

The Willows Day Nursery – Early Years Funding Guide

2025-2026

FREE Early Education Entitlement

Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) is a government funded programme; it provides all eligible children up to 30 hours of government funded early education per week. This is up to a total of 1140 hours per year over 38 weeks during term time.

Parents may wish to use fewer hours per week over a longer period, for example up to 52 weeks. This is known as the stretched offer.

Funding is provided by Central Government to Leicestershire County Council (LCC). LCC set the funding rates and make the payments to our nurseries - please note that these rates are a private contract between LCC and the setting and cannot be disclosed to parents. Payments are not made directly to parents.

Eligibility Universal 15 Hours for 3 & 4-year-olds

This is a universal offer for all three and four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds. Funding can start from the term after their third birthday. It can continue up to compulsory school age or when parent's/carer's register their child at a maintained school or academy.

30 Hours Extended Entitlement for 3 & 4-year-olds

30 hours free childcare is for eligible working families of three- and four-year olds. It is an extra 15 hours on top of the Universal 15 hours already available for all three- and four-year olds only. Parents will need to check if they are eligible by applying through the HMRC

Website <https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/apply-for-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

30 Hours for children above 9 months old.

30 hours free childcare is for eligible working families of children aged 9 months and above. Funding can start from the term after the child turns 9 months old. Parents will need to check if they are eligible by applying through the HMRC Website <https://www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/apply-for-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

Formula milk & bottles will need to be provided by parents as these are not included in the funding and will not be supplied.

Reconfirming eligibility all funded children.

For a child's hours of funding to continue throughout their childcare placement, parents must reconfirm their details on the HMRC Website every three months. HMRC may send two reminders via email & text to do this, but this is the parents responsibility. Parents' eligibility for funded childcare hours will expire if parents/carers do not reconfirm. **It is not The Willows responsibility to remind parents to reconfirm their codes – if the code is not reconfirmed in time, funding will be lost, and the sessions will be charged at our full rate.**

Next steps

Parents will need to apply to HMRC during the period before they wish to take up the funding. If eligible, the parent will receive an 11-digit code.

The Willows will email a parental statement of undertaking (PSOU) to each parent from a company called Funding Loop which will contain all the relevant funding information.

The Funding Loop form needs to be completed accurately and signed to enable Lime Tree to claim the funding on a parent's/carer's behalf.

The funded hours are free, however, in line with the Department for Education Guidance, The Willows are permitted to charge for extra's in addition to the funding and these are illustrated below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Additional hours not covered by the FEEE funding are charged at our variable rate
- Meals and snacks & milk
- Consumables e.g. nappies, wipes, nappy sacks and suncream
- Online observations
- Forest Schools
- Sports and Music sessions led by external providers
- Cooking and other specialised activities and parties
- Specialist resources
- Off-site outings/trips including transport

The funding rate that we receive from the local authority covers care and basic provision. It does not cover the additional services and specialist resources named above that we provide to give your child an enhanced learning experience.

Whilst we need to charge for these extras to cover our overheads, we do not want this to deter families from attending our settings.

Please refer to the price per session below:

Additional half an hour – variable depending on session	£9.50
Meals and snacks – Full Day	£7.50
Meals and snacks – Morning	£6
Meals and snacks – Afternoon	£6
Meals and snacks – Flexi 1 & 2	£6
Meals and snacks – School day	£6
Nappies, wipes, nappy sacks and disposal of waste	£7.50 per month

All school holiday sessions are charged at our normal standard rate and averaged over the whole year.

For eligible children, there is additional funding we can apply for called Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). This funding can be used to support your child further at our setting.

For more information on eligibility and to view Leicestershire County Council's Website please follow the link below or Andrea Mardel at grangeeducationuk@gmail.com

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/early-years-andchildcare/funded-childcareplaces/early-years-pupil-premium-eypp>

Funding is a complex topic, and we have included a table below to give some clarity. Please see the childcare choices website for more information relevant to your circumstances.

www.gov.uk/free-childcare-if-working/apply-for-free-childcare-if-youre-working

A few important notes on funding

Funded hours DO NOT cover the charges for meals or sundries (nappies, wipes, and certain resources please see our funding policy)

Funding applies only for 38 weeks of the year (term-time)

Where a child attends all-year-round, we will 'stretch' the funding so that parents may benefit fully and have lower bills over the whole year.

Age 9-23 Months

Age 2 years

Age 3 – 4 years

All Parents	This will only be available for working parents	This will only be available for working parents	All children receive 15 hours regardless of working status
Families with additional Needs	This will only be available for working parents	15 hours available to parents with low income, additional needs	Universal 15 hours by default
Working families 15 hours	15 hours for working parents	15 hours for working parents	Universal 15 hours by default
Working Families 30 hours	30 hours for working parents	30 hours for working parents	30 hours for working parents
Tax Free Childcare	For working parents	For working parents	For working parents

Packed lunches and nappies

Why We Charge for Meals

At our nursery, we are committed to providing fresh, nutritious, and well-balanced meals for all children in our care. Our dedicated chefs prepare meals on-site daily, ensuring that every child, regardless of their dietary needs, allergens, or preferences, is catered for. This level of care and quality comes at a cost, and as the government's funding does not cover meals, we apply a meal charge to ensure we can continue providing high-quality food for all children.

Funding is given for the childcare element only funding doesn't include food and other consumables.

Government Funding & Meal Charges

While the government promotes funded childcare hours as "free," the reality is that this funding does not cover all the costs of running a nursery, including food, training, and operational expenses. Many nurseries are already struggling financially, and additional restrictions on charges only make it harder for us to remain open and sustainable.

Funding is given for the childcare element only funding doesn't include food and other consumables for example

Celebration day package: attendance to Christmas parties, any nursery celebration events such as Halloween, easter, book day, mother's or Father's Day, attendance to graduation ceremony including gown hire (age 3+ only), graduation gifts (age 3+ only), family and parent sessions such as communication and language support sessions and sign language sessions. – We could charge for this but chose not to.

Your Options – opting out of meals and nappy charges.

We understand that some parents may wish to opt out of meal charges and bring their own meals in, please email accounts@limetreedaynursery.co.uk if you would like to start bring in your own food and see our packed lunch policy attached. If opting out of nursery meals breakfast, snack, lunch, snack and tea this will be for the whole term and if food is forgotten a phone call will be made to the parent to bring food in - there will not be spare food at nursery to cover any of these meals.

Why we charge for Nappies, wipes and dispose of clinical waste.

As nappies and wipes aren't included in the government funding, we charge £6 per month per child – if you do not wish to pay this charge there is another option of bringing enough nappies, wipes, nappy sacks and tissues for your child for that day. Nothing can be kept at nursery due to storage and all dirty nappies will be sent home in your child's bag for you to dispose of at home.

If nappies etc are forgotten or there isn't enough a phone call will be made, and parents will need to bring these in that day.

As soon as your child is out of nappies this charge will be removed.

Daily requirements for FEEE funded children opting out of sundries

- All items must be labelled with your child's name, date and allergies listed in food products.
- **No nut products – this includes any products that say - May Contain on the label.**

- Both lunch and tea pack lunches must be separate, and both provided with ice packs as will be stored at room temperature. **We cannot refrigerate or reheat any food at nursery.**
- No Salty snacks such as crisps or savoury biscuits, Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits, cereal bars, cakes and biscuits, processed fruit bars and sweets
- Do not bring in food that needs heating up as we will not be able to do this.
- Sandwiches must have a healthy filling – no jam or chocolate spread.
Any meals including snack that does not meet the policy will result in a phone call to the parent to bring in a suitable meal for that day.

Nursery food will not be provided if meals or snacks are forgotten or does not meet the policy.

Breakfast	Weetabix Original Shredded Wheat Porridge
Snack (Morning)	Fruit (No grapes due to choking hazard)
Lunch	Packed Lunch – sandwich, crackers, or rice cakes. Vegetable sticks, fruit, yoghurt (natural or fruit based). Must have ice packs in lunch box, all rubbish and waste will be sent home.
Snack (Afternoon)	Vegetable sticks
Tea	Packed Lunch – sandwich, crackers, or rice cakes. Vegetable sticks, fruit, yoghurt (natural or fruit based). Must have ice packs in lunch box, all rubbish and waste will be sent home.
Nappies – what must be provided	Nappies Wipes Nappy sacks Nappy cream Tissues All dirty nappies will be sent home in your child's bag for you to dispose of at home.