



# **Acorn Childcare Centre**

## **Parent Contract**

We believe that there needs to be a formal agreement between the Nursery and parents/carers. This contract will outline the obligations and commitment, of both the Nursery and the parent/carer. This is a contract between Acorn Childcare Centre (referred to as 'the Nursery') and the Parents or legal Guardian (referred to as 'the Parent') of a child (or children) that is enrolled at the Nursery.

### **Admission Requirements**

A nursery place for your child at Acorn Childcare Centre will be confirmed only upon receipt of all the following:

- Completed and signed Admissions Form
- Completed and signed Parent Contract
- Payment of the £100 refundable deposit
- Payment of the £100 non-refundable admissions fee for chargeable hours

Until all required documentation and payments have been received in full, a nursery place will not be reserved, and the child will not be permitted to start at the nursery.

If you decide you no longer need the nursery space the deposit fee is non-refundable.

### **Contracts**

We offer term time only (TTO) contracts for children aged 3 years and above and all year round (AYR) contracts for all ages. Either one is requested on the booking form when registering. TTO contracts will follow the Malcolm Sargent School term dates. The child can attend during holiday times but will be charged in full for the hours attended and sessions are subject to availability.

### **Funding Entitlement - Parent Responsibility**

It is the parent's responsibility to apply for any applicable working entitlement and/or deprivation funding and to provide the nursery with the relevant eligibility code before funding can be claimed.

Parents must also reconfirm their eligibility for funding each term, in line with government requirements, and promptly provide updated codes where necessary.

By signing this contract, you confirm that you understand and agree to these responsibilities.

It is a legal requirement for the nursery to hold a completed funding declaration form for auditing purposes. The nursery will share regular reminders regarding when new forms need to be completed; however, it is the parent's responsibility to return completed forms in a timely manner so that funding can be claimed.

If funding is lost or cannot be claimed due to a parent's failure to apply, reconfirm eligibility, or provide the required information within the specified timeframes, the parent will be liable for all nursery fees for the period during which funding is not available. This includes, but is not limited to, failure to apply for funding for a new term.

Should funding lapse, one month's notice may be given in accordance with the contract. However, the nursery is unable to guarantee that your child's place will be held open if you wish to return once funding has been secured again. Any future placement will be subject to availability.

Please see the attached Funding FAQ sheet for further information regarding funding eligibility and how to apply.

### **Cancellation of Nursery Place**

If a parent/carer cancels a child's nursery place less than four weeks before the agreed start date, the standard four-week notice period still applies, and full fees for this period will remain payable, even if the child does not attend.

Where applicable, the nursery may also claim any available government funding to cover part of the loss of income. This policy ensures the nursery can manage staffing and resources effectively. By signing the contract, parents/carers acknowledge and agree to this condition.

### **Termination of Nursery Place (four weeks' notice)**

- Either party may terminate this agreement by providing four weeks' written notice. The notice period begins on the date written notice is received by the nursery.
- During the notice period, the child's place will remain open and all fees will continue to be charged as normal, regardless of whether the child attends.
- Where the child is receiving government-funded hours, the nursery will continue to claim funding for the child throughout the full notice period. Any additional hours or services not covered by funding will continue to be charged at the agreed rates.
- If a parent chooses to remove their child before the end of the notice period, fees/funding for the full four weeks will still apply, and the parent remains responsible for payment of any outstanding charges.
- The nursery reserves the right to terminate this agreement with immediate effect in circumstances involving safeguarding risks, persistent non-payment, or other serious breaches of contract.

## **Changes to Booked Hours and Sessions**

Parents must provide a minimum of four weeks' written notice for any request to reduce their child's booked hours, days, or sessions. Fees will remain payable for the originally booked hours throughout the full notice period.

For new parents with advanced bookings, we ask that as much notice as possible is given for any changes to booked sessions; however, a minimum of one month's notice is required. Where less than one month's notice is provided, fees will remain payable in line with the original booking, as outlined above.

Requests to increase a child's hours, days, or sessions will be accommodated subject to availability. While the nursery cannot guarantee immediate increases, all reasonable efforts will be made to offer the requested sessions at the earliest possible opportunity.

All session changes are subject to availability and must be agreed in writing by the nursery before taking effect. An admin fee will be required for any sessions added that takes your hours over the allocated funding.

### **Clarification Note:**

Advanced bookings are defined as sessions reserved in advance of a child's start date or before the full funding or fee arrangements are in place. These sessions are held exclusively for the child and cannot always be reallocated at short notice.

### **Example:**

If a child is booked to start in September and sessions are reduced or cancelled in August with less than one month's notice, fees will remain payable for the originally booked sessions for the full notice period.

## **Registration Fee and Deposit**

- A £100 non-refundable registration fee is required to secure a nursery place. This fee covers administrative costs and enrolment processing and will not be returned under any circumstances, including if the child does not start the nursery.
- A £100 refundable deposit is also required at the time of registration. This deposit will be held on the child's account and refunded after the final invoice, provided that:
  1. All fees have been paid in full,
  2. The required four weeks' written notice of termination has been given, and there are no outstanding charges for additional sessions, consumables, or damages.
- If notice is not given as required, or if fees remain outstanding at the time of termination, the nursery reserves the right to retain the deposit to cover any unpaid amounts.

## Payment and discounts

Effective from 1st September 2025, all nursery session fees will be invoiced in advance.

Children who are registered in the nursery prior to 1st September 2025 will continue to be invoiced in arrears in line with the existing arrangement.

OOSC fees are invoiced monthly in arrears and payable within 15 days of receipt. Payment by bank transfer is preferred but cheques, payable to The Acorn Childcare Centre, are also accepted. The Centre prefers not to receive cash but if cash is the only option, a receipt will be issued for all cash received. Cash must only be handed to the Centre office.

Statements and invoices are issued by email to the person(s) named as the Bill Payer on the Admission Form.

A 10% discount on childcare in the nursery is offered to children whose parents are employed by Malcolm Sargent Primary School and 30% discount to all staff employed by Acorn Childcare Centre. Full discount is offered to all staff employed by Acorn Childcare Centre for children attending OOSC (Staff must be on rota to be eligible for the discount).

One 10% discount is available per family with more than one child attending the Centre, either in the nursery or the wrap around care. The 10% discount is applied to the oldest sibling's sessions. The discount will only be applied if:

- 1) The eldest child attends contracted sessions at wrap around care.
- 2) The eldest child has contracted sessions within the nursery or sessions that exceed funded hours. I.e., if your eldest child comes to nursery on 2 or 384 funded hours only, the discount will not be applied.

**It is the parent's responsibility to notify the office if a sibling discount is required. Discounts cannot be applied retroactively.**

## Additional Charges

### **Lunch**

Parents whose children are attending nursery may either provide their own, healthy, packed lunch for their child or alternatively they may order a hot meal. Meals are freshly cooked each day on the school site, following School Food Standard guidelines and are transported to the nursery at lunch time.

The meal comprises two courses along with fresh fruit and homemade bread. Orders will need to be placed via a personal School Grid application. Should you choose for your child to have a hot meal, please speak with the Acorn admin team and they will organise an account for you and provide further detail on menus and how to order.

Please note that hot meals are only available during term time. Packed lunches will need to be provided during holidays.

## **Nappies**

We ask that parents provide their child's own wipes, nappies, and creams. Our nursery team will monitor supplies and send reminders when items are running low. If additional supplies are not provided in time and we need to use the nursery's stock, a charge of 20p per use will be applied. This ensures we can continue to meet each child's needs promptly and consistently.

## **Late collection**

We understand that being late can happen to anyone. However, if a parent or carer is experiencing an emergency or anticipates being late to collect their child, they must inform the Centre by telephone as soon as possible.

If a child is collected late during the day—beyond their booked session time—the following session will automatically be added to their attendance and charged at the standard session rate. For collections after the Centre's closing time, a late fee of £20 will be applied for each 30-minute period or part thereof, to cover staff costs. For example, if your child is collected at 18:35, the fee would be £40 per child.

Please be assured that our staff will always remain with your child and ensure they are cared for safely until they are collected.

## **Non-collection**

If a child has not been collected from the nursery after ten minutes has been allowed for lateness, we check for any changes to normal routines or general information.

If there is no information recorded, the manager will try to contact the parents on the telephone numbers provided for their mobile, home or work. If this fails, the manager will try the emergency contacts shown on the child's records.

The manager/staff member in charge and one other member of staff must stay behind with the child (if outside normal operating hours). In the event of no contact being made after one hour has lapsed, the person in charge will ring the local authority children's social services emergency duty team. The two members of staff will remain in the building until suitable arrangements have been made for the collection of the child.

## **Operating Days and Hours**

The nursery operates Monday to Friday, from 7:30am to 6:00pm.

We are open all year round except for the following closures:

- All UK Bank Holidays
- Christmas closure: from Christmas Eve (24th December) until 2nd January, reopening on 2nd January

These closure periods are non-chargeable, and no fees will be applied for the days on which the nursery is closed.

## **Non-Payment of Fees: (Bad Debt Policy)**

Prompt payment of fees helps all families by keeping our costs down. We recognise, however, that occasionally some parents/carers may experience financial difficulties. If this is the case, please contact us as soon as possible so that the Centre can arrange a suitable payment plan. All financial matters will be dealt with the utmost sensitivity and consideration and in confidence. The process, in the event of non-payment of fees, will be:

- The Manager will liaise with the parent/carer concerned.
- A payment plan will be established.
- Where there is no resolution, or the plan is not adhered to the child's/children's place will be withdrawn and the deposit fee will be issued against the outstanding balance.
- As a last resort and to be fair to all users, legal action will be taken to recover fees if necessary.

## **Review of Fees**

The Centre will review fees at our own discretion. If fee changes are agreed by the Directors of the Centre, they will be notified to parents with one month's notice.

## **Nursery's Right to Terminate or Reduce Hours**

The nursery reserves the right to terminate this agreement or reduce a child's hours with immediate effect if it is deemed necessary for the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of the child, other children, or staff.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Persistent behaviour that poses a risk to others
- Non-compliance with nursery policies
- Any actions or circumstances that compromise health and safety

In such cases, the nursery will provide written notice outlining the reasons for the decision. Fees will be charged up to the date the agreement is terminated or the hours are reduced.

## **Moving rooms**

We move children in consultation with parents and carers when they reach the age or development stage of the next room. We offer the children settling in visits with their new key person before they start their new room.

This allows them to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings, friends and staff members. A meeting will be arranged with current key workers and new key workers prior to this transition, and child's needs or parent's questions will be discussed.

## **Settling in Sessions**

We offer a complimentary two-hour settling-in session for all nursery children prior to their official start date. During this initial visit, we warmly invite parents to accompany their child to help them become familiar with the environment, daily routines, and the staff within their room.

This time also provides a valuable opportunity for parents to meet with their child's key person, who will discuss the child's current routine, likes and dislikes, comfort items, and any additional information that will support a smooth transition. Building this early connection helps form the foundations of a strong, trusting bond.

Once the child has had time to explore with their parent present, we then suggest that parents leave their child in the care of their key person for a short period. This allows both the child and the staff to observe how they manage independently and helps us understand what further support may be beneficial.

We recognise that every child settles differently, and we strive to make each settling-in experience bespoke to the individual. If additional sessions are needed, we are more than happy to arrange these in agreement with both the setting and the parents, ensuring the transition into nursery is as positive and reassuring as possible.

## **Illness and Infection Control Procedures**

- If a child becomes unwell during the nursery day, staff will complete an unwell child form, monitor symptoms, and record temperatures. A fever is considered 38°C or above.
- Temperature will be checked every 10 minutes for 30 minutes. If it does not reduce with cooling measures and offering fluids, parents will be contacted.
- With prior parental permission, Calpol (paracetamol suspension) may be administered when appropriate, as determined by senior staff. All medication given will be recorded and signed by staff and the parent on collection.
- If the child remains unwell or their temperature stays high, parents must collect them promptly. The child will be cared for in a quiet area with their key person until collected.
- The nursery follows Public Health England guidance on exclusion periods for infectious illnesses. Children with sickness or diarrhoea must be symptom-free for 48 hours before returning.
- Parents will be informed of any contagious illnesses in the nursery. Affected areas and resources will be thoroughly cleaned.
- Ofsted will be notified within 14 days of any incident involving food poisoning affecting two or more children.
- Children starting antibiotics must remain at home for the first 48 hours (unless part of an existing care plan and the child is otherwise well).
- The nursery reserves the right to refuse admission to any child who is unwell; this decision is made by the duty manager and is final.
- Information on head lice is available, and parents are expected to check their child's hair regularly and inform the nursery if head lice are found.

## **Allergies**

We ask parents to provide full details of any allergies or allergic reactions on their child's registration form and to inform staff of any allergies identified after registration. All allergy information is shared with the relevant practitioners to ensure appropriate care and safety measures are in place.

It is the parent's responsibility to update the nursery via email with any changes or new information regarding their child's allergies.

## **Non-Prescription Medication**

The nursery will not give non-prescription medication containing aspirin. Liquid paracetamol or antihistamines may be administered only with prior written consent for specific doses and circumstances.

Emergency supplies are kept on site. Children under two with allergy symptoms must see a doctor. If a child has been sent home with a high temperature and given Calpol, they should not return the following day if the temperature remains high and medical advice should be sought. Staff will attempt to contact parents before giving medication; if unreachable, a Senior Lead will decide.

Medication is a last resort, and the child will be closely monitored. Parents must inform the nursery of any medication given before arrival. All medication administered will be recorded and communicated to parents. No medication will be given without prior written consent.

## **Prescription Medication**

- Prescription medicine will only be administered if prescribed by a doctor, dentist, nurse, or pharmacist, for the named child, in the original container, with instructions in English. Medicines containing aspirin will only be given if prescribed by a doctor.
- Parents must hand medication to an appropriate staff member, who will record administration details on the medication form; another staff member will check these details.
- Written parental consent is required for each medication. Consent may cover a full course or ongoing use only for that brand and dosage. Any changes in dosage, strength, or administration must be notified immediately, and a new form completed.
- The nursery will not exceed the recommended dosage unless accompanied by written instructions from a health professional. Parents must inform staff of the last dose given before nursery; staff will record this and provide full details to parents at collection, including times and dosages, with signatures at both points.
- Medication will be offered to the child in the prescribed form at the correct time. Non-level three staff must be supervised by a level three practitioner during administration. Staff are not legally obliged to give medication.
- If a child refuses medication, this will be recorded. For essential medicines or those with potential side effects, staff will discuss with parents the appropriate response.

## Safeguarding

I understand that the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 places a duty on the staff to follow specific child protection procedures should any concerns be made and that there is a Safeguarding Policy available for me to view at any time.

## Mobile Phones

Whilst we recognise that there may be emergency situations which necessitate the use of a mobile telephone, in order to ensure the safety and welfare of children in our care and share information about the child's day, parents and visitors are kindly asked to refrain from using their mobile telephones whilst in the nursery or when collecting or dropping off their children.

Parents/Carers are not permitted to use any recording device or camera (including those on mobile phones) on the nursery premises without the prior consent of the manager.

## What to wear

To feel free to explore and experiment with all kinds of materials, including messy ones, it is advisable to send children dressed in clothes that are easily washable and preferably not new.

It is good for children to practice the skills, which will make them independent. Simple clothing which they can handle themselves will enable them to go to the toilet unaided and to put on and take off their outdoor clothes without being too dependent on adults for help.

The Nursery also requests that each child is provided with a suitable winter coat, hat and gloves during colder weather and a sun hat and sun cream during hotter weather, which is clearly labelled and can be kept at the Nursery where possible.

## Potty/toilet training

We will work in conjunction with parents during potty training. If you have a method that has been working for you, please let us know and we will adopt it for your child where possible. Preferably, all children will be potty trained before going into preschool room. Staff will work alongside children and parents to help children prepare for this. Please provide us with several sets of spare clothes during this time.

## Acceptances

The parent/carer has read and understood the Terms and Conditions outlined in this contract, as well as the Admissions and Charging Policy. This agreement must be signed by all persons with Parental Responsibility and/or those accepting responsibility for payment of fees.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Legal Guardian)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Legal Guardian)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Term and Conditions are subject to change without prior notice.

Centre Manager: Lorna Hodgett

Telephone: 01780 766493

Email: [enquiries@acornchildcarecentre.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@acornchildcarecentre.co.uk)