Tarnerland Nursery School

ADMISSIONS AND CHARGING POLICY OCTOBER 2026

1. Early Years Free Entitlements

1.1 Government funded hours are advertised as either 15 or 30 per week which applies to term-time only (38 weeks of the year). Tarnerland Nursery School is open for 47.5 weeks a year and the funded hours spread across this number of weeks, resulting in an allocation of either 12 or 24 hours per week.

1.2 Children are eligible for a place in our **Lookers and Explorers** group from the age of 9 months old until the term after they turn 2 years old.
Children of eligible working families are able to claim their Early Years Free Entitlement of 24 hours a week, for 47.5 weeks of the year, from the term after (1st January, 1st April, 1st September) they turn 9 months old.
There is no funding for 'early learning for 2 year-olds' in this age group.

1.3 Children are eligible for a place in our **Players and Pretenders** group from the term after they turn 2 years old (1st January, 1st April, 1st September) until the term after they turn 3 years old.
Children of eligible working families are able to claim their Early Years Free Entitlement of 24 hours a week, for 47.5 weeks of the year, from the term after (1st January, 1st April, 1st September) they turn 2 years old.
Children from families eligible for 'early learning for 2 year olds' in this age group are able to claim their Early Years Free Entitlement of 12 hours a week, for 47.5 weeks of the year.
A small number of children might be entitled to both the eligible working families funding (12 hours) and the 'early learning for 2 year olds' funding (12 hours). In these dual eligibility cases children will be able to access 12 hours under the 'early learning for 2 year olds' funding and an additional 12 hours under the working families funding.

1.4 Children are eligible for a place in our **Carers and Creators** group from the term after they turn 3 years old (1st January, 1st April, 1st September) until they reach school-age.
Children of eligible working families are able to claim their Early Years Free Entitlement of 24 hours a week, for 47.5 weeks of the year, from the term after (1st January, 1st April, 1st September) they turn 3 years old.
Children from all other families in this age group are able to claim their Early Years Free Entitlement of 12 hours a week, for 47.5 weeks of the year.

1.5 There is occasionally some flexibility around which group a child will be cared for in, depending on an individual child's needs and at the discretion of the headteacher.

2. Admissions criteria

2.1 If there are more applications than there are places available, places in each group will be offered in the following order of priority:

a) Places will be offered firstly to children already attending the nursery and at a transition point (only relevant for Players and Pretenders and Carers and Creators). This will only apply to children remaining at the nursery without a break.

b) Places will then be offered to 'vulnerable' children, that is, children with a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan, Children in Care or Previously in Care or children previously known to social care.

c) Places will then be offered to children eligible for 'early learning for 2- year olds', i.e. those families eligible for the local authority administered 2-year-funding: Free early learning for 2 year olds (brighton-hove.gov.uk)

d) Places will then be offered to children who have a sibling, including an adopted, foster, half or step sibling, living at the same address and attending the nursery at the time of enquiry.

e) Places will then be offered to children of members of staff who will continue to be employed at the school at the point of admission.

f) The remaining places will be offered to children in the order in which their parents / carers made an enquiry via the nursery website (where all telephone / email enquiries are directed to). Placing a child on the waiting list does not therefore guarantee a place at the nursery.

2.2 For categories b, c, d and e, the order in which a child's parents / carers made an enquiry via the nursery website will be used as a 'tiebreak' to decide who has the highest priority for admission.

2.3 For a family to secure a place there must be a commitment to our fixed attendance patterns.

3. Admissions processes

3.1 One month before the end of term, three terms in advance, the admissions criteria will be applied to all children on the wait list for each room.

For September, this will be agreed by the end of the preceding Autumn term.
For January, this will be agreed by the end of the preceding Spring term.
For April, this will be agreed by the end of the preceding Summer term.

A small number of places will be reserved for children falling into categories b and c at this point in time.

For Lookers and Explorers, ONE place will be reserved.
For Players and Pretenders FOUR places will be reserved.
For Carers and Creators FOUR places will be reserved.

Other places will be offered as confirmed for families at this point and they will be removed from the wait list. Where a place is offered to families this will need to be confirmed by a deposit of £100. The deposit is completely refundable for those families who take up a place; it will be subtracted from their final invoice.

3.2 During the half-term before the children are due to start, the admissions criteria will be applied to any remaining children on the wait list for each room. At this point, no places will be reserved. Again,

where a place is offered to families this will need to be confirmed by a deposit of £100. The deposit is completely refundable for those families who do then take up a place; it will be subtracted from their final invoice.

4. Attendance patterns

4.1 We have a clear rationale for why we operate with fixed attendance patterns, including;

- A predictable routine helps children feel more secure and settled, supporting emotional well-being and reducing anxiety.
- Consistent peer groups promote stronger social bonds and subsequently more effective learning.
- Fixed attendance enables more efficient staff deployment, ensuring appropriate child-to-staff ratios at all times.
- Staff are able to tailor activities more effectively to the needs of a stable group of children.
- Fixed attendance allows for more accurate financial and resource planning.

4.2 Attendance patterns – children eligible for 24-hour funding in all groups.

	Mon	Tue		Wed			Thurs	Fri		Funded hours	Fee paid hours
	8.00 to 6.00	8.00 to 2.00	2.00 to 6.00	8.00 to 12.00	12.00 to 2.00	2.00 to 6.00	8.00 to 6.00	8.00 to 2.00	2.00 to 6.00		
Opt 1 2.5 days	✓	✓	✓	✓						24	0
Opt 2 2.5 days						✓	✓	✓	✓	24	0
Opt 1 3 days	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				24	6
Opt 2 3 days				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	24	6
Opt 1 4 days	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	24	16
Opt 2 4 days	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	24	16
Opt 1 5 days	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	24	26
Opt 2 5 days	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	24	26

4.3 Attendance patterns – children eligible for 12-hour funding in Carers and Creators and Players and Pretenders.

	Monday and Tuesday 8.30am to 12.30pm Thursday 1pm to 5pm	**or**	Tuesday 1pm to 5pm Thursday and Friday 8.30am to 12.30pm	Funded Hours
Option A	✓			12
Option B			✓	12

4.4 Children only entitled to 12 hours have the option to 'top-up' their sessions. In the first instance they can choose to add breakfast (arrive at 8am instead of 8.30am) or lunch (leave at 1.30pm instead of 12.30pm) to their morning sessions. They can also add tea (leave at 6pm instead of 5pm) to their afternoon session. Alternatively, children only entitled to 12 hours have the option to 'top-up' their sessions to mirror one of the 24-hour options above. All extra hours are charged at our standard hourly rate, plus meals.

4.5 In addition, some children will not be entitled to any Early Years Free Entitlement until the term after they turn 3 years old (babies younger than the term after they turn 9 months old, working families earning above the income threshold; two parent families where one parent is not working). Families in this situation can buy sessions to match one of the fixed attendance patterns (12 or 24 hours), including the 'top up' options above.

4.6 We also offer a limited number of ad hoc sessions at our standard hourly rate for families who need occasional childcare, such as attending medical appointments or job interviews. These sessions are available only to families with no outstanding balance and must be booked in line with our existing scheduled session times.

5. Fees

5.1 We provide breakfast, lunch is provided by Caterlink, the school meals provider, and tea is provided by Zebedees.

5.2 The following families do not pay for breakfast or tea:

- families whose child attends on a 'early learning for 2 year olds' funded place;
- families whose child previously attended on a 'early learning for 2 year olds' funded place (over 3s).

The following families do not pay for any meals:

- families with children eligible for Free School Meals.

5.3 For all other families, we request a voluntary donation for meals; £3.00 for breakfast, £2.60 for lunch and £3.60 for tea. Please see Appendix 1 for further information about charging for meals.

5.4 All children are offered a drink of milk and a fruit / cracker snack each session they attend (am and pm). We ask parents / carers to donate two pieces of fruit per 12 hours attended, which is shared, instead of making a charge.

5.5 The following WEEKLY optional charges therefore apply;

<table>
<tr><th rowspan="2">Attendance pattern</th><th rowspan="2">Sessions</th><th colspan="3">For children eligible for 24 free hours</th><th rowspan="2">For children eligible for 12 free hours only</th></tr>
<tr><th>Lookers and Explorers (babies)</th><th>Players and Pretenders (toddlers)</th><th>Carers and Creators (over 3s)</th></tr>
<tr><td>2.5 days start of week</td><td>Mon 8-6
Tue 8-6
Wed 8-12</td><td colspan="2">Only charged meals (3 x breakfast, 3 x lunch, 2 x tea)
Total: £24.30</td><td>Only charged meals (3 x breakfast, 2 x lunch, 2 x tea)
Total: £21.60</td><td rowspan="2">Pay for additional 12 hours plus meals</td></tr>
<tr><td>2.5 days end of week</td><td>Wed 2-6
Thu 8-6
Fri 8-6</td><td colspan="3">Only charged meals (2 x breakfast, 2 x lunch, 3 x tea)
Total: £22.20</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 days start of week</td><td>Mon 8-6
Tue 8-6
Wed 8-6</td><td rowspan="2">Additional 6 hours £46.44 + meals (3 x breakfast, 3 x lunch, 3 x tea) £27.90
Total: £74.34</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">Additional 6 hours £42.60 + meals (3 x breakfast, 3 x lunch, 3 x tea) £27.90
Total: £70.50</td><td rowspan="2">Pay for additional 18 hours plus meals</td></tr>
<tr><td>3 days end of week</td><td>Wed 8-6
Thu 8-6
Fri 8-6</td></tr>
<tr><td>4 days</td><td>Mon 8-6
Tue 8-6
Thu 8-6
Fri 8-6</td><td>Additional 16 hours £123.84 + meals (4 x breakfast, 4 x lunch, 4 x tea) £37.20
Total: £161.04</td><td colspan="2">Additional 16 hours £113.60 + meals (4 x breakfast, 4 x lunch, 4 x tea) £37.20
Total: £150.80</td><td>Pay for additional 28 hours plus meals</td></tr>
<tr><td>5 days</td><td>Mon-Fri 8-6</td><td>Additional 26 hours £201.24 + meals (5 x breakfast, 5 x lunch, 5 x tea) £46.50
Total: £247.74</td><td colspan="2">Additional 26 hours £184.60 + meals (5 x breakfast, 5 x lunch, 5 x tea) £46.50
Total: £231.10</td><td>Pay for additional 38 hours plus meals</td></tr>
<tr><td>Option A</td><td>Mon / Tues 8.30-12.30
Thurs 1-5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Only charged meals</td></tr>
<tr><td>Option B</td><td>Tues 1-5
Thurs / Fri 8.30-12.30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>Only charged meals</td></tr>
</table>

5.6 Fees are reviewed annually.

6. Payment

6.1 Invoices are issued at the start of each month, and payment is due within two weeks. Fees can be settled via bank transfer, Tax-Free Childcare and some childcare salary sacrifice schemes are also accepted.

6.2 Fees are charged for sessions that a child is booked to attend but which are missed due to sickness, family holidays, etc. as the running costs for the nursery remain the same. This is with the exception of meals where no charges will be made if a full calendar months' notice is given.

6.3 There is no charge for holiday closures (one week in the summer and two weeks at Christmas), Bank Holidays or the five in-service training (INSET) days per academic year when the nursery is also closed. When closed for conditions beyond the nursery's control, there will be a charge for the first three consecutive full days, if the nursery remains closed for a longer period, any further decisions will be taken by managers in Brighton and Hove City Council.

6.4 Failure to pay fees promptly may lead to a child's paid for sessions being withdrawn and no future bookings accepted from the family. When necessary, debt recovery efforts are conducted in compliance with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks. We maintain clear communication with debtors, offering support and flexibility where possible, while ensuring the timely recovery of outstanding fees.

6.5 To enable legal adult / child ratios to be maintained, it is imperative that children do not arrive before their session start time and are collected on time at the end of their session. We reserve the right to charge £10 per 15 minutes for late collections.

6.6 Any reductions to children's sessions require a full calendar months' notice.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually

Appendix 1

The government makes clear that children's Early Years Free Entitlement is to fund a certain number of early education hours for children, it has made clear that this funding does not cover the cost of any meals, snacks or any consumables.

At Tarnerland Nursery School, we ask families to provide any necessary consumables, such as nappies, wipes, nappy creams, suncream, etc. We avoid charging for snacks by asking families to provide two pieces of fruit per 12 hours attended.

With the exception of lunch for our Players and Pretenders (toddlers), our 12-hour attendance patterns avoid mealtimes, to help reduce potential extra costs.

Families whose child attends on an 'early learning for 2 year olds' funded place, or who previously attended on a 'early learning for 2 year olds' funded place (over 3s), do not pay for breakfast or tea. Families with children eligible for Free School Meals do not pay for any meals.

However, for other families, whose children are with us during mealtimes, we do request a voluntary donation for each meal; £3.00 for breakfast (provided by us), £2.60 for lunch (provided by Caterlink) and £3.60 for tea (provided by Zebedees).

Both Caterlink and Zebedees provide a seasonal menu on a three-week rotation. We share these on our noticeboard for families and on our website. Provision is made for children with a vegetarian or vegan diet or other dietary needs, including allergies.

We do not accept packed lunches or snacks from home as an alternative to our meals for the following reasons;

- We are required to meet rigorous nutritional standards for all children in our care.
- Many children attend for long days and freshly-prepared, nutritious meals, including a hot meal in the middle of the day, are beneficial for them.
- Sharing the same food contributes to the social aspect of sharing a meal together and encourages children to try food they might not eat at home.
- Children's independence is supported – with opportunities to practice using cutlery, pouring their own water, deciding how much they will eat, etc.
- We lack sufficient space to safely store and manage food for over 80 children, especially when considering refrigeration and allergens.
- We have children with severe food allergies, and offering the same food to all children helps us manage this effectively.

In our inspection in September 2023, Ofsted made the following comments;
"Eating together as a family is a daily highlight. Children learn table conversations and mealtime etiquette. They take turns to serve food and check everyone has what they need. Staff positively role model these interactions."

The government requires us to be open and transparent about any charges and to ask parents / carers to agree to paying, without requiring them to. The cost of meals is always discussed at the point of registration to the nursery. Our charges are detailed on our website and on our noticeboard for families. Our invoices show your funded hours, fee-paid hours and charges for meals.

We hope the reasons for the meal charges are clear. We ask that families make contact with the headteacher directly if payment for meals is problematic as other options can be discussed.