



## **Admissions and Funding/Fees Policy**

### **Introduction and Statement of Intent**

The Forest Approach Outdoor Preschool will be the first fully outdoor nursery in the Hart district. It will focus on learning outside and nurturing a love for nature. We will have a lodge, a yurt, and a hut to provide shelter from the changing weather. We are committed to sustainability by using eco-friendly toilets, earning the Plastic Free Hart award, and planting trees to enhance our environment and protect ecosystems.

#### **\*\* Our Intent\*\***

We aim to make our preschool and home education club accessible to children and families from all areas of the local community. Our focus is on providing high-quality early years education that is inclusive, equitable, and suitable for all.

#### **Definitions**

Funded hours package - a service providing funded hours during specific times within sessions that follow a fixed weekly schedule.

Consumables & Sundries - items and services not covered by the government funding, such as specialist activities or events as listed below and additional materials

#### **Admissions**

Admissions within The Forest Approach (TFA) aim to ensure that children's entry is fair, equitable, and responsive to each child's individual needs and preferences, as well as those of their parents or caregivers. They follow guidance from the Equality Act 2010.

- As an organisation, no child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs, language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender, or ability.
- Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Priority will be given to siblings of children already attending
- Before a child attends TFA, the parents or carers must complete and sign a registration form. The registration form can be adapted to accommodate language barriers, disabilities or learning difficulties. The registration form provides TFA with the following vital information.
- To ensure our preschool can meet the needs of the child, we kindly request that you accompany them on a visit before enrollment.
- A two-hour settling-in session is required before a child starts, to allow us to get to know your child and understand their needs.
- Please be honest and give full details of your child's requirements. This will allow us to meet your child's needs from the start date. Parents/carers will also be asked to provide the TFA with any further information they believe will enable us to provide the best care for their

child and build a strong relationship. Our Open Door and Equal Opportunities Policy is also available.

- Siblings' priority is given where the child already attends.
- The Enrichment Package is a voluntary contribution for each day a child attends. This also includes a morning session from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., extending to the whole day

### Supporting Children with Additional Needs

- Reasonable adjustments will be made for children with additional needs.
- To better support children with additional needs, an enhanced staff-to-child ratio is often beneficial, and this may depend on available funding. If funding is limited, we encourage parents to explore options, such as contributing to additional staffing, or we can discuss adjusting hours to ensure each child receives the care and attention they require.

### Enrollment process

Parents must secure a place by completing our registration form and reviewing the terms and conditions.

- At present, we do not have an administration fee or a deposit system: this could be added.
- Any child who enrolls for the government-funded place will not need to pay for additional services. ( session timing applies; details below in basic funded package)
- The Nursery owner will confirm availability and confirm a start date.
- We maintain a waiting list in case no space is available.
- The Forest Approach will publish its fees, making them available upon inquiry and at the time of enrollment. They will all be available on the SEND Local Offer. For more details, please consult the Nursery Manager directly.

### Funding Structure

We provide government-funded places for children from 2 years old to school-aged children. Every child must have access to quality early education,

- We provide 570 hours of funding during the academic year to support your growth. We encourage you to make the most of these hours over the 38-week term. If you qualify for 30 hours, you may also be eligible to add Extended Funded hours to your entitlement.
- Parents must provide an eligibility code to access funding beyond the universal offer. Parents are required to check and revalidate eligibility codes. This code must be renewed every 3 months via the Gov.uk website to ensure continued compliance.
- Funding is available for eligible children starting the term following their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday

### \*\*Basic Funded Package\*\*

- One session is offered every day from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
- Parents are entitled to access up to 15 hours per week (a total of 570 hours per year) for additional childcare. Any hours beyond this allocation will need to be paid for.
- Fully funded hours with no mandatory changes. You can opt in to voluntary contributions to cover the costs of consumables, sundries, and additional activities.
- The total funding amount is limited per child. You cannot claim more than this.

**\*\*Enrichment Package\*\***

Choose your days- flexible package ( we recommend your children use their full entitlement to get the best learning experience)

Our enrichment package enhances your child's development through:

- Daily Forest School sessions with trained leaders
- Physical activities with a qualified PE teacher
- Mindfulness and yoga
- Gardening and sustainability projects
- Cooking and outdoor adventures
- Daily snacks and all self-care consumables - Priority to Holiday camps and Home Education
- Free Registration and Admin fee
- Visiting workshops

  

- The total funding amount is limited per child. You cannot claim more than this.

**2 years old Disadvantaged Funding**

- Places are available for eligible families based on Department for Education (DfE) criteria.
- An eligibility code will be provided to the setting before a place can be given. Places are available until the term after the child's third birthday, subject to availability.

**Absences**

- Funding will be claimed according to the specific guidelines established by the local authorities.
- We will track children's absences. You will receive a call if your child does not attend their scheduled session. Any Funding that must be returned to the authority must be covered by the parent or guardian.

**Sessions and Booking Structure**

- To support children's development, we require a minimum of 6 hours per week. (taken in one day.)
- Home-educated siblings are welcome to attend one or two sessions, as they will continue in our home education program after their fifth birthday. Please note that the timing for preschool differs from our home education workshops; therefore, it is essential to follow the designated drop-off and pick-up times. I appreciate your cooperation.

**Additional Charges**

Early years funding is provided solely to cover childcare costs. It does not include meals, snacks, consumables, our enrichment package, or any additional hours beyond the funded entitlement. The Local Authority (LA) outlines the rules we must follow in an Early Years setting. We need to be transparent about our additional and consumable charges. Your voluntary contributions are crucial to maintaining our ethos and delivering high-quality learning opportunities. Without this support, it would be challenging to keep the business's viability.

Parents can opt for these charges on a termly basis, and they will remain in effect for the entire term. If your financial situation changes during the term, please speak to the preschool manager. We recognise that this charge may be difficult for some families. In some instances, we may be able to reduce the cost. These decisions are made at the preschool's discretion. Alternative

hours may be offered; we will consider individual circumstances, such as eligibility for two-year funding, receipt of the Early Years Pupil Premium, and receipt of means-tested benefits.

We genuinely believe in the importance of inclusivity and are dedicated to ensuring that every child has the opportunity to participate in activities and enjoy shared experiences. We want all children to feel welcome and valued, and we will do everything we can to support their involvement.

Parents will receive a comprehensive enrichment statement at the beginning of each term, outlining the benefits and activities included with their voluntary contribution. This will detail separate funded and chargeable hours.

Consumable charges will not be included in the funding forms to maintain the confidentiality of the managers' relationships with families. This decision is rooted in the understanding that these matters are part of a private agreement between parents or guardians and the setting.

### **Meal arrangements**

We will continue to follow our healthy eating policy, which encourages a balanced, nutritious diet and promotes a positive attitude toward healthy eating. We will offer some self-serve snacks that meet children's nutritional needs, including catering to individual requirements such as special diets and cultural preferences. Daily, we will provide fresh fruits and vegetables. Please supply water in their drink bottles.

The TFA will make drinking water available throughout the day. During mealtimes, we encourage children to be independent and make choices. Staff will sit with the children to promote social skills, ensure safety supervision, and serve as positive role models.

Parents are to follow the preschool's guidance on healthy lunches and be aware that it is a nut-free setting.

[Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)

### **School-Aged Children**

Parents are encouraged to apply for school places to ensure that their children can transition with their peers. Requests for delayed school entry for summer-born children (those born between April 1 and August 31) are carefully considered on a case-by-case basis in consultation with preschool. Some children may then decide to pursue home education as an alternative to traditional schooling.

### **Fees Information Policy**

At The Forest Approach, we provide all children with access to basic free funding. However, we offer more than just basic services; our enriching environment ensures that your children receive the best possible start.

The Local Authority (LA) outlines the regulations we must adhere to in an Early Years setting, and we strive to be transparent about any additional and consumable charges that may apply. Your voluntary contributions are essential to maintaining our ethos and delivering high-quality learning opportunities. Without this support, it would be challenging to sustain our business.

As you are aware, our business model encompasses a range of additional services, and we are committed to providing you with clear and accurate information. Here's what your child receives when you enrol at The Forest Approach.

**Our Enrichment Package.** This exceeds the basic package, providing your child with a wealth of enriching shared experiences. This is an all-inclusive package.

**Forest School** (with Level 3 Forest School Leaders) offers both on-site and off-site learning experiences that emphasise a holistic approach to education in nature. Our program aims to develop children's confidence, resilience, and independence while encouraging them to take risks and step outside their comfort zones. We provide an environment that empowers children to believe in themselves and grow their abilities, recognising that each child's development will be unique. Resources available include tools, nails, clay, wood, screws, fire resources, slacklines, and bell tents.

**Snacks** - It's time for a fun and interactive snack session! We will encourage your children to explore fruits and vegetables while enjoying social time with friends. Let's ensure they stay refreshed with plenty of fresh water, too!

**Self-Care-** Biodegradable wipes, nappies and suncream

**Multi-sports** ( 1 qualified P.E. teacher, one sports coach). There are many reasons kids should play sports. Participating in sports helps individuals develop social and teamwork skills, improves their mental health, and enhances their physical fitness. The benefits of playing sports include forming lasting friendships, building confidence, and improving physical strength.

**Yoga** (with two qualified teachers on-site) is a simple yet powerful way to support a child's overall development. The benefits of yoga for young children go beyond physical fitness, as it enhances their focus, confidence, and emotional well-being.

**Mindfulness** (1 qualified teacher on-site) helps children become more aware of their emotions and develop healthy coping mechanisms to manage stress. Additionally, practising mindfulness helps children improve their focus and attention, making it easier to stay engaged in tasks and minimise distractions.

**Outside Cooking** - Ingredients, gas, pizza oven, cooking equipment, camping hob.

**Allotments, gardening, and sustainability:** seeds, bulbs, outside agencies, willow structures, eco-friendly practices, compost toilets, water butts, and biodegradable materials.

**Adventures & Gatherings:** Embark on exhilarating journeys to our local communities, calming forests, and enchanting orchards. Join us in celebrating the rich tapestry of life through lively festivals and unforgettable celebrations!

We deliver our enrichment package daily and weekly, showcasing our commitment to providing essential opportunities for children. Relying solely on funding for children aged 2 to 5 years is not

feasible. Our exciting range of extracurricular activities is designed to enhance the children's experience, and parents actively opt in during the enrollment process.

Our commitment to outdoor learning allows us to teach skills such as Forest Skills and functional skills, including gardening, growing vegetables, and cooking and eating them. If parents prefer that their children not participate in our enrichment package, we offer afternoon sessions where children can utilise their funded hours at no cost. With limited availability, these afternoon sessions are offered from 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Additional hours can be used in another setting, and we can provide shared care.

We've planned these sessions for the afternoon to ensure every child feels included and valued. We want to ensure that no one feels left out, particularly during the enrichment package. To proceed with the voluntary enrichment package fee, we kindly request that you sign and date the new fee policy agreement on your registration form.

**Quality is not merely a target; it's a mindset. Our ethos drives every interaction and decision we make.**

Many nurseries and preschools are increasing their hourly and daily rates. After careful consideration, we have evaluated whether raising our fees is necessary to maintain the high-quality care and education that your children deserve. At this time, we have decided not to implement an increase. We understand that any fee increase may raise concerns, and we want to assure you that we have made every effort to keep these increases to a minimum. As of now, there will be no increase on April 25. We are committed to providing high-quality services and ensuring our staff are well-supported and compensated for their essential work.

We aim to maintain transparency by providing invoices detailing the funding amounts we will claim and your payment for each term, including the corresponding consumable charges.

### Early Years Education Funding (EYE)

Currently, TFA offers 15 hours of funding per week as a term-time option. There are no deposits required for EYE-funded places; however, we may introduce a deposit system to secure places when intake increases. Children are welcome to attend settled-in sessions before starting, and we also offer parent-and-child workshops during school holidays to help children acclimate to the environment. These workshops are charged, and arrangements will be made between parents and management staff.

EYE funding is available for 3-year-olds after their third birthday and for 2-year-olds after their second birthday. It's essential to note that the 570-hour allowance, funded by the government, is calculated from one birthday to the next, rather than from the start of the academic year. Therefore, if there is an early Easter one year followed by a late Easter the next year, it's likely that the 570 hours will be exceeded, and parents or carers will be responsible for covering those extra hours. Additionally, Hampshire County Council (HCC) provides 14 weeks in autumn, 12 weeks in spring, and 12 weeks in summer; this can often lead to a shortfall of hours during the summer term, which parents or carers must cover.

We can accommodate between 20 and 25 children at any given time. Unlike typical preschools, we have the flexibility to adjust the number of children based on the group's dynamics, ensuring that each child's individual needs are met. We can claim 15 hours of universal funding per week, totalling 570 hours per year. The remaining hours may be claimed at another setting. We offer 6 hours of daily care, plus a voluntary contribution (9 am to 3 pm).

Fees & Funding Information Policy

**Non-Funded Fees (£9.50 per hour)**

<b>All-day session</b>
<b>9.00 am to 3.00 pm</b>
<b>£57</b>

At The Forest Approach, we have limited 2-year-old and 2-year-old funded spaces, and children aged 2-3 years have an educator-to-child ratio of at least 1:4. (not 1:5 as the government recommends) We suggest that children attend for two or more days to achieve continuous care.

If you require different hours and want to use your funding hours specifically, speak with Wendy Hamley.

**"Government funding is intended to deliver 15-30 hours a week of free, high-quality, flexible childcare. It is not intended to cover the cost of food, other consumables, additional hours, or additional activities. Parents can therefore expect to pay for any food offered by the provider, and parents can expect to pay for other consumables or activities" ~ The Department for Education (DfE).**

**What funding is available to me? 15 hours Universal entitlement:**

All three- and four-year-old children can access 570 hours of government-funded entitlement from the term after their third birthday. This funding can be applied across the school terms (38 weeks per year)

**We can provide additional hours at The Forest Approach.**

- Working parents of 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds can access an additional 15 hours of funded childcare, provided they meet specific eligibility criteria. The program offers 15 hours of universal funding. If parents wish to claim 30 hours, they can obtain them from additional settings or receive 15 hours through The Forest Approach at an extra cost.
- Sessional days: 15 hours per week for sessional days over 38 weeks. Some days at the start or end of each term may not be covered by funding. You can pay for these sessions if you wish for your child to attend. We may not want to claim the maximum entitlement for your child, depending on your child's hours of work.
- We offer a maximum of **6 hours** of Government funding per day as part of full days or sessional days. We charge for additional hours beyond the funded hours. These additional fees are for our enrichment package.
- As a childcare provider, we always strive to provide parents with the best childcare at affordable rates.

**This is how it works for Funded Children.**

The entitlement to free Early Years Education (EYE) starts in the funding period, which follows your child's third birthday.

**Children who turn three years old on or between:**

- 1 April and 31 August are eligible for the autumn term starting in September.
- 1 September and 31 December are eligible for the spring term starting in January.
- 1 January and 31 March are eligible for the summer term starting in April.

**Policy and Provision** - We are registered at the Service for Young Children at Hampshire County Council (HCC)

**How do the funding hours affect my fees?**

Your 15-hour Universal entitlement will be provided free of charge at the time of delivery, according to our policy. However, the Forest Approach charges for any additional hours beyond the Government-funded entitlement (please refer to our Funding Policy for information on the total number of hours provided). The voluntary consumable fees are listed above.

Some days at the start or end of each term may be covered by something other than funding. If you wish for your child to attend these sessions, you may pay a fee. Depending on your child's hours, we may not want to claim the maximum entitlement.

The tables below outline our charges for additional hours beyond the Universal 15-hour entitlement for sessional care.

Sessional Daycare from 9:00 am-3:00 pm- up to 15 hours per week over 38/39 weeks per year, 570 per year.

**2- 5-year-old with Funding (15 hours)**

Attendance (days per week)	Funded hours per week	Total hours per week	Number weeks year	Cost of Fees for a day session per week (nonfunded) 9 am-3 pm	Cost of a day session with Voluntary contribution, including funded hours per week (term to be paid in advance, number of weeks varies term to term)
1	5	6	38	£57	£20
2	10	12	38	£114	£40
3	15	18	38	£171	£88.50 with 15 hours of funding plus additional fees
4	0	24	38	£228	£146 with 15 hours of funding plus additional fees
5	0	30	38	£285	PLEASE ASK

**Policy / Late Charges**

- Fees are charged on a termly basis, with payment required in advance on the first of each month. You will receive your invoice two weeks before the due date. If payment is not received by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, a final invoice will be issued within 7 days. If your

**payment is not received, late payment charges are applied. We recommend checking your junk folders to avoid missing important communications. Parents who consistently make late monthly payments will lose the option to pay monthly.**

- We will charge 6% interest on any late payment of fees. Additionally, we reserve the right to impose a £ 10.00 late payment fee on overdue invoices, as the administration involved in managing late payments is time-consuming and costly. If accounts remain overdue, a reminder notice will be issued. Outstanding invoices will be referred to a debt recovery agency if payment is not received promptly.
- If you are experiencing difficulty paying your fees, please speak with Wendy Hamley, and we will do our best to support you.
- No fees are charged during school holidays; no discounts are given for holidays taken during term time or for sickness. We review our fee structure annually.
- If a parent/carer wishes to change or end their contracted hours, TFA requires a term's notice period, provided in writing. TFA will invoice this notice period regardless of attendance. Parents/Carers may opt to pay an invoice by:
  - Tax-Free Childcare account
  - Childcare Vouchers
  - Direct debit via Tide bank 04-06-05 account 19435036

### **Late Collection Fees**

- If you are late collecting your child, an initial late fee will be charged at a rate of £1 per minute following a 5-minute grace period for a maximum of 10 minutes. After this period, the charge is £10 per additional 5-minute block. You will be asked to sign the register, and the total charges will be added to your invoice.

### **Persistent Late collection**

Repeated late collections will result in the following actions:

1. A formal warning.
2. A meeting with management to review ongoing arrangements.

In persistent cases, this may lead to termination of the child's place.

### **Can my child attend another setting? Can I claim free entitlement in both settings?**

Yes, for the extended 15-hour entitlement, as long as the combined total does not exceed the hours set out in our policy. You must complete a Parental Contract form for each provider and declare the hours you claim at each setting.

If you have any further questions or would like a parent funding form, please contact The Forest Approach at [theforestapproach@hotmail.com](mailto:theforestapproach@hotmail.com).

Early Years Funding information can be found on the Hampshire funding website:

[Eligibility for 30 hours of childcare | Best Start in Life](#)

### **Notice Period**

The Forest Approach mandates a minimum of 4 weeks' notice for contract termination. By signing the fees policy, you acknowledge and agree to this requirement.

All session fees are correct until April 2026