

# Acorn Pre-school and the Mighty Oaks Clubs, Shefford

## Fees Policy

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### Payment Conditions

The current fees can be found in the information sheets. Fees will be reviewed by the committee to ensure they are kept in line with the Government funding levels. Parents will be given 1 terms notice in writing of any changes.

- Fees will be payable for any child who is registered to attend a session but who is then unable to attend for any reason. Including, but not limited to, sickness and holidays.
- If you are late to collect your child you will be charged a late collection fee as outlined in your contract. This is currently £25 per 15 minutes (or part thereof) per child.

### Invoices and payment terms

- Fees are paid in advance, each half term, on receipt of an invoice.
- The invoice must be paid in full by the date shown on the invoice.

### Modes of payment

You may choose from the following modes of payment to settle your invoices.

#### Cheque

- Please make your cheque payable to 'Acorn Pre-School'
- Your child's name should be written on the reverse
- The cheque should be put in an envelope and clearly marked with 'Fees' and the child's name.

#### Childcare Vouchers

We are already registered with a large number of Childcare voucher providers but if we are not registered with your provider please let us know and we will sign up with them.

- When making your payment online please use your child's name as a reference.
- When making payment with a paper voucher please ensure the vouchers are in an envelope clearly marked with the child's name.

#### Paying by cash

- Please put all cash in an envelope marked with 'Fees' and the child's name.
- If you require receipt please let a member of staff know.

## Invoice Disputes

Should you not agree with the amount on the invoice, please speak in the first instance to the Administrator. If you do not feel your query has been addressed you may send a dispute letter to the Chairperson, with a copy of the invoice, outlining the disputed amount and the reason for the dispute. Any such dispute letter must be received within 14 days of issue to be considered. If no dispute letter is received within this period, the invoice is deemed to be accepted, and liable for payment in full.

On receipt of such a dispute letter the Chairperson will investigate the situation and provide a prompt response, including supporting information as appropriate. An appropriate 'on account' payment will be expected in line with payment dates whilst the investigation is being carried out.

In the eventuality that the invoice is confirmed to be incorrect, a revised invoice will be sent.

## Late payments

You are encouraged to speak to our Administrator if you think you will have difficulties in paying your invoice. The sooner we hear, the easier it is to find a solution. Please contact us as soon as possible, this is in everyone's best interest. See paragraph 7 for payment difficulties.

In the eventuality that payments are not received as outlined in 'Invoices and payment terms' on page 1 Acorn Pre-School and the Mighty Oaks will engage the following procedure to secure payment:

- **Stage 1:**

A reminder will be sent to you asking for payment, this will include a copy of any outstanding invoices and give a deadline for payment or contact to discuss payment being made. If we receive no response we will attempt to make contact either in person or by telephone to discuss payment being made.

- **Stage 2:**

If no response is received following stage 1 then a warning letter will be sent to your home address. This will be sent by special delivery and will request payment within one week of receipt. This will incur a £10 administration fee that will be added to your outstanding balance. Again, if we receive no response we will attempt to make contact either in person or by telephone to discuss payment being made and to advise as to the next stage of debt collection.

- **Stage 3:**

If no response is received following stage 2 then the child's place will be withdrawn immediately and the child will no longer be accepted at Acorn Pre-School and the Mighty Oaks clubs. This exclusion will remain in place for an entire term following settlement of the outstanding fees. Re-admission of the child to the setting will be subject to session availability.

- **Stage 4:**

If fees are not paid within one week we will then use the judicial system to recover any outstanding amounts due to us, you will then also be liable for any additional interest and costs accrued.

## **Payment difficulties**

If you experience any problems in meeting the payments you must contact the administrator to avoid your child's place being withdrawn. You will be required outline the problems in writing. The matter will be dealt with confidentially.

In this eventuality and upon receipt of such a letter, the administrator, the chairperson and the treasurer will meet to discuss the case and formulate an appropriate response. Should they consider the claim to be valid, support maybe provided which could involve deferred payment or payment over a longer period of time. Any such decisions will be made on a case by case basis and you should not have any expectations in terms of the response you might receive. We, may also, with your consent, be able to seek professional and/or financial support to help you.

## **Childcare support**

If your employer offers a childcare voucher scheme, you will be able to use these towards payment for your booking. These schemes are exempt from PAYE and National Insurance. If your employer would like support to set up a scheme, ask them to call 01954 284203 for more information and advice, or logon to [www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/e18.pdf](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/helpsheets/e18.pdf).

We currently accept most childcare vouchers. Please contact our administrator for details.

### **Childcare tax credits**

You may be entitled to childcare tax credits, which could assist with up to 70% of the cost of the fees. To find out if you qualify, call the Tax Credit Office on 0845 300 3900, or visit [www.taxcredits.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.taxcredits.hmrc.gov.uk)

### **Childcare Information Service**

This service may be able to provide support for families and advice on paying for childcare. You can contact them on 0845 0454014

## **Cancellation/Termination of sessions**

In the event of a parent/carer withdrawing a child half a terms (6 weeks) written notice is required. Fees for the notice period are still payable even in the event of a Parent/carers withdrawing a child immediately.

Unless there are agreed exceptional circumstances, payment must be made. If exceptional circumstances are agreed, we will write to confirm that no payment is due.

## Forced closure of Acorn Pre-School & the Mighty Oaks

In some extreme circumstances Acorn Pre-School and the Mighty Oaks may be forced to close unexpectedly at short notice.

If Acorn Pre-School and the Mighty Oaks and the Lower School are both closed due to circumstances beyond their control e.g. snow closure, we will credit the cost of any sessions affected. If the Lower School is closed but Acorn Pre-School and the Mighty Oaks are able to open e.g. heating failure at the school, no credit will be issued.

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This policy gained staff consent on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

This policy was the subject of parent consultation between 21<sup>st</sup> October and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015

This policy was adopted at a minuted full meeting of the Committee held on .....

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Confirmed on behalf of Acorn Pre-school and the Mighty Oaks Clubs

Signature .....

Position ..... Date .....