

Introduction

This policy sets out

- the way in which Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup decides its fee structure and levels
- the procedure for invoicing and payment of fees
- the procedure for non-payment of fees
- further information regarding entitlements and funded places

Fee structure

Our 2023-24 rates are:

For children aged two to three years (up to the term following their third birthday): £6.00 per hour

For children aged three years upwards (from the term following their third birthday): £7.00 per hour

For families in receipt of the free early years funding this charge only applies to any hours over their entitlement.

Paying for settling-in sessions

Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup is committed to providing high quality care to every child. To sustain this high quality of care we charge for all sessions attended even if the child is accompanied by a parent/carer. While we do not offer a free settling in session, we invite prospective families to visit the setting and to attend our Mud kitchen sessions. These weekly sessions (Friday 10.00 to 11.30) will provide an opportunity for you and your child to become familiar with the setting.

Free childcare entitlements

All families are entitled to up to 570 hours per year of free early year's education from the term following their child's third birthday: this equates to 15 hours per week during term time. (Please consult the Headcount and payments timetable in our information folder if you wish to check when you will receive the free entitlement).

Subject to meeting certain eligibility criteria some families will be able to apply for a further 15 hours per week. More information about the 30 hours free childcare, tax-free childcare, tax credits for child care, universal credits and childcare vouchers can be found on the Childcare Choices website:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

In addition to this, children who meet certain eligibility criteria are entitled to 15 hours per week of free early year's education from the term after their second birthday. To carry out an eligibility check, please phone Derbyshire County Council on 01629 539319.

Invoicing arrangements

Invoices will be issued by the Treasurer (email geptreasury@gmail.com) in the first half term. Invoices are sent to the email address(es) provided on the child's registration form.

Payment(s) should be made by the due date(s) indicated on the invoice. If payment is not received by the due date a late payment charge of 10% of the original invoice amount will be added for every month payment is outstanding.

We support families wishing to start mid-term, the start date provided at time of application will be used for invoice purposes. An invoice will be sent out the week the child starts.

Payment of fees

This should be arranged with the Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup's Treasurer. The pre-school accepts both Tax Free Childcare and Employer Supported Childcare payment; the parent/carer should inform the Treasurer if using this payment method as processing times can be lengthy.

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All cheques should be made payable to Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup. We also accept cash payments when these are made in person to the Supervisor or Treasurer.

Absence

Fees are still payable should a child be absent, for example because of illness or family holiday.

If a child is absent for more than a three week period (due to a hospital stay etc.) the parent/carer will need to speak to the Supervisor prior to their child's absence whereupon a discounted fee arrangement may be made.

Fees will not be payable if a child is absent because the child or the family are self-isolating, a refund will be made for this period.

This will be the case if the self-isolation is because someone in the family has symptoms of coronavirus; or because a member of the support bubble has symptoms of coronavirus or because you have been asked to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace as a result of close contact with an individual who has tested positive. A refund will not be made if the isolation follows travel to a country considered a high coronavirus risk area.

Where a child attending Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup under the free childcare entitlement is repeatedly absent or late, without due notice (see below) we are obliged to inform Derbyshire County Council who may claim back funding for the period of absence from Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup. In this instance the pre-school needs to cover the costs of staffing and other expenditure already committed based on expected children numbers. Therefore, the child's parent/carer would become liable for paying the fees, and an invoice would be sent by the pre-school to the parent/carer, to be paid as per this policy.

Pre-school closure

When the closure is the result of an emergency or unexpected event then fees will not be refunded.

Alternative sessions will be offered at the discretion of the Supervisor.

If the closure is the result of a planned event such as the current national lockdowns put in place by the government, fees will not be due and any payments made will be refunded.

If Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup is open, our fees will remain due for all sessions, even if children are unable to attend.

If the pre-school remains closed for an extended period of time, a decision regarding fees would be made on a case-by-case basis by the Committee.

Any refunds will be deducted from the next invoice to be sent out following the closure, unless no further invoices are to be sent in which case a direct refund will be made.

Non-payment of fees

Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup values its relationships with families and will be sympathetic towards any difficulty in paying their child's fees. However, we have to be financially sustainable, and would be unable to function effectively without these payments.

We aim to help a parent/carer to pay all fees due to us by offering an agreed flexible payment system, proactively following up payments and following a fair procedure. As part of this procedure, we operate the following non-payment of fees policy:

- If payments are 2 weeks late: - a reminder invoice will be issued.
- If payments are 3 weeks late: - a further reminder will be issued accompanied by a letter and a copy of this policy. The letter will include details of our late payment charge of 10% of the original invoice for every month payment is overdue.

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- If payments are more than 4 weeks late: - A final warning will be issued giving the parent/carer 14 days to pay the full amount due. We reserve the right to suspend a child's place until payment is made.
- If the full payment is not received after this time scale then procedures will begin at the Small Claims Court and the child will lose their place at pre-school.
- Where a child is leaving Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup, any amount which is not paid before the child has left the pre-school will be recovered through the Small Claims Court.

Should a parent/carer have problems paying their child's fees on time they should speak in confidence to the Supervisor or treasurer.

Notice period for changes in hours of attendance

A Notification of change form should be completed each time a child's hours are altered. This form is available on our website or from pre-school.

Reductions in hours of attendance, including a child leaving Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup

At least four weeks notice is required; otherwise four weeks fees in lieu of notice will be due.

Increases in hours of attendance for all children

Where there is a place available, this can take place with immediate effect and the extra hours will be invoiced accordingly.

Changes in hours of attendance for funded children

A contract amendment form must be completed for each change of hours. Children that leave part way through a week will be funded up to the end of the week and starters will be added from the start of the following week.

Where a child is leaving Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup, the fees for the notice period will be invoiced and be payable prior to the child leaving pre-school.

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup.

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory: