



## Early Education Funding Policy

### **Policy statement:**

This policy is written and Early Education Funding (EEF) is delivered within statutory and local authority guidelines from the Royal Borough of Kingston's Achieving for Children department which may be updated from time to time. This policy is applicable from 1 April 2020

### **EEF Eligibility**

#### **Universal 3 and 4 Year Old Funding**

- This is a universal funding which provides up to 570 hours of free childcare a year, effective from the term following the child's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday (or on or before 31 March for summer term funding to apply). Acacia Pre-school delivers this care for 15 hours a week based on 3 hours a day (9am-12pm), 5 days a week over 38 weeks a year (term time). Funding is claimed by and paid directly to us from Achieving for Children in the Royal Borough of Kingston.

#### **Extended Funding for 3 and 4 Year Olds**

- This funding is for up to an additional 15 hours per week over 38 weeks a year. The place is subject to meeting the eligibility criteria and having a valid code from HMRC. Acacia Pre-school is offering the full 30 hours per week, 38 weeks a year 9am-3pm, Monday – Friday.
- Parents need to reconfirm their eligibility to this funding every 3 months. They will be sent reminders from HMRC to reconfirm that the details they entered on their initial application are accurate
- **Grace Period** If a parent falls out of eligibility to Extended funding, they enter what is known as a "Grace Period". The details of the Grace Period dates are as follows:

<b>End of Eligibility Period</b>	<b>Grace Period End Date</b>
1 January – 10 February	31 March
11 February – 31 March	31 August
1 April – 26 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	31 December
1 September – 21 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	31 March

Parents who lose eligibility to the extended funding entitlement can continue with the extended funded placement for their child until the end of their Grace Period. If parents' situation changes during this grace period time, making them become eligible again, then they should inform the pre-school of their claim code.

If parents would like their child to continue with their current sessions at Acacia but have fallen out of eligibility to extended funding, they can continue to do so after the Grace Period by claiming Universal Funding for the morning sessions and paying for the afternoons at the current non-funded rate per 3 hour session. The current non-funded rate is published on our website.

If a parent loses eligibility to extended funding but does not want to pay for their child's extended hours after the Grace Period, their child can continue at Acacia for morning only sessions on the days they are currently registered to attend and claim Universal Funding for these hours.

## **2 year old funding**

- This is an eligibility based funding for up to 570 hours of free childcare a year effective from the term following the child's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday. Applications for 2 year old funding are made via the Royal Borough of Kingston and places can only be allocated once eligibility has been confirmed. Eligibility is confirmed by the Royal Borough of Kingston and then claimed and paid directly to Acacia Pre-school. Children who join Acacia under the 2 year funded scheme are automatically guaranteed to progress to a fully funded 3 and 4 year old place for the same sessions that they attended when aged 2. If a child does not attend for the full entitlement of 15 hours a week, but the parent wishes to increase their hours once aged 3, extra sessions will be offered when availability allows.

Further information on Early Years Funding can be accessed via the Kingston Council website [http://www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200130/education\\_schools\\_and\\_nurseries/1121/free\\_early\\_education\\_2\\_3\\_and\\_4\\_year\\_olds/3](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/info/200130/education_schools_and_nurseries/1121/free_early_education_2_3_and_4_year_olds/3)

## **Admissions policy**

To ensure sustainability of the business, we aim to fill all places at the start of each academic year, with minor exceptions applied on a case by case basis.

- Priority is given to children returning for a second academic year.
- We then offer places to all children aged 3 and 4 where a minimum of 3 full day sessions (9am-3pm) are required and are claiming extended funding or paying for the afternoon sessions if they are only eligible for Universal Funding
- Places are then allocated to new siblings where their attendance will run consecutively or concurrently to their older sibling.
- We reserve 3 places for children eligible for 2 year old funding at the start of the academic year and these are allocated on a first come first served basis. Places not taken by 2 year funded children by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the Autumn term are offered to the next child/ children on our waitlist.
- Vacancies are then allocated to children entitled to Universal EEF, by date of birth order, for all applications received by our application deadline, giving priority to the eldest children. Children entitled to receive 3 and 4 year old funding are therefore prioritised over fee paying younger children.

## **Delivery and Charges**

- Acacia is open 8.30am-3pm, 5 days a week for 38 weeks a year. Early Bird club operates from 8.30am until 9am, when the pre-school session officially starts. Early Bird club is available to all children who are attending the standard morning session that day and is currently charged at £4 per 30 minute session. This fee may be subject to change and any update is available on our website. We will not apply any funding entitlement to our Early Bird club sessions.
- Universal Funding can only be claimed for morning sessions (9am-12pm). Extended funding applies to all afternoon sessions (either lunch club only 12-12.45pm) or whole afternoon sessions (12pm-3pm). Children can only attend lunch club or afternoon sessions if they are registered to attend the morning of that day. If a child is collected late, then their attendance falls outside the funded hours and a Late Collection Fee may apply. Please see our Terms & Conditions document for further details.
- It should be noted that children attending for less than 5 days a week are not receiving their maximum funding entitlement.
- Where EEF is claimed for fewer hours than a child attends Acacia, (e.g. where EEF is also charged at another setting), then a charge will be made for all unfunded hours. The hourly charge will be one third of the current non-funded session rate.
- A deposit of £100 is payable by parents claiming Universal or Extended funding in order to secure their child's place. If our required notice period of half a term to leave is given, this deposit is returned to the parent after the headcount day of the child's last term, provided the completed parental declaration form has been received by the pre-school. The half a term

notice period does not apply when the child is leaving Acacia to start in Reception class at school the following term.

- Acacia does not charge any registration or deposit for places allocated to children claiming 2 year funding.

### **Headcount Day**

- If your child joins Acacia after the designated headcount week, your child may not be eligible for funding until the following term. In this case, you will be charged at the non-funded session rate for all sessions your child is registered to attend until the beginning of the next term.
- If your child leaves Acacia after the designated headcount week, there will be no reimbursement of funding claimed for and received for the current term. In this circumstance, you will not be entitled to claim EEF with another childcare provider until the following term.
- Where a child is attending Acacia in the term in which they will start school the funding will be allocated to the school via the school census. Therefore no EEF can be claimed by Acacia and you will be charged for any sessions accessed.

### **Parental Declaration**

- At the beginning of each term, parents or guardians of children attending Acacia under EEF must complete a declaration, provided by ourselves within the given deadline. Parents MUST enter details for EVERY SETTING that their child attends and complete a declaration form for each setting. Funding is dependent on this form being correctly completed and returned to the Pre-school Administrator within the given timescale. If this form is not returned by the given deadline, the parent or guardian will be charged for all sessions their child is registered to attend for that term at the non-funded session rate. These fees will be invoiced and payment due within 10 days of the date of invoice. Failure to pay fees for the term, may result in your child losing their place at Acacia and retention of the deposit payment to cover costs of sessions already attended.

### **Queries and Complaints**

- If you have a query or complaint regarding the delivery of your funded hours, please speak first to the Pre-school Manager. If your issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, then you can contact the Achieving for Children Early Year's team at [early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk](mailto:early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk)