

FUNDING & FEES POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Ash & Claire Childminding, we understand that the cost of registered childcare may seem expensive to parents. However, delivering high-quality, safe and stimulating care requires time, training, equipment, and resources. We are committed to a fair, transparent approach to fees and funding in line with Hampshire County Council (HCC) guidance, the Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance, and the Department for Education (DfE).

We value the relationship with parents/carers and will be sympathetic towards any difficulty in paying their child's fees. However, we are unable to function effectively without these payments. If fees are not paid we are within our rights to immediately terminate the contract (this is stated in our Terms and Conditions document) and take legal actions to recover unpaid fees. Legal action might affect your credit rating in the future.

RETAINER

A retainer may be charged if a childcare place is immediately available but the child's parent does not want to take the place until sometime in the future. This fee holds the space open and is

refundable only if the place is not available when needed.

SETTLING IN SESSIONS

We offer 3 x 1 hour free settling-in sessions to see how the child settles.

These sessions are an important part of a child's transition into our care.

If parents would like to book further short settling-in sessions, they will be charged at our normal hourly rate and should be paid.

A Child must attend at least 1 settling-in session, and more if we feel that they are not settled with us yet.

- We offer 2-4 weeks settling-in period. This allows us to find out more about the child and their family
- We reserve the right to ask parents to bring their child for further settling in sessions if the child does not seem to be settling in well.
- During this period the contract can be immediately terminated by parents or childminder without prejudice.
- We reserve the right to extend the settling-in period if this is felt to be in the best interests of the child or family.

FUNDED SESSIONS

We are registered with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to offer the following funded childcare:

- 15 hours universal funding for all 3- and 4-year-olds
- 30 hours extended funding for eligible working families of 3- and 4-year-olds
- 15 hours for eligible 2-year-olds

Changes from September 2025:

From September 2025, eligible working families can access:

- 15 hours for children aged 9 months and up
- 30 hours for eligible children from 9 months, during term time (or as a stretched offer)

To check eligibility and apply, visit www.childcarechoices.gov.uk. We will continue to offer the stretched option where requested and follow HCC's terms and conditions.

Parents will be required to sign a funding agreement each term, confirming:

- Funded hours allocated to their child
- Any additional charges (e.g. for meals, consumables, trips)

ADDITIONAL CHARGES FOR FUNDED HOURS

We do not charge for the funded hours. However, charges may be made for:

- Meals and snacks
- Entry to special outings (e.g. farms, museums)
- Activity-specific materials

These costs will be shared in advance, clearly itemised in invoices and funding declarations.

Invoices will clearly separate the government-funded entitlement hours from any additional private paid hours to fully comply with the new transparency rules.

ADDITIONAL CHARGES

- Late Collection: £2.50 per 10 minutes
- Overnight Care: Normal charge till 8pm, £7.00 after
- Additional Days: If available normal charge

INVOICES & PAYMENT METHODS

Invoices are sent out to parents through BabyDays on the 30th of each month.

THE INVOICES MUST BE PAID WITHIN 7 DAYS OF 30TH OF EACH MONTH.

Previous invoices can be found on Babydays by logging in.

Payments Options

- We accept: Bank Transfer, Childcare Vouchers, Tax-Free Childcare
- Voucher overpayments cannot be refunded – future payments must be adjusted
- Parents are responsible for full payment, even if funding/vouchers are delayed

Child / family illness	50% discount
Early arrival / late collection £ 2.50 per 10 mins	£2.50 per 10 minutes
Overnight care if offered	Usual Rate till 8pm, £7 thereafter
Booked overtime	Usual Rate
Non-booked overtime	Usual Rate
Holding fee if child attends another setting	£50

FEES

Usual Rate: £6.50

Normal Hourly Fee	Usual Rate
Provider Holiday	£0.00
Provider Illness	50% discount
Provider Occasional Day Off	£0.00
Parent Occasional Day off	Usual Rate
Unsociable hours before: 7 am / after:7 pm	£7.00
Before school only	Usual Rate
After school only	Usual Rate
Voluntary payment for enforced closure	Half Usual Rate
Bank Holidays if worked	Usual Rate
Child / family holiday	Usual Rate

WHAT DO OUR FEES COVER?

The fee you pay covers a multitude of different costs, some more obvious than others. Here is a list of just a few:

- Personal care and supervision of your child
- Toys, educational and craft materials
- Some activities and outings
- Childcare and safety equipment
- Pick-up/drop-off for school or nursery
- Digital systems like BabyDays
- First aid supplies, safeguarding, and insurance

CALCULATING FEES

Fees are calculated on the hours that the child attends according to the contracted hours.

Absences of children for their own illness or holidays is also calculated off their own contracted hours.

If a child is early dropping off, or late picking up this is added to the hours.

Overnight care is calculated on the hours each child is awake or asleep.

If you are receiving funding for your child then this will be recorded as free on your invoice; but you will still need to pay for the remaining hours in addition to the funded hours.

EXTRA EXPENSES

Outings

Petrol and travel are included in our standard rate. If an entry fee is required (e.g. zoo, farm), we will discuss it with parents in advance.

Pick-up / Drop-off:

- Included for agreed school sessions
- Home collection available depending on location – fees based on distance and time

LATE PAYMENT/ NON-PAYMENT OF FEES PROCEDURE

Late payment of fees is taken extremely seriously and represents a breach of the responsibilities under the contract. Late

payment charge of £5.00 per day will be applied.

1. After one weeks of non-payment, we will suspend the childcare place, and children will not be allowed to come into our setting until the fees are paid in full. Fees will still be applicable during the two weeks our setting suspends the place.
2. If the fees are not paid in full after four weeks, we will terminate the contract and send a letter to confirm this.
3. We reserve the right to seek legal advice. All costs incurred in the collection of unpaid fees including administration costs and costs from using solicitors or debt collection agencies where needed will be recoverable in full.

CONTRACT TERMINATION

- All fees must be paid in full before the contract is terminated.
- Contract termination must be in writing giving at least 4 weeks notice.
- The termination period does not include holiday days / weeks. - The termination period is chargeable at the normal rate.
- If there are any outstanding payments, parents will be acting in breach of contract. In such an instance we reserve the right to seek legal advice.

- If any of the Terms and Conditions* or contractual agreements are broken the contract may be terminated immediately.

PAYING FEES

Fees are to be paid with 7 days of the invoice being issued to parents by email.

WE UNDERSTAND THAT FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES HAPPEN. PLEASE SPEAK TO US AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN TRY TO WORK WITH YOU. HOWEVER, FAILURE TO PAY WILL RESULT IN CONTRACT TERMINATION.

FEE REVIEW

Fees are reviewed regularly to reflect increases in the cost of living, national minimum wage, and inflation. While we aim to keep fees affordable, changes may be implemented more than once a year when necessary.

UPDATED: MAY 2026

REVIEW: MAY 2027