

Government Funded Hours Policy 2021/2022

Entitlement

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 Universal funded hours per week during term time starting the term after their third birthday. Families wishing to claim funded hours will need to complete an Early Years Funding (EYF) Parental Declaration Form, which we can provide, confirming how many hours you wish for Alfresco to claim on your behalf and providing consent for your information to be passed to the appropriate authorities in order for the claim to be made.

Appendix 1 provides some guidance on how to complete the form and we are happy to help with any questions you may have.

You may be entitled to an additional 15 funded hours per week as part of the 30 hours Extended offering in which case you are welcome to use those Extended hours here at Alfresco. Visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk to find out whether you can claim the extended 30 hours. If your claim for 30 hours funding is successful you will be provided with an 11 digit code which will need to be provided to us to confirm eligibility. These codes need to be renewed every three months and it is the family's responsibility to provide and renew the code.

Using Your Funded Hours

There are two ways funded hours can be used at Alfresco:

1) Over 38 weeks during term time. Pre-school term dates for this academic year are:

Autumn: 1st Sept – 19th Oct (7 weeks) 1st Nov – 17th Dec (7 weeks)

Spring: 4th Jan – 11th Feb (6 weeks) 28th Feb – 8th Apr (6 weeks)

Summer: 25th Apr – 27th May (5 weeks) 6th Jun – 22nd Jul (7 weeks)

2) Spread over 52 weeks (same total number of hours but fewer hours per week).

Additional hours can be booked over and above your funded hours and these will be charged at our standard rates. Early drop off or late collection charges will be applied to all sessions as per our terms and conditions.

There are some limitations on claiming funded hours which are explained in Appendix 2.

Additional Services

Government funding is designed to cover the cost of providing early education and childcare but does not cover the additional services which we provide at Alfresco. The additional services relate to aspects of this setting which go over and above the funded early education and childcare offer, including freshly home-cooked meals and snacks; educational trips to local places of interest; forest school activities which require additional staffing, training and materials; and incidentals. As the government funding does not cover these additional services, families will need to pay if you would like your child to receive them.

The additional services we offer are charged at £1.70 per funded hour. We charge for additional services on an hourly basis as this enables us to continue to offer complete flexibility regarding hours booked. The alternative would be to restrict funding to set session times but we want to avoid this as we know how valuable flexibility is to families.

The additional services charge is optional, but we regret that if families decide to opt out and not pay the additional charge then their children will not receive meals and snacks and will not be able to join educational trips or other activities.

Families wishing to opt out of receiving additional services will need to confirm this in writing and speak to us about ensuring their children are provided with everything needed to attend. Four weeks notice is required to opt in or out.

Appendix 1: Completing the Parental Declaration Form

The Parental Declaration Form comes from Swindon Borough Council and provides a written record that you have given your permission for us to claim funding on your behalf. It outlines how many hours you would like us to claim and we are unable to claim funding for hours which do not have an accompanying form.

Parts 1 and 2 of the form ask for your child's details and that of the parent/carer. If you have an eligibility code for two year old funding or Extended 30 hours per week for 3-4 year olds please make sure this is included in Part 1. If you cannot remember which staff member saw your child's proof of identity when they started or the date that you brought it in then we can provide this information.

Part 3 clarifies how many hours are to be claimed by each setting your child attends. Families must complete and sign the start and end dates in order for the form to be valid. If you are happy to use the end of August before your child starts school as the end date then we can continue to use the same form for the duration of your child's attendance at Alfresco (provided no other details change during this time). If you decided to leave Alfresco before that date then we would claim until the end of your child's notice period and any remaining hours would be available to use at a different setting.

As outlined previously, at Alfresco you can use your funding during term time only (38 weeks per year) or spread across the whole year (52 weeks). Please enter either 38 or 52 in the table where it asks for weeks per year. Please ignore the suggested number of weeks given as examples as these relate to settings which are not open all year round. If you have any questions regarding whether your full entitlement is being used and how many hours remain we would be happy to clarify this for you.

Finally, please remember to sign and date the end of the form.

Appendix 2: Limitations for claiming funded hours

Deadlines for changes

The system which nurseries and pre-schools use to claim funding from the government is set up on a termly basis and there are only certain windows during which it is open for us to make new or amend existing claims. You are welcome to request changes in hours at any time and we will always do our best to accommodate you, but if the last window has passed for that term we may not be able to claim increased funding until the following term. It may be possible to make funding changes after the window has closed, but if the government is unable to provide increased funding then families will be liable for the full cost of any extra hours.

Carrying over entitlement

We are able to offer families the opportunity to spread funded hours throughout the year and can account for different numbers of hours per term or different hours during the holidays. However, it is not possible to exceed the maximum funded hours per week. For example, if you are entitled to claim 15 hours per week but only use 10 hours per week in the autumn term it is not possible to claim 20 hours per week in the spring term as this is more than your maximum of 15. You are still entitled to the unused hours from the autumn term, though, and they could be used during the holidays.

Ad hoc bookings

From September 2021 it will no longer be possible to use funded hours for ad hoc bookings. Please see our fees list for clarification of what constitutes an ad hoc booking versus a regular booking.

Multiple Settings

If you are claiming funding at more than one setting you will need to ensure that your combined claims do not exceed the maximum entitlement. A parental declaration form will need to be completed at each setting so it is clear how much funding is being claimed where and to avoid any over claims. We are entitled to continue claiming funding during a child's four week notice period even if they do not attend so this will need to be considered if you move setting and wish to set up a new claim elsewhere.