



## Little Explorers Pre-school

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### Fees and Charges Policy – April 2025

At Little Explorers, our aim has always been to provide high-quality childcare that remains affordable for families while ensuring the long-term sustainability of our preschool. In light of the updated guidance on fees and funding from the Department of Education, the Management Committee has reviewed our approach and established a new billing policy, which will take effect this week.

As early years entitlement expands, the DfE aims to ensure that childcare remains accessible and affordable for families while securing the long-term stability and quality of settings. The government states, “*Government funding is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours, or additional services.*” The change emphasises transparency in fees and funding, requiring that extra costs be clearly outlined on invoices and websites. Additionally, local authorities must now ensure that providers offer reasonable alternatives to parents who wish to access funded entitlements for free. This measure ensures that settings remain mindful of the impact of extra charges on disadvantaged families.

The DfE also notes, “*The Department is not encouraging parents to opt out and is not asking local authorities to encourage parents to opt out, where charges are voluntary. We know many parents prefer to purchase consumables from their providers and will continue to do so.*”

At Little Explorers, we introduced a Consumables Contribution Charge in September 2024. As of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 this contribution charge now has to be voluntary for government funded hours, however, by paying this charge it allows your child to access the following:

- Breakfast bar, morning snack, and afternoon snack
- Consumable items (e.g., soap, paper towels, gloves for nappy changing, intimate cleaning supplies, spare clothing, nappy sacks for nappies and soiled/wet clothing, wet wipes, spare nappies/pull ups)
- “Enhanced activities” that go beyond the basic EYFS requirements, such as:
  - Regular baking sessions
  - Extra staffing for trips to the park, library bus, or village outings
  - Seasonal and event-based crafts and take-home gifts
  - Gardening club activities
  - The care and upkeep of our pets
  - Visits from external activity providers (e.g., Diddi Dance sessions, Jiggy Wrigglers parties)
  - Parent stay-and-play sessions (e.g., Christmas stay-and-play, Mother’s Day tea, Easter stay-and-play, Father’s Day tea, Sports Day, Music and Arts Festival, End-of-term party/graduation, and leaving gifts)
  - Parties/feasts/celebrations for the children (eg Christmas, Diwali, Chinese New Year etc)
  - Online Learning Journal (Tapestry).

By January 2026, invoices must be itemised as follows:

1. Free entitlement hours
2. Additional private paid hours
3. Food charges
4. Non-food consumables charges
5. Activity charges

Until this time, our invoices will be broken down into three sections:

1. Funded childcare costs
2. Additional/private childcare costs
3. Consumables contribution

To ensure fairness for all families, the Management Committee has decided to charge the consumables contribution as an hourly amount rather than a daily amount, which will be reflected on invoices. We will also be charging both funded and non-funded children in the same way (a breakdown between childcare costs and consumable costs).

The charging structure for the final two weeks of the Spring term will remain unchanged. However, from after Easter, the new structure will be:

- **Childcare (funded):** £0 per hour
- **Childcare (private/additional):** £5 per hour
- **Consumables contribution:** £1 per hour

The consumables contribution covers food, consumables, additional activities, and enhanced provision costs. For **funded hours only**, if you choose to *opt out* of paying this charge, you must email [littleexplorers.ditton@gmail.com](mailto:littleexplorers.ditton@gmail.com) upon receipt of your invoice. You will then be provided with a list of items to supply each day. Any activities you wish your child to participate in that fall under “external activity provider” or “enhanced activity” will be billed separately. This must be reconfirmed with each invoiced period.

### **Charging Structure from September 2025**

- **Funded hours sessions are available between 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM only**
- **Childcare (funded):** £0 per hour
- **Childcare (private/additional):** £6 per hour
- **Consumables contribution:** £1 per hour
- **Breakfast Club:** 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM (charged in half-hour sessions @ £6 per hour)
- **Afterschool Club:** 3:00 PM - 4:00 PM (charged in half-hour sessions @ £6 per hour)
- **Late collection:** Any child picked up after the end of afterschool club (4pm) will be charged at £3.

**Policy Dated: 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025**