



Top up Nursery Hours policy

Statement of intent

Livingstone Nursery aims to provide a nursery experience for children that is affordable, high quality and geared towards a smooth transition into primary school. The Governing Body is the Admission Authority and is responsible for setting the school/setting's Admission Policy. The policy is written to ensure fairness and equality for all those intending to begin their education at Livingstone Primary and Nursery School. This policy follows non-statutory guidance, and the current School Admissions Code does not apply for nurseries and early years settings. This policy will be reviewed annually.

Entitlement to Nursery Education Places

From September 2012 each child is entitled to 15 hours free early years education per week from the term following their third birthday. At Livingstone, this 15-hour provision runs from 9am –12pm Monday – Friday, term time only.

From September 2017, parents who work a minimum of 16 hours per week may be entitled to an extra 15 hours of free early years education per week. This is on production of an eligibility code. This code and NI number must be brought to the school office for us to check through an online portal. This must be done before start of the term in which the parents start to claim the extra 15 hours. Eligibility then must be confirmed on a termly basis by the parent. Should eligibility change, there will be a grace period in which the parent will still be able to claim the extra 15 hours of childcare.

For several years, Livingstone Nursery has offered additional paid places in the afternoons for those children who are entitled to the universal 15 hours. Children attending on a top up place will have access to the same provision as those on 30-hour places.

Top up Provision Availability

We have 26 places in our Nursery. There are places available for any parent who wishes to top up the 15 hours allocation on a regular basis or on an occasional basis.

Allocation of Top up Spaces

The allocation of Nursery places is subject to Livingstone Primary School's own admissions criteria. When we first offer a place, we write to parents to find out if they wish to take up a 15 hour place, a 15 hour place with top up hours or a 30 hour place. Parents of children requesting top up spaces will then be asked to identify on which days they wish to take additional provision.

Parents should be aware that a place in Nursery does not guarantee a place in Reception.

Nursery children in the younger cohort

Sometimes, when the nursery has spaces we will admit children into an N1 cohort in the term after the one in which they have turned 3. They will also be eligible to accept a 15 hour place, a 15 hour place with top up hours or a 30 hour place.

Additional Charges

Where children stay for the afternoon provision parents will have the choice as to whether to pay for a school lunch (£3.25) or whether to provide a packed lunch for their child.

Top up Fees

One afternoon costs £13 and a full week of sessions costs £65.

Payment information

- Payments should be made in advance.
- Payment should be made via bank transfer for the nursery sessions and online via School Spider for the school lunches.
- Childcare vouchers can be used too.

Difficulty with payments

Livingstone Primary School will work with parents to ensure all avenues for assistance with payments are explored. Parents may face financial difficulties and, understandably, would like to ensure as little disruption to their child's care and education as possible. Parents and carers experiencing such difficulties should contact the office as early as possible, to reach a suitable arrangement for both parties.

Debt collection

- The Governing Body has a duty to ensure the school receives all the funds to which it is entitled including top up nursery fees.
- A full record will be kept of debts owed to the school for 7 years. This will include all letters requesting money, reminders and invoices.
- The school will not initiate legal action to recover debts. However, we will refer uncollected debts to the local authority to consider such action.

Roles and responsibilities regarding debt collection

The Headteacher and School Business Manager will ensure that:

- Letters requesting money are accurately recorded and those records maintained.
- Evidence of the steps taken by the school in pursuance of debt is recorded including dates and times of both letters, phone calls and text messages.
- A final reminder is sent by recorded delivery to the debtor.
- The privacy of the family involved will be respected and only made known to those who need to know.
- The level of outstanding debt can be determined at any time.

The Governing Body:

- Will prescribe and regularly review the arrangements for debt recovery.
- Will record all approved action in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Will adhere to the privacy arrangements.
- May delegate its responsibilities under this policy to Mrs Hanson (School Business Manager).

The process for pursuing debts

Informal reminder – Within 2 days of late payment, the debtor will be informally reminded in person or by telephone or text message that they owe money to the school.

First reminder letter – If the debt is yet to be paid one week after an informal reminder, a formal letter will be sent to the debtor.

Second reminder letter - If the debt is yet to be paid one week after a first formal reminder, a second formal letter will be sent to the debtor. These letters allow the debtor every opportunity to settle their debt and ensure the school can prove all reasonable steps have been taken to recover the debt should the issue proceed further.

Final reminder letter - If no response is received following the second reminder, the school will send a letter to the debtor advising them that they will be referring the matter to the local authority to consider legal action. This letter will be sent by recorded delivery to ensure the debtor has had every chance to respond.

Possible legal action – If no payment is made the local authority will decide whether to take legal action against the debtor.

The waiving of debts

The waiving of debts is at the discretion of the Headteacher and the Governing Body. A debt may be waived when it is believed the debtor is experiencing serious financial hardship or if all reasonable avenues to recover the debt have been exhausted and it is believed it would not be cost effective to pursue the debt through legal action.

- The Headteacher is authorised to waive debts off up to £100.
- Debts between £100 and £500 will only be waived with the approval of the Governing Body.
- Debts of £500 or more will never be waived.

Changing hours

Parents are able to change the hours they have as long as they keep us informed. We invoice on either a weekly or a monthly basis depending on how many afternoons a child stays at school for each week.

Parents might also become eligible for a 30 hour place in which case a code should be provided and checked and then this place will start at the beginning of the next term. We cannot start 30 hour places at other times due to national funding structures.