

LITTLE OAKS NURSERY

Fees, Funding & Chargeable Extras Policy

Policy	Fees, Funding & Chargeable Extras
Legal provider	Little Oaks Education Ltd (company number 16858208)
Applies to	All Little Oaks families
Adopted	23/09/2026
Review date	23/09/2027
Related documents	Admissions & Allocation of Places Policy; Parent Contract / Terms & Conditions; current Sessions, Fees & Funding schedule

Purpose of this policy

This policy explains how Little Oaks charges for private childcare, how government-funded entitlement hours are offered, and how optional chargeable extras are handled. It is intended to make the cost of childcare transparent before a family accepts a place and throughout their time at Little Oaks.

1. Our principles

Little Oaks aims to make fees and funding straightforward and transparent. We will:

- provide government-funded entitlement hours free of charge under national guidance and our local-authority agreement;
- never charge a top-up fee or require private hours as a condition of funded provision;
- show private childcare, meals and other optional extras separately, with reasonable alternatives where a family opts out;
- publish current prices and provide clear invoices showing funded hours, private childcare and optional extras;
- apply funding arrangements consistently and fairly.

2. Little Oaks sessions and private fees

Our standard sessions are shown below. Current rates are the rates planned for opening and will also be published on the Little Oaks website. The website/current fee schedule will take precedence if rates are updated following the notice provisions in our Parent Contract.

Session	Times	Hedgehogs (0-2)	Squirrels (2-3)	Owls (3-5)
Full Day	07:30-18:00	£86.00	£79.00	£79.00
School Day	08:30-16:00	£70.00	£64.00	£64.00
Morning	08:00-13:00	£54.00	£49.00	£49.00
Afternoon	13:00-18:00	£54.00	£49.00	£49.00
Additional hours	Subject to availability	£9.00 per hour	£9.00 per hour	£9.00 per hour
Full-time week	5 Full Days	£405.00	£372.00	£372.00

Private-session fees include normal care, meals and snacks, learning resources and everyday nursery experiences provided during that private session.

A 10% sibling discount is applied to the eldest child while two or more siblings attend Little Oaks at the same time. The discount applies to private childcare fees, not funded hours, meal charges or other extras.

Parents supply their child's nappies, wipes, preferred creams, breast milk or preferred first infant formula and sterilised bottles. There is no separate charge for safely handling parent-supplied milk.

3. Government-funded childcare

Little Oaks intends to offer the government early years entitlements for eligible children, subject to Ofsted registration, our funding agreement with Cheshire West and Chester Council, availability and the family meeting the relevant eligibility requirements.

The national entitlement framework includes:

- the universal entitlement for all eligible 3- and 4-year-olds;
- the working parent entitlement for eligible children from 9 months to compulsory school age; and
- Early Learning for eligible 2-year-olds who meet the relevant criteria.

Eligibility is determined by government or the local authority, not by Little Oaks. Where an eligibility code is required, parents are responsible for applying for the code and reconfirming eligibility within the required timescales.

4. How funded hours can be used at Little Oaks

The statutory entitlements are calculated over at least 38 weeks of the year. Little Oaks is open for 51 weeks. Our standard model is to apply entitlement hours during the applicable funded weeks and charge private fees for childcare used outside those funded weeks. For all-year places, the annual parental contribution is spread evenly across 12 monthly payments.

Important distinction

Spreading a family's annual bill evenly over 12 months does not create additional funded hours. The total funded entitlement remains the number of hours authorised under the government scheme. Any non-funded childcare remains privately chargeable.

Subject to availability, funded hours may be used within our standard sessions. National rules limit a funded session to a maximum of 10 hours in one day. As a Little Oaks Full Day is 10.5 hours, a family using funding for a Full Day can use a maximum of 10 funded hours that day; the remaining 0.5 hour is privately chargeable.

- There is no requirement to purchase extra private hours in order to access a funded place.
- Funded places and attendance patterns are subject to availability and our Admissions & Allocation of Places Policy.
- Funded hours can be split between providers in accordance with local-authority rules.
- Funded entitlement cannot be compressed into fewer than 38 weeks.
- Parents will be told how many funded hours are being applied to each day/week.

5. What government funding covers

Government funding covers the delivery of the funded early education and childcare hours. It is intended to meet the core cost of delivering those hours, including staffing, premises and resources needed to provide the EYFS.

Little Oaks will not charge families, in connection with funded entitlement hours, for:

- a difference between our normal private rate and the funding rate received from the local authority (a top-up fee);
- ordinary learning materials, toys, craft resources or equipment needed to deliver the EYFS;
- business running costs such as staffing, rent, utilities, cleaning or insurance;
- additional support required because a child has SEND as a condition of taking up funded hours; or
- any general, non-itemised sustainability, enrichment or administration charge on top of funded entitlement hours.

6. Chargeable extras during funded hours

Government funding does not have to cover meals, consumables, additional private hours or genuinely optional additional services. Little Oaks may therefore offer these separately. Any such charge connected with funded hours is voluntary and is not a condition of accessing a funded place.

Chargeable extra	Little Oaks charge	What is included	Alternative if parent opts out
Meals & snacks - Full Day	£15 per funded day	Meals and snacks provided during the Full Day	Parent may provide suitable food for the day, agreed in advance and in line with nursery food-safety and allergy procedures.
Meals & snacks - School Day	£10 per funded day	Meals and snacks provided during the School Day	Parent may provide suitable food for the day, agreed in advance and in line with nursery food-safety and allergy procedures.
Meals & snacks - Morning	£10 per funded morning	Meals and snacks appropriate to the Morning session	Parent may provide suitable food for the session, agreed in advance and in line with nursery food-safety and allergy procedures.
Meals & snacks - Afternoon	£7.50 per funded afternoon	Meals and snacks appropriate to the Afternoon session	Parent may provide suitable food for the session, agreed in advance and in line with nursery food-safety and allergy procedures.
Nappies, wipes & preferred creams	No nursery charge	Parents currently supply these items for their child	Not applicable - parents provide their own.
Everyday activities & learning resources	No charge	Normal nursery play, learning resources and everyday experiences	Not applicable - these form part of the funded provision.
Special optional trips / services	Only if separately offered and priced	Any exceptional optional activity will be explained in advance	Child can continue to access their funded provision without purchasing the optional activity; a reasonable alternative will be offered.

The charges above apply where meals and snacks are purchased in connection with funded hours. Meals and snacks are included within fully private sessions. For a 10.5-hour Full Day using 10 funded hours, the parent pays the £15 Full Day food charge plus 0.5 hour of private childcare at the current hourly rate. The £15 charge covers the food for that day; no second food charge is added for the private half-hour.

7. Opting out of chargeable extras

A family will not lose or be refused a funded place because they choose not to purchase an optional extra. Where a parent does not wish to purchase meals or another optional item connected with funded hours, they should speak to the nursery so the alternative arrangement can be agreed before attendance.

- For meals and snacks, the normal alternative will be parent-supplied food that is suitable for the child and complies with Little Oaks food-safety and allergy arrangements.
- Where a family has difficulty meeting an optional charge, they are encouraged to speak confidentially with the Nursery Manager. We will consider reasonable alternatives, including whether a charge can be reduced or waived in appropriate circumstances.
- Children who opt out of paid extras will receive the same quality of funded early education and access to the core EYFS provision as other children.

8. Additional private hours

Families may purchase childcare beyond their funded entitlement where space and staffing allow. Additional private hours are optional and are charged at the current published private rate. Taking additional private hours is never a condition of accessing funded entitlement hours.

Where a standard session contains both funded and private time, the invoice will identify the funded hours and the privately chargeable element separately. For example, a 10.5-hour Full Day can contain no more than 10 funded hours, so at least 0.5 hour is private if the whole day is attended using funding.

Late collection

We do not charge for an isolated, unforeseen late collection where the parent contacts us and collects as soon as reasonably possible.

Late collection is treated as regular when there are three late collections in any rolling eight-week period. We will give written notice and may charge the current one-hour additional rate for the third and each later late collection within that period. The current charge is £9 per late collection. A serious or very late collection may also need to be managed under our safeguarding and non-collection procedures.

9. Invoices and monthly payments

Little Oaks aims to make invoices easy to understand. Where relevant, invoices will separately identify:

- funded entitlement hours at £0 to the parent;
- additional private childcare hours or sessions;
- food / meal charges connected with funded hours;
- any other optional chargeable extras; and
- credits, adjustments or other clearly described items.

For an all-year place, Little Oaks calculates the expected parental contribution for the nursery's 51-week year and spreads it evenly across 12 monthly payments. The amount is recalculated if booked sessions, funding, prices or agreed discounts change. Before monthly billing begins, and whenever the calculation changes, Little Oaks will provide a schedule showing the funded weeks and hours, private childcare, food and other optional charges, the annual parental total and the resulting monthly payment.

Invoices are normally issued on or around the 15th of each month for the following calendar month. Cleared payment must reach Little Oaks by the last calendar day of the month. If that day is not a working day, payment is due on the preceding working day. Families using Tax-Free Childcare or childcare vouchers should allow enough processing time. The first payment must clear before the child's first session.

Each invoice will continue to show funded hours at £0, private childcare and optional charges separately. Any small balancing adjustment caused by a change during the year will be explained on the invoice.

No hidden charges

Any compulsory amount payable by a family will be disclosed clearly before the family commits to the place. Little Oaks will not introduce an unavoidable fee later in the booking journey without making the total price and basis of the charge clear.

10. Eligibility codes, declarations and changes

- Parents must provide any eligibility code, child details and evidence requested by the local authority so Little Oaks can validate and claim the entitlement.
- Parents may be asked to complete or renew a local-authority parental declaration confirming the hours claimed at Little Oaks and any hours used with another provider.
- Parents using the working parent entitlement are responsible for reconfirming eligibility as required by HMRC.
- If eligibility changes, the nursery will apply any grace period or local-authority rules that apply and will explain any resulting change to the family's fees.
- Little Oaks cannot guarantee that a particular funded pattern will remain available if a family requests a later change of days or sessions; changes are subject to capacity.

11. Absence, holidays and closures

Normal private fees remain payable when a child is absent because of illness, an appointment or another personal reason, because the place and staffing remain available.

Each family may take up to two normal contracted weeks of holiday in each calendar year at a 50% private-fee retainer, provided at least two calendar months' written notice is given. No meal or other optional charge is made for those notified days. The allowance is pro-rated for a child who attends for only part of the year, cannot be carried forward and does not reduce or replace funded entitlement hours. Additional holiday is charged at the normal private fee.

Little Oaks is open for 51 weeks and closes for one week at Christmas. The Christmas closure week is excluded from the annual fee calculation. Statutory bank holidays that fall on a child's normal booked day are included in the 51-week annual calculation and do not receive a separate credit.

Routine staff training will be organised while the nursery remains open, using staggered training and suitable cover so that statutory ratios and safe care are maintained. There is no planned training-day closure built into the fees. If an exceptional planned training closure is necessary, affected private childcare and optional charges will be credited.

If Little Oaks closes unexpectedly and cannot provide childcare, the affected private childcare and optional charges will be credited or refunded. Any government-funded hours will be managed in line with local-authority rules. We will not charge for a service we are unable to provide.

Where the nursery cannot lawfully claim entitlement funding for a period, any private childcare requested for that period will be charged under the applicable private fee arrangements. Little Oaks will not represent unfunded childcare as a funded entitlement.

12. Place acceptance deposit

For offers accepted on or before 4 January 2027, there is no place-acceptance charge. For offers accepted from 5 January 2027, a £100 place-acceptance deposit applies where the place includes private childcare. It is credited in full to the first private invoice. No deposit is required for a place made up only of funded entitlement hours.

If Little Oaks cannot provide the agreed place, the deposit will be returned in full. If a family cancels after accepting but before the start date, Little Oaks may retain only the amount needed to cover reasonable losses caused by the cancellation, after taking reasonable steps to fill the place; any balance will be refunded.

13. SEND, inclusion and funded places

Children with SEND will not be required to pay additional support costs as a condition of accessing their funded entitlement. Little Oaks will work with families and the local authority to identify available support, including relevant inclusion funding or the Disability Access Fund where applicable. See our SEND & Inclusion Policy.

14. Fee reviews and notice of changes

Private fees and optional charges may be reviewed from time to time. Where Little Oaks changes a fee or charge, parents will receive the notice required by the Parent Contract and the updated prices will be published on the website. Changes to government funding rules or local-authority requirements may also require this policy to be updated.

15. Questions, concerns and complaints

Parents are encouraged to contact Little Oaks if they do not understand how their invoice or funded entitlement has been calculated. We will provide a breakdown and correct any error promptly.

If a parent believes their funded entitlement has not been provided free of charge, or that an optional charge has incorrectly been made compulsory, they may use the Little Oaks Complaints Policy and may also contact Cheshire West and Chester Council regarding delivery of the early years entitlement.

16. Legal and guidance basis

This policy has been developed with reference to current national guidance and local practice, including:

- Department for Education, Early education and childcare: statutory guidance for local authorities (valid from 1 April 2026), particularly the charging and transparency provisions;
- Department for Education Chargeable Extras template for early years entitlement providers;
- Competition and Markets Authority, Price transparency guidance (CMA209, 2025/26);
- Cheshire West and Chester early years funding requirements/provider arrangements, as applicable; and
- published chargeable-extras and funding approaches used by local Cheshire nurseries, reviewed as market-practice examples rather than as legal authority.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
23/09/2026		23/09/2027