Next Steps Pre-school, Elms Vale, Church Road, Dover, CT17 9LW
Tel: 01304 226234
Registered Charity No. 1156391

Payment/Funding Procedure 2026/27

When your child started at the pre-school, you signed a joining form and agreed to the terms and conditions of childcare offered by the pre-school (these are on the pre-school website or can be emailed to you).

Term and holiday dates are in line with Kent County Council's 38-week calendar (displayed on the parent board in the setting).

Free Early Education for 2-year-olds is available if you meet the criteria. This is for 15 hours a week. You will need to apply via the Kent County Council website, and you will be given a code to put on your funding claim form.

The pre-school has one delivery pattern when claiming hours, and this can now include lunches. Any extra hours over the claimed hours on your funding form will be charged at £6.30 an hour.

No deposit is required, but a £25 annual administration fee is now payable when joining the pre-school. You do not have to give notice if you leave the pre-school while claiming funding, but we would appreciate it if you did, so that we can offer your place to another family.

Free Early Education is available for 3- and 4-year-olds. You can access up to 15 hours of universal funding a week, and a further 15 hours of extended funding if you are entitled, over 38 weeks a year. Please make sure your child attends during the headcount weeks below so that your funded hours can be claimed.

Working parent entitlement funding is available for 2-year-olds for up to 30 hours a week. Please ask for more details about the eligibility criteria.

The days your child attends can be changed termly, provided notice is given, for hours claimed as part of Free Early Education.

A Parental Declaration form needs to be signed every term to record the hours you have requested.

Actuals claim period

- Autumn 2026: Tuesday 1 September – Tuesday 6 October 2026
- Spring 2027: Monday 4 January – Tuesday 2 February 2027
- Summer 2027: Tuesday 13 April – Tuesday 25 May 2027

Designated Early Years census week

- Autumn 2026: Monday 28 September – Friday 2 October 2026
- Spring 2027: Monday 18 January – Friday 22 January 2027
- Summer 2027: Monday 17 May – Friday 21 May 2027

If you are applying for 30 hours free childcare (extended entitlement) or working parent entitlement funding for 2-year-olds, you will need to visit

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk. You need to apply the term before you require the funding.

You will receive an 11-digit code, which you need to bring into the pre-school so that your eligibility for 30 hours extended funding can be checked.

Children not claiming Free Early Education or working parent entitlement funding, or requiring extra wraparound care

If your child is not entitled to Free Early Education, fees (£6.30 per hour from September 2026) need to be paid in advance of using childcare, for example weekly, fortnightly or monthly. If your child goes into a new hour, this is charged as a full hour.

Receipts will be issued after payments are logged by the Finance Manager every Friday. Payments are entered into a weekly record and then into your individual account, which shows all details of your hours, including your Free Early Education place, and the payments you have made. Invoices will be issued to all parents/carers for sessions and wraparound hours owed, and are monitored on a four-week cycle to prevent anyone going into arrears.

If you receive letters reminding you about a late payment, a £25 administration charge will be added to your invoice after three invoices. If the balance is still not settled, a further charge of £10 will be added each time a further invoice is issued.

Please do not hesitate to ask if you need to clarify anything.