



Admissions & Fees Policy

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Review Date: Annually or following legislative changes, operational updates, or Forest School development

Statement of Intent

Forest & Play is an Ofsted-registered early years provider committed to meeting all requirements of the Ofsted regulations and the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework published by the Department for Education.

We are committed to providing a fair, transparent, and inclusive admissions and fees process in line with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Buckinghamshire Council funding agreements and guidance on the Local Management of the Funded Entitlement
- Equality Act 2010

We aim to offer high-quality outdoor early years provision while ensuring all admission decisions are made fairly, consistently, and in the best interests of children and the safe running of the Forest School environment. We are transparent about costs, funding, and how places are allocated, so parents can make informed decisions.

1. Scope

This policy applies to all admissions to: Forest and Play and covers:

- All funded and non-funded places
- Children aged rising 3 to 5 years
- Up to **30 funded hours per week** (15 Universal Entitlement plus an additional 15 hours Eligible Working Parent Entitlement for eligible children).
- Voluntary contributions
- Deposits
- Additional private hours available beyond funded time
- Waiting lists
- Allocation of places
- Withdrawal of places



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2. Attendance Options

Forest & Play is open Monday to Friday from 08:30–16:00 during term time.

Families may book morning, afternoon or full-day attendance, subject to availability:

Morning attendance: 08:30–12:00

Afternoon attendance: 12:30–16:00

Full-day attendance: 08:30–16:00

Funded early education is not restricted to fixed 3 or 3.5-hour blocks. Eligible families may use their funded entitlement flexibly across their booked attendance times, subject to availability and the child's remaining funded entitlement.

Forest & Play will work with families to agree a funded attendance pattern that enables them to access their 15 or 30-hour entitlement without requiring them to purchase additional childcare as a condition of accessing that funding

4. Funded Early Education

Forest & Play offers a limited number of funded places for eligible children, subject to availability.

We currently offer:

- **Universal Entitlement – up to 15 funded hours per week.**
- **Eligible Working Parent Entitlement – an additional 15 funded hours per week for eligible families.**

Eligible children may therefore access up to 30 funded hours per week, delivered over 38 weeks per year in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council funding arrangements.

Funded hours may be used flexibly across the week within Forest & Play's opening hours and agreed attendance options, subject to availability. Families are not required to purchase additional childcare hours or optional extras in order to access their funded entitlement.

Where a family's chosen attendance pattern does not use their full weekly entitlement, Forest & Play will discuss available options for using the remaining funded hours. For example, four morning sessions from 08:30–12:00 provide 14 hours. A child entitled to 15 funded hours may use the remaining funded hour at another agreed time during the week, subject to availability, without having to purchase an additional session.

Where a family chooses not to use their full weekly entitlement, any unused hours will not be claimed by Forest & Play and cannot be carried forward by the setting.

Children accessing funded-only places receive the same high-quality early education, care and learning opportunities as all other children attending Forest & Play.



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5. Optional Additional Private Childcare

Where a family chooses childcare that exceeds the child's available funded entitlement, those additional hours may be purchased at the published private rate as shown in appendix A

Purchasing additional childcare is entirely optional and is not a condition of accessing a funded place or the child's full funded entitlement.

6. Voluntary Enhanced Provision Contribution (Consumables and Chargeable Extras)

Government funding is intended to contribute towards the delivery of a child's funded early education entitlement. It does not fully cover the additional costs associated with optional consumables and enhanced experiences beyond our usual Forest School provision.

Forest & Play therefore invites parents to make a **voluntary Enhanced Provision Contribution of £2.00 per funded hour**, calculated according to the number of funded hours accessed.

The contribution helps towards optional consumables and enhanced experiences that are additional to the funded early education offer and the usual Forest School experience.

Children accessing funded places will have full access to the EYFS curriculum and our usual Forest School provision without payment of the voluntary contribution.

The voluntary contribution may help towards additional items and experiences such as:

Food and Consumables

- Breakfast and light tea (where applicable)
- Fresh fruit and healthy snacks
- Wipes, sunscreen (Where required)

Forest School Resources

- Enhanced bushcraft activities beyond our usual Forest School provision
- Enhanced natural creative materials and specialist resources beyond those ordinarily used within the provision.

Enhanced Learning Experiences

- Optional educational visits and outings e.g. swimming, Library, Farm trips
- Seasonal celebrations
- Campfire and pizza cooking ingredients
- Cultural celebrations
- Special activity days



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- Visiting educational workshops (such as Zoolab, French Teacher, Story Teller, Boogie Mites Music Scheme)
- Additional enrichment activities that enhance children's learning beyond the statutory EYFS curriculum

Parents may choose to make the Enhanced Provision Contribution in full, in part, or not at all. Families may select which elements they wish to contribute towards; for example, they may choose to pay only for Enhanced Learning Experiences and Non – Food Forest School Consumables. Where the food contribution is not selected, parents will need to provide a breakfast, snacks and light tea in addition to their packed lunch. Food from home must comply with the setting's allergy and food safety requirements.

The Enhanced Provision Contribution is **entirely voluntary**. Parents who choose not to make the contribution will still be able to access their funded entitlement and usual Forest School provision. Payment is not a condition of admission, access to funded hours or continued attendance.

Optional Extras

From time-to-time Forest & Play may offer optional activities or experiences that fall outside our usual provision.

Where these incur an additional cost, parents will always be informed beforehand and participation will remain entirely optional.

A child's funded place will never depend upon participation in these optional activities.

Transparency

Forest & Play is committed to transparency in all charges.

A current schedule of:

- private session fees;
- additional childcare charges;
- voluntary Enhanced Provision Contributions; and
- any optional extras

is available from the setting and forms part of our Parent Fee Schedule.

All fees and voluntary contributions are reviewed periodically, and parents will be given reasonable notice of any changes.



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7. Admissions Process

Step 1: Enquiry and Registration

Parents should submit an enquiry or completed registration form. A waiting list may operate where demand exceeds availability.

Step 2: Place Offer

Places are offered via email once availability and suitability are confirmed.

Step 3: Acceptance and Confirmation

Parents must confirm acceptance of the offer within the timeframe stated in the offer letter.

A place is only secured once:

- Registration form is fully completed
- Contract/terms agreement is signed
- All required documentation (see Section 13) is received
- Any deposit (if applicable) has been paid

Deposits

A £60 deposit is required to secure a place. The deposit will be deducted from the first invoice for privately funded places or refunded for funded-only places within six weeks of the child taking up their place, in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council requirements.

If a family accepts a place but does not take it up, Forest & Play reserves the right to retain the deposit.

Forest & Play does not charge a registration fee.

We recommend children attend a minimum of two sessions per week to support continuity of care, relationship building and children's learning. However, families accessing funded hours may choose fewer sessions if they wish.

8. Admissions Criteria and Waiting List

Where demand exceeds availability, places are allocated based on the criteria below. This ensures we maintain a sustainable provision, consistent groups, and the emotional wellbeing of our cohort—all critical in a relationship-based outdoor setting.

Priority is given to:

1. Existing children wishing to increase sessions or change attendance patterns

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2. Siblings of children already attending Forest & Play
3. Children requiring continuity and consistency of care (e.g., transitioning from another setting)
4. The age and stage of development of the child in relation to group dynamics
5. Group dynamics and the wellbeing of the wider cohort
6. Children with SEND whose needs can be appropriately supported within the provision
7. Looked After Children and children supported by external agencies
8. Session availability and current staffing arrangements

Waiting List Management

- Joining the waiting list does not guarantee a place.
- Parents will be contacted as places become available.
- The setting reserves the right to allocate places in a way that supports the safe, effective, and sustainable operation of the provision.

9. Settling-In and Transition

Home Visits

Before a child starts at Forest & Play, we work closely with parents and carers to support a smooth and positive transition into our woodland environment. Where appropriate and desired, a home visit may be offered. Home visits are entirely voluntary and arranged in partnership with parents and carers.

Information Sharing

As part of the settling-in process, parents and carers will be encouraged to share information about:

- The child's interests, routines, and individual needs
- Any medical, dietary, developmental, or additional support requirements
- The child's communication needs and language use
- Preferred methods of self-regulation and emotional support
- Any comfort items or familiar objects that help the child feel secure
- Appropriate outdoor clothing and equipment needed for all seasons



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- Any relevant risk assessments, care plans, or involvement from external professionals (e.g., speech and language, occupational therapy)

Three-Step Settling-In Programme

All children are offered a flexible settling-in programme designed around their individual needs and readiness:

- **Settle 1:** One hour with a parent or carer present
- **Settle 2:** One hour without a parent or carer present
- **Settle 3:** Two hours independently

This programme helps children become familiar with the environment, practitioners, routines, and expectations, whilst enabling our team to build positive relationships and gain understanding of each child's needs, interests, and wellbeing. The programme may be adjusted to reflect individual circumstances and the child's readiness to separate from their parent or carer.

Transitions Between Settings

Where children are transitioning from another setting or moving on to school, Forest & Play will work in partnership with parents, carers, and other professionals (where appropriate) to ensure relevant information is shared (with parental consent where required) to support a smooth and successful transition.

10. Inclusion and Equality

We are committed to inclusive practice and will not discriminate on the basis of:

- Gender
- Race or ethnicity
- Disability
- Religion or belief
- Family background

We will work in partnership with parents and external agencies to support children with additional needs.

11. Documentation Requirements

Before a child starts, the following must be completed:

- Deposit (where applicable)



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- Registration form
- Contract/terms agreement
- Emergency contact details
- Medical and dietary information
- Permissions and consents

12. Right to Refuse or Withdraw a Place

The setting reserves the right to:

- Refuse a place where needs cannot be safely met
- Withdraw an offer if information provided is inaccurate
- Adjust sessions based on operational or safety requirements

Before withdrawing a funded place, Forest & Play will discuss concerns with the family and, where appropriate, seek advice from Buckinghamshire Council Early Years Team before making a final decision.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or following:

- Changes in legislation
- Operational changes
- Forest School development updates

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Appendix A – Current Fees

Session	Fee
Morning Session (3.5 hrs)	£38.50
Afternoon Session (3.5 hrs)	£38.50
Full Day	£82.50
Cost per hour	£11.00
Voluntary Enhanced Provision Contribution £2.00 per funded hour	

Fees, Invoicing and Payment

Fees for private sessions, additional childcare hours and any optional extras are invoiced monthly in advance and are payable by the due date shown on the invoice.

Parents are responsible for ensuring fees are paid on time.

Where payments become overdue, Forest & Play will contact parents to discuss the outstanding balance. Persistent non-payment may result in additional sessions being suspended or the child's place being reviewed in accordance with the Parent Terms and Conditions.

Deposits (where applicable) are payable when accepting a place. Deposits for funded-only places will be returned in accordance with Buckinghamshire Council requirements.

Appendix B – Chargeable Extras Schedule (Voluntary Enhanced Provision Contribution)

Description	Unit	Unit price	Line total
Free entitlement hours Up to 30 hours per week for eligible children (15 Universal Entitlement plus an additional 15 hours Eligible Working Parent Entitlement), delivered over 38 weeks per year, subject to eligibility and availability.	Weekly	Free	Free
Additional private childcare beyond funded hours (subject to availability). Charges are detailed in Appendix A – Current Fees Schedule.	Hourly (Calculated according to hours booked)	£11	£
Meals & Refreshments - Breakfast (where applicable), fresh fruit, healthy snacks and light tea (where applicable)	Per funded hour		£0.60
Non – Food Forest School Consumables Wipes, sunscreen and tissues, together with enhanced natural creative materials and specialist resources additional to those ordinarily provided as part of our EYFS and usual Forest School provision.	Per funded hour		£0.70
Enhanced Learning Experiences Enhanced bushcraft activities beyond the usual Forest School experience, additional cooking experiences, seasonal and cultural celebrations, specialist visitors, educational visits and additional enrichment activities.	Per funded hour		£0.70
		Total	£2.00

The voluntary contribution does not fund the delivery of the EYFS or Forest & Play's usual Forest School provision, including ordinary woodland exploration, den building, tool use and fire experiences. Each element of the voluntary contribution may be selected individually.

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Where the Meals & Refreshments contribution is not selected, families may provide suitable food from home.

