



Government Funded Hours Policy 2026/2027

Entitlement

Universal funding available to all families

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 Universal funded hours per week during term time (38 weeks per year) starting the term after their third birthday.

Additional funding for working families

Details of the eligibility criteria can be found at www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

Children of eligible working families will be entitled to 30 funded hours per week during term time starting the term after a child turns 9 months old. For 3 and 4 year olds this means 15 additional hours on top of the 15 Universal hours (giving a total of 30 hours).

Funding for families receiving additional forms of support

Some two year olds are eligible for 15 funded hours per week during term time if families receive certain types of additional government support. Details of the eligibility criteria can be found at www.beststartinlife.gov.uk

Claiming Funding

All families wishing to claim funded hours will need to complete an Early Years Funding (EYF) Parental Declaration Form, which we can provide, confirming how many hours you wish for Alfresco to claim on your behalf and providing consent for your information to be passed to the appropriate authorities in order for the claim to be made.

In order to claim additional funding for working families you will first need to obtain an 11 digit eligibility code. You can apply for this through the Best Start In Life website using the link above. The code needs to be set up before the start of the term in which you intend to start claiming and codes need to be renewed every three months. **It is the family's responsibility to provide and renew the code.** Alfresco will be unable to claim the additional funding for working families without a valid eligibility code.

In order to claim funding for families receiving additional forms of support you will need to contact your local council.

Using Your Funded Hours

Government funding is for 38 weeks per year so we offer families three booking options:

- 1) All Year Round – Children are booked in for the whole year and funding is spread over 51 weeks (same total number of funded hours but fewer funded hours per week)



- 2) Term Time Only (38 Weeks) - Children are booked during our 38 week term dates which can be found on our website at www.alfrescochildcare.co.uk/term-dates. Using this option every week will be funded.
- 3) Term Time Only (39 Weeks) - The school year is 39 weeks long as it typically includes five days for teacher development. We offer the option for children to be booked for 39 weeks per year based on the Swindon Borough Council term dates (these can also be found on our website using the link above), however families need to be aware that using this option there will be five days per year which are not covered by funding and will be charged at our standard rates.

Additional hours can be booked over and above your funded hours and these will be charged at our standard rates. Early drop off or late collection charges will be applied to all sessions as per our terms and conditions.

Additional Services

Government funding is designed to cover the cost of providing early education and childcare but does not cover all the additional services or food which we provide at Alfresco. Details of these can be found on our Additional Services Fees List which is on our website here:

www.alfrescochildcare.co.uk/additional-services

These fees are only charged on days when your child attends a session. On days where children do not attend their session, any charges for additional services are automatically credited to the following month's invoice, meaning that funded sessions you do not attend have no cost to you, although funding will still be claimed.

Limitations for claiming funded hours

Deadlines for changes

The system which nurseries and pre-schools use to claim funding from the government is set up on a termly basis and there are only certain windows during which it is open for us to make new or amend existing claims. You are welcome to request changes in hours at any time and we will always do our best to accommodate you, but if the last window has passed for that term we may not be able to claim increased funding until the following term and unused funding from that term is lost.

It may be possible to make funding changes after the window has closed, but if the government is unable to provide increased funding then families will be liable for the full cost of any extra hours.

Carrying over entitlement

We are able to offer families the opportunity to spread funded hours throughout the year and can account for different numbers of hours per term or different hours during the holidays. However, it is not possible to exceed the maximum funded hours per week. For example, if you are entitled to claim 15 hours per week but only use 10 hours per week in the autumn term it is not possible to claim 20 hours per week in the spring term as this is more than your maximum of 15.



One off bookings

It is not possible to use funded hours for one off bookings, unless it is to replace hours which would have fallen on a bank holiday.

Multiple settings

If you are claiming funding at more than one setting you will need to ensure that your combined claims do not exceed the maximum entitlement. A parental declaration form will need to be completed at each setting so it is clear how much funding is being claimed where and to avoid any over claims. We are entitled to continue claiming funding during a child's four week notice period even if they do not attend so this will need to be considered if you move setting and wish to set up a new claim elsewhere.