



Gosfield School

Funded Early Education Entitlement Policy

Policy Statement

Gosfield School is committed to delivering high-quality early education in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in line with the Universal Funded Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) as administered by Essex County Council. This document sets out how we deliver the universal 15 hours of funded early education, the responsibilities of parents and carers, and how funded provision interacts with our independent fee structure.

About the Universal Funded Early Education Entitlement

In Essex, all children aged three and four are eligible to receive up to 15 hours of funded early education per week. This entitlement begins from the term after the child's third birthday and continues until they reach compulsory school age. Parents do not need to apply for the universal 15 hours; instead, funding is accessed by agreeing a placement with a registered provider and completing the necessary Parent Agreement/Declaration form with the setting.

A child's funded place commences in the following term based on date of birth: if a child is born between 1 January and 31 March, their funded entitlement begins in the Summer term; if born between 1 April and 31 August, funded entitlement begins in the Autumn term; and if born between 1 September and 31 December, entitlement begins in the Spring term.

The funded entitlement equates to 525 hours per year delivered as 15 hours per week over 35 weeks (term time).

Eligibility and Parent Responsibility

To access the funded entitlement, parents must complete and sign a Parent Agreement Form on a termly basis confirming their child's details and the funded hours they will receive at this setting. This form is necessary for the school to submit accurate claims to Essex County Council. Parents can split funded hours between two settings, outlining how they intend on splitting it on the Parent Declaration Form and must ensure that any information they provide is accurate and remains up to date. If parents choose not to use the full 15 hours, that is their choice; they do not have to claim all hours to be eligible.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school promptly of any change in circumstances that affects eligibility or attendance. Incorrect or late information can result in funding being reclaimed by the council.

Delivery of Funded Hours

At Gosfield School, funded hours are delivered within our afternoon opening hours (1-4pm) and structured sessions. Funded places are offered subject to availability and operational capacity. Funded hours must be taken as agreed sessions and cannot be accessed on an hourly or ad-hoc basis outside this agreed programme.

As an independent early years provider, we allocate funded places in a way that ensures continuity of care and sustainable provision. Children accessing more than the funded hours will be charged in accordance with our published fee schedule.

Charges and What Funding Does Not Cover

The Universal Funded Entitlement is intended to cover early education only. Funding does **not** include the cost of additional services provided by the setting. Essex County Council permits providers to charge for consumables, including snacks and healthcare products (nappies, wipes & creams) providing these charges are voluntary and clearly communicated to parents. This ensures that the 15 hours remain free at the point of delivery. Parents must not be required to purchase additional services in order to access funded hours.

Parents may choose to opt in or opt out of the consumables charge. If a parent opts to not pay the consumables charge, they will be asked to provide their own snacks and healthcare products, making separate arrangements with the Nursery Manager. Funded hours, privately purchased hours, and the consumables charge will be itemised on termly invoices sent to parents from the Finance Department.

Attendance, Absence and Non-Attendance

Regular attendance is expected to ensure children benefit from funded early education. Parents are required to notify the school as soon as possible if their child is absent for any reason. Funding is allocated for agreed sessions and cannot be reclaimed, refunded, or replaced for missed sessions due to illness, holidays, or other absence. The school will monitor attendance, and persistent non-attendance may lead to a review of the child's funded place and possible withdrawal of funded provision as per Essex County Council guidance.

Early Years Pupil Premium and Additional Support

Under Essex County Council's funding arrangements, some children accessing funded hours may attract the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), which provides additional funding to support learning and development outcomes for eligible children from low-income households. Providers are encouraged to discuss EYPP eligibility with parents so this funding can be accessed where appropriate.

In addition to EYPP, children with identified special educational needs may attract further support funding through local inclusion funding streams. Parents should speak with the setting if their child has additional needs so appropriate support can be considered.

Headcount, Audits and Compliance

The school is required to submit termly headcount and funding claims to Essex County Council. Parents must ensure the information provided on the Parent Agreement Form and any subsequent updates are accurate. The school will keep records to support funding claims

and comply with audits. If funding is clawed back by the council due to inaccurate information or non-compliance with local authority rules, the school reserves the right to seek recovery of the reclaimed funds from the parent or carer.

Changes to Attendance or Leaving the Setting

Parents must provide notice in accordance with the Nursery’s Terms and Conditions if they intend to change their child’s attendance pattern or withdraw their child from the setting. Funding adjustments will be made in line with Essex County Council guidance, and fees will be due for any additional hours outside of the funded entitlement during the notice period.

Policy Review

This policy is reviewed annually and may be updated sooner if there are changes to government legislation, Essex County Council funding guidance, or the EYFS statutory framework.

Next Review Due: January 2027



12th February 2026

Principal’s
Signature: _____ Date: _____