the Childcare Service helpline for assistance with your application.

This applies to those seeking the 30 hours of free childcare for working parents, including the new funding from 9 months of age:

Date You Start Work	When You Can Get 30 Hours From	When to Apply
1 st April – 31 st August	January (Term 3)	1 st September – 31 st December
1 st February – 30 th April	April (Term 5)	1 st January – 31 st March
1 st May – 30 th September	September (Term 1)	1 st April – 31 st August

Aligned with Kent County Council guidance, we offer government-funded early education entitlements:

Free for 2 (FF2) Funding – For Some Parents

- Kent County Council (KCC) provides funding for all eligible 2-year-olds attending a registered Kent childcare setting, regardless of where the child lives.
- To qualify for Free for 2 funding, a parent or carer must be in receipt of one of the following benefits:
 - Income Support
 - Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
 - Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - Support under Part 6 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
 - Tax Credits with a gross annual income of £16,190 or less (before tax)
 - Universal Credit with a household annual income of £15,400 or less (after tax)
 - The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
 - Working Tax Credit 4-week run-on (paid when you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Children are also eligible for Free for 2 funding if they:
 - Are looked after by a local authority
 - Have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
 - Receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
 - Have left care under a Special Guardianship Order, Child Arrangements Order (living arrangements), or Adoption Order

Eligible children can access up to 570 hours of free early education per year. This is typically taken as 15 hours per week over 38 weeks but can be stretched across more weeks if the provider offers this model. (Goldilocks Nurseries does not currently offer stretched hours).

For full details and to apply, visit www.kent.gov.uk/freefor2. You will need the following information:

- Proof of your child's date of birth (birth certificate or passport)
- Your date of birth and National Insurance Number or National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS) reference number
- If applicable: the most recent Disability Living Allowance (DLA) letter for your child

Once approved, KCC will send you a Free for 2 eligibility code via email.

Please inform the nursery of the code as soon as it is received—we cannot confirm a funded place without it. If you apply online, you may forward the email to us from your phone.

Universal 15 Hours Free Childcare for 3 & 4-Year-Olds

All children in England are entitled to 15 hours of free early education per week, starting from the term after their third birthday.

30 Hours Childcare

From September 2025, eligible working parents of children aged 9 months up to school entry are entitled to receive 30 hours of childcare per week (equivalent to 1,140 hours per year, usually delivered over 38 weeks).

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for the 30 hours entitlement:

- Both parents (or the sole parent in a single-parent family) must be working or about to start work, including if currently on statutory leave (maternity, paternity, adoption, sick leave, or carer's leave).

- Each parent must earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at National Minimum or Living Wage and less than £100,000 per year.
- Parents must apply online via the HMRC childcare service at gov.uk/sign-in-childcare-account.
- Eligibility codes must be reconfirmed every 3 months to maintain funding. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure reconfirmation is done on time.

Tax-Free Childcare

Parents can receive up to £2,000 per child, per year for children under 12, and up to £4,000 per disabled child under 17, to assist with childcare costs.

- **Eligibility:** Available to working families, including the self-employed, across the UK.
- **Age Requirements:** Applies to children aged under 12, or under 17 for disabled children.
- **Government Contribution:** For every £8 paid into a childcare account, the government adds an extra £2, up to the maximum limits (£2,000 or £4,000 per year). This equates to up to £500 every three months per child.
- **Income Criteria:** To qualify, parents and their partners must each expect to earn, on average, at least the equivalent of 16 hours per week at the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage.
- **Income Cap:** Each parent must earn less than £100,000 per year.
- **Special Circumstances:** Parents on maternity, paternity, adoption leave, or those unable to work due to disability or caring responsibilities may still qualify.
- **Compatibility:** Tax-Free Childcare can be used alongside the 15 and 30 Hours Free Childcare schemes. However, it cannot be used simultaneously with childcare vouchers, Universal Credit childcare costs, or tax credits.
- **Decision Tool:** Families are encouraged to use the Childcare Choices Calculator to determine the most suitable childcare support scheme.
- **Application Process:** Applications can be made through the Childcare Choices website or directly via HMRC.

Childcare Vouchers

We accept all childcare voucher schemes and hold accounts with most providers. If we do not currently have an account with your childcare voucher scheme, please speak to the manager to arrange for one to be set up.

Lunches

If your child is attending only free funded hours and you would like them to have lunch; an additional charge will apply as follows:

Sessions:

- 8:00am–1:00pm, 1:00pm–6:00pm, or 8:00am–3:30pm – £5.00
- 8:00am–6:00pm – £7.00

Lunch fees are included in our standard Nurseries fees for full-paying sessions. Please note that lunches may not be provided at all Nurseries locations, so we recommend checking with your specific nursery for availability.

Payment of Fees

- **When Fees Are Due:** Fees are invoiced on the first working day of each month and must be paid within 7 days of the invoice date. If a child starts partway through the month, fees must be paid before or on their first day of attendance. Should fees remain unpaid after this period, Goldilocks Nurseries reserves the right to refuse entry to your child without prior notice. You will be informed on the day of refusal, which will be treated as one month's notice served by you, with fees payable for this notice period. For children receiving Free Early Education, any hours beyond the 15/30-hour entitlement will be suspended until fees are settled.
- **Methods of Payment:** Standing Orders are the preferred method of payment and Nurseries bank details will be provided. Alternatively, we accept payment via Nursery voucher schemes, Tax-Free Childcare, cash, BACS, debit, or credit cards.
- **Late Payment of Fees:** Invoices are generated on a monthly basis. Failure to meet the Payment Due date (7 days from invoice print date) will result in a Late Payment Charge of £20.00. After this, a minimum of one week's grace will be given to settle the debt before the place is withdrawn (at management discretion). Reminders are not necessarily issued.
- **Charges for Late Collection of Children:** While we understand delays can happen, to cover costs of caring for children after closing time, we reserve the right to charge fees (see current fees for amounts) if your child remains uncollected for over 30 minutes. If parents or guardians cannot be contacted, the Manager or Deputy Manager will contact Social Services. Charges increase after 6:00 pm (please refer to current fees). Late collection fees will be automatically added to your account. Please be aware the Nurseries aim to close on time, and this system should not be abused.
- **Review of Fees:** The Nurseries reserves the right to review and adjust fees at any time, with one month's written notice provided for any fee changes.
- **Unforeseen Closures:** Absences or closures due to severe weather or emergencies will be charged as usual. Unfortunately, no refunds or make-up days will be offered for such closures.
- **Termination of Placement:** One month's written notice or payment in lieu of notice is required to terminate your child's placement. Fees are payable during the notice period.
- **Session/Placement Changes:** Requests to reduce sessions require one month's written notice, with fees payable during this period. Requests to increase sessions or change attendance days will be accommodated as vacancies arise.
- **Holiday Leave & Absences:** Fees remain payable for all booked sessions during holiday leave. Absences due to illness or appointments are also chargeable.