



9.0 Childcare & Early Years Practices – September 23

9.1e Schedule of Fees and Action to Recover Monies Owed

Aim

We aim to ensure that all sections of the community have access to Caterpillars through open, fair and clearly communicated policies and procedures, including our fee structures. However, as a registered charity, in order to keep our fee structure low, and ensure the financial stability of Caterpillars Pre-School we will implement a fair and a consistent process for pursuing non-payment of fees.

Methodology

In order to achieve this aim Caterpillars Pre-School will:

- At induction fully inform parents/carers of the fee and payment structure of the Caterpillars Pre-School.
- Issue invoices to parents electronically via email when fees are due. The invoice will give details of the sessions being paid for and the rate being charged. It will also include payment details and give a 3-week window in which to make the payment.
- Hardcopy invoices to be provided to parents request who do not have email access.

Fee Structure & Invoicing

- Our fees are reviewed a minimum of every April as are the Government funded rates and maybe reviewed during the year if funding rates are revised or other financial pressures demand it.
- The current fee rates for non-funded hours from September 2023 are ;

Children over 3 years - £6.50 per hour

Children under 3 years - £7.81 per hour
- The under 3 rate will be charged up to the end of the term after a child's 3rd birthday
- Universal funded places (up to 15 hours a week) can be claimed from the term after a child's 3rd birthday.
- Any hours/sessions attended that are not covered by government funding will be charged in line with the rates outlined above.

- In addition to any fees payable, a charge towards the snack and other food-based activities will also be charged for every morning sessions a child attends. From September 23 this is £1 per day.
- Invoices for non-funded places/hours will be issued electronically every half term and are payable within 21 days of the date of issue.
- 4 weeks' notice (term weeks) is required if your child no longer require a place Caterpillars (this includes new starters) or you wish to reduce the number of sessions your child attends. If less than 4 weeks term time notice is given, fees will remain payable for the duration of the notice period.
- In order to retain your child's place at Caterpillars, absences due to holidays, sickness or personal choice, remain chargeable.
- If you are late collecting your child for any reason, in line with our terms and conditions we reserve the right to apply the following fees to cover the additional costs Caterpillars will incur whilst staff wait with your child;
 - £20 fee for the first 15 minutes
 - An additional £10 for every fifteen minutes thereafter.
- In the exceptional circumstances that Caterpillars is forced to close one or both of its settings e.g. due to extreme weather, staff sickness, outbreak of a contagious illness or forced to close by a 3rd party, all fees remain payable for the first 3 working days. If the closure lasts longer than 3 working days, adjustments will be made against future invoices.

Recovery of Monies - Statement of Intent

It is our policy to pursue all unpaid fees through the County Court for the recovery of monies owed to Caterpillars Pre-School.

System for Failed/Non Payments

If a family has used the services provided by Caterpillars Pre-School without payment or their payment has been dishonoured, Caterpillars Pre-School will follow the staged procedure outlined below:

1. 7 days after the invoice due date, a '1st reminder will automatically be generated by the invoicing system and emailed to the named parent/carer.
2. If payment is still not received within a further 7 days of the 1st reminder (and now 14 days after the payment due date) a 2nd reminder will again be automatically generated by the invoicing system and emailed to the parent/carer.

3. If payment is still not received within a further 7 days of the 2nd reminder (now 21 days after the due date) a 3rd and final reminder will again be automatically generated by the invoicing system and emailed to the parent/carer.
4. During steps 1-3 contact will be made with the parent/carer to ensure that the invoices and reminders are being received and to discuss when they expect to be able to make the payment.
5. If after 28 days beyond the original due date and following the issue of the 3 system generated reminders and contact being made with the parent/carer, payment is still outstanding, an 'Overdue Account' letter asking for immediate payment plus a £10 administration fee will be issued to the parent/carer.

If payment is received within 7 days of the 'Overdue Account' letter, no further action will be taken.

6. If after a further 7 days from the 'Overdue Account' letter payment is still outstanding and/or a payment plan (that has been agreed by the Caterpillars Pre-School Committee) has not been agreed a 'Final Warning' letter will be issued plus a further £10 administration fee. At this stage the child(ren) will be unable to use Caterpillars services until payment in full is received. If full payment following the issue of the 'Final Warning' letter is received or a payment plan is being adhered to, no further action will be taken.
7. If there has been no payment or payment plan put in place within a further 7 days of the 'Final Warning' letter, Caterpillars Pre-School will immediately begin proceedings in the County Court for which we charge an administration fee of £50 and all court costs. If Caterpillars Pre-School are required to attend at County Court, costs will be applied at a rate of £20 an hour.
8. If the amount owing in fees exceeds £250, or a child is due to leave Caterpillars and there are fees still outstanding, the Management Committee reserve the right to suspend a child's place at Caterpillars at any point from step 1 until full payment or a payment plan is agreed.