



# Funded Childcare Information for Parents

*Supplement to the Watermead Day Nursery Care Packages*

## Important

This information supplements our Watermead Day Nursery Care Packages. It does not replace our existing care package offer. Government-funded childcare hours are provided free of charge. Parents do not have to purchase meals, consumables, additional private hours or optional enrichment activities as a condition of accessing a funded place. All places and attendance patterns remain subject to availability.

## Government-funded childcare entitlements

**30 hours for eligible working parents.** Eligible working parents in England can receive up to 30 hours of funded childcare each week for 38 weeks of the year (up to 1,140 hours annually), from the funding period after their child turns 9 months until they start school.

- Parents (and partners, where applicable) must normally be in qualifying paid work and meet the minimum earnings test.
- Neither parent can normally have expected adjusted net income above £100,000 in the current tax year.
- Special rules can apply for maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave, sickness, self-employment and some other circumstances.
- Foster parents follow a separate eligibility process through their local authority.

**15 hours for all 3- and 4-year-olds.** All children in England are entitled to 570 hours of funded early education from the funding period after their third birthday, usually taken as up to 15 hours per week over 38 weeks. This universal entitlement is not dependent on parental employment or income.

**15 hours for eligible 2-year-olds receiving additional support.** Some 2-year-olds may receive 15 funded hours a week where the family receives qualifying support or the child meets specified criteria, for example certain looked-after or previously looked-after children, children receiving Disability Living Allowance, or children with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

## When funded childcare can begin

Funded hours normally begin at the start of the funding period after the child reaches the relevant age and, for the working-parent entitlement, the parent has obtained a valid eligibility code by the applicable deadline.

| Child reaches relevant age | Funding can begin | Working-parent code by |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 September - 31 December  | 1 January         | 31 December            |
| 1 January - 31 March       | 1 April           | 31 March               |
| 1 April - 31 August        | 1 September       | 31 August              |

**We strongly recommend applying well before the deadline.** Receiving an eligibility code does not reserve a nursery place or guarantee a particular pattern of attendance.

## How to apply and reconfirm

1. Check eligibility and apply through the GOV.UK Free Childcare for Working Parents service.
2. Give Watermead the 11-digit eligibility code, together with the details we need to validate it, including the child's date of birth and the applying parent's National Insurance number.
3. Complete the Leicestershire County Council Parental Statement of Undertaking (PSOU) and agree the funded attendance pattern with Watermead.
4. Reconfirm eligibility through your government childcare account every 3 months, even if your circumstances have not changed.

**Grace periods.** If a family stops meeting the working-parent eligibility criteria, a limited grace period may apply. Leicestershire County Council determines the relevant grace-period end date. After that date, working-parent funded hours can only continue if eligibility is regained or the child qualifies for another entitlement.

## Using funded hours at Watermead

Watermead is open from 7.45am to 6.00pm. Subject to availability, our current session pattern is:

| Session   | Attendance time | Funded hours available within session |
|-----------|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Morning   | 7.45am - 1.00pm | Up to 4 funded hours                  |
| Afternoon | 1.00pm - 6.00pm | Up to 4 funded hours                  |
| Full day  | 7.45am - 6.00pm | Up to 9 funded hours                  |

**Where a session is longer than the funded hours shown**, the remaining time is private childcare and is charged separately. Parents choosing a funded-only place are not required to buy private hours. Funded-only attendance times and session patterns are agreed with Watermead and remain subject to nursery availability.

### Important - funded hours and session availability

**A funded entitlement is an entitlement to funded childcare hours; it is not an entitlement to a particular day, time or attendance pattern at Watermead.** Funded-only places are offered within the session patterns and availability that Watermead can accommodate. Parents cannot select arbitrary funded hours outside the funded-only sessions available at the nursery.

Choosing not to purchase Watermead's optional care package does not affect a child's entitlement to funded hours. However, it does not create an entitlement to different or bespoke attendance times. All funded-only places remain subject to Watermead's availability, staffing, session structure and the attendance arrangements agreed with the nursery.

- A child must be present for the funded hours claimed on their behalf.
- Funded hours can be split between eligible providers, subject to the entitlement rules. Parents must tell each provider how the hours are being divided.
- The standard entitlement is calculated over 38 weeks. If a stretched arrangement over more weeks is available and agreed, the same annual entitlement is spread across more weeks, so fewer funded hours are available each week.

## Charges, optional extras and childcare choices

Government funding pays for the funded childcare hours. It is not intended to cover additional private childcare hours, meals, nappies and other consumables, or optional additional activities and services.

**Watermead's existing Care Packages set out our full offer, including:** private session prices, funded hours within each session, optional all-inclusive package charges, the itemised consumables/enrichment breakdown, and the funded-only alternative available to parents who do not wish to purchase optional extras.

### Our funded-place commitment

Funded childcare hours can be accessed free of charge. Our optional meals, consumables, additional private hours and enrichment package are not a condition of receiving a funded place. Please read this document alongside the Watermead Day Nursery Care Packages for the detailed charges and the alternatives available.

## Information we use for funding

To validate eligibility and administer government funding, Watermead may collect and process information such as the child's name, address and date of birth; parent/carer details; National Insurance number; eligibility code; funded hours; attendance information; and information needed for Early Years Pupil Premium, Disability Access Fund or other early-years support.

We use this information to verify eligibility, complete required declarations, submit and administer funding claims, prevent duplicate or incorrect claims, and meet legal, safeguarding, audit and local-authority requirements. Relevant information may be shared securely with Leicestershire County Council and authorised government bodies where necessary. Please also see Watermead's Privacy Notice.

## Complaints and concerns

If you have a question or concern about funded hours, availability, invoices or optional charges, please speak to the nursery office first. We will aim to resolve concerns promptly and in line with Watermead's complaints procedure.

### Watermead Day Nursery and Pre-School

2 Watermead Lane, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE11 3TN

Telephone: 01509 239205

Email: [info@watermeadnursery.co.uk](mailto:info@watermeadnursery.co.uk)

**If your concern specifically relates to the delivery of the Free Early Education Entitlement and remains unresolved**, Leicestershire County Council advises parents to contact its childcare service:

Email: [childcare@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@leics.gov.uk)

Telephone: 0116 305 6545

## Further information for parents

- [GOV.UK - Free Childcare for Working Parents](#)
- [Best Start in Life - childcare and early years support](#)
- [Leicestershire County Council - funded childcare places](#)
- [Ofsted - find an inspection report](#)

**Information reviewed: September 2026**

*Please read this together with the Watermead Day Nursery Care Packages and our Privacy and Complaints policies.*