

Government Funding Policy

Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery Schools RP523735

Applies to:

Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery Schools City Limited (Ofsted ID: 131700)
Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery Schools Worship Street (Ofsted ID: 2837915)

Primary person responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this policy:	Ben Murray, Nazish Usman, Joanne Allen
Adopted:	September 2026
Last review:	September 2026
Next review due:	September 2027

1. Scope and application

1.1 This policy applies to

Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery Schools City Limited (Ofsted ID: 131700)

Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery Schools Worship Street (Ofsted ID: 2837915)

1.2 This policy does not form part of any contract, and we may amend it at any time. Where this policy is updated, the current version is published on our website.

2. What is government funding?

2.1 The universal entitlement provides up to 570 hours a year of funded early education, 15 hours a week over the 38 term-time weeks, for every three- and four-year-old in England. There is no eligibility test.

2.2 The working parent entitlement provides up to 1,140 hours a year, 30 hours a week over 38 weeks, for eligible working families with children from nine months old to school age.

2.3 To qualify, you and your partner, or you alone if you are a single parent, must each expect to earn at least the equivalent of 16 hours a week at the National Minimum or Living Wage, and no more than £100,000 a year in adjusted net income. This includes employed and self-employed parents. Eligibility is confirmed by HMRC through your childcare account, which issues an 11-digit code that must be reconfirmed every three months.

2.4 A separate 15-hour entitlement is available for two-year-olds in families receiving certain government support, applied for through the local authority.

3. When funding starts

3.1 Your child is eligible from the start of the term after they reach the qualifying age. Born between 1 January and 31 March, funded from 1 April. Between 1 April and 31 August, from 1 September. Between 1 September and 31 December, from 1 January.

4. Stretched hours

4.1 The entitlements are structured around the 38 term-time weeks. Where we are open for more weeks than this, we stretch the funded hours across the weeks we operate. Your weekly funded hours are lower, and your monthly invoice is the same each month.

If your nursery is open for	15 hours of entitlement becomes	30 hours of entitlement becomes
33 weeks of the year	15 hours each week	30 hours each week
38 weeks of the year	15 hours each week	30 hours each week
48 weeks of the year	11.9 hours each week	23.8 hours each week
50 weeks of the year	11.4 hours each week	22.8 hours each week

4.2 Funded hours are free in all our booking patterns, including funded entitlement only places (section 9). Hours beyond the funded entitlement are charged at our standard rates.

5. What the funding covers

5.1 The funding covers the childcare and the delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) during your child's funded hours, including staffing, the nursery environment, equipment and resources, and observation and assessment. We do not charge top-up fees or any mandatory charge for funded hours.

5.2 The funding does not cover meals and snacks, hygiene consumables such as nappies, wipes and sun cream, additional hours such as early starts and late finishes, or the optional enrichment and extracurricular activities we run beyond the EYFS, including specialist-led sessions, forest school, language lessons and trips.

6. Optional charges and opting out

6.1 Our optional extras are charged in the following categories, each shown separately with its price on our fee sheet and website: meals and snacks; hygiene consumables; optional enrichment resources; and extracurricular activities and trips.

6.2 These charges are voluntary and you may opt out of any of them. Opting out does not affect your child's place, sessions or funded hours.

6.3 If you opt out of meals and snacks, you provide all your child's food from home in line with our Food Provided by Parents and Carers guidance. If you opt out of hygiene consumables, you supply your child's own named items, kept topped up. If your child does not take part in an enrichment session, they stay with their key person and room staff. If your child arrives without an item, we provide it and do not charge.

6.4 So that we can plan catering, staffing and resources, we ask you to confirm your choices for each term before the term begins, through the parental declaration. Changes take effect from the start of the following term. A full month's notice is needed to opt back in to nursery-provided meals.

6.5 You can choose an optional extra on some days and not others. If you take nursery meals on three days and send food from home on the other two, we charge for three days.

7. Fees and invoicing

7.1 Our fees are calculated on the number of operating weeks per year, averaged into 12 monthly payments unless your setting invoices termly.

7.2 Your invoice shows separately your child's funded hours at £0.00, any additional private hours at our standard rate, and each optional extra you have chosen, named and priced as at 6.1.

8. Headcount day

8.1 Headcount Day is the date each term, set by the local authority, by which children claiming funding must be in attendance for us to claim that term's funding. The exact date varies by local authority and by term and is confirmed by your setting. The exception is two year olds funded through the local authority with a valid eligibility code, who can start and be funded at any point in the term.

8.2 If your child joins after headcount day and is not transferring from another provider, we cannot claim funding until the following term, and sessions until then are charged at our standard rates. If your child transfers from another provider, we can normally claim any unused funding for the remainder of the term.

8.3 Increases to funded sessions agreed after headcount day are funded from the following term. Until then the additional sessions are charged at our standard rates.

9. Funded entitlement only places

9.1 You may use your funded entitlement only, with no optional extras and no additional private hours. There is no registration fee or deposit for a funded entitlement only place, and no income, benefits or other test attached to one.

9.2 Funded entitlement only places run in defined booking patterns, set by each nursery to fit its sessions and staffing. Where a nursery runs morning and afternoon sessions, funded

hours are taken in the afternoon. Where it runs full days only, funded hours are taken as full days on set days, within the daily 10-hour limit. You can use any remaining entitlement on another day if one is available, or with another provider. Your setting will confirm the patterns it runs.

9.3 Funded entitlement only places are in the same rooms, with the same staff, as all other places.

10. The parental declaration

10.1 Before your child first takes up funded hours, and at the start of each term, we complete a parental declaration with you. It records the days and times of your child's funded hours, any stretching of the entitlement across the year, the optional charges you have chosen, and any additional privately paid hours and their fees. The local authority requires it. It also records what happens to the optional charges if your child is absent or the nursery is closed.

11. Additional support

11.1 Additional government funding may be available for your child. The Early Years Pupil Premium provides extra funding to the nursery to support eligible children's learning, and the Disability Access Fund supports children who receive Disability Living Allowance. Complete the relevant section of the parental declaration and we will check eligibility.

12. Questions

12.1 If you have any questions about government funding, your invoice or your choices, please speak to the nursery. You can also seek independent advice from your local authority's early years team.