



Cygnets Childcare, The Old School Hall
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Dear Parents/Carers

As is the case for so many Early Years settings, it continues to be a financially challenging time for Cygnets. Our operating costs have risen, and continue to rise rapidly, particularly the national minimum wage which will rise by almost 10% in April. As you will no doubt be aware from the press, the rate we are paid for every government funded hour we provide, falls far short of the actual cost of providing that care and education. We have scaled back our Breakfast Club sessions due to very low take up and are working hard to make savings without compromising the quality of the early years education and care we provide.

To ensure our financial viability and sustainability as an organisation, Cygnets have no option but to increase its fees to parents from 17 April 2023.

To ensure we can continue to provide the high-quality care and education you expect, and your children deserve, it is necessary for us to increase our hourly rate from £4.90 to £5.40 per hour for pre-school sessions. Breakfast and After-school Club fees will remain sessional, increasing to £6.20 and £9.00 per session respectively. This will help support our financial sustainability and cover a proportion of our ever-increasing costs. This increase will be effective from 17 April 2023 - please refer to the table below for the new sessional rates:

Session/Service	Price from 17 April 2023
Before School Club	£6.20
Pre-school (09:10-12:10)	£16.20
Pre-school (12:10-15:10)	£16.20
Full Day (09:10-15:10)	£32.40
After School Club (pick up by 17:00)	£9.00
Sibling discount continues to apply as follows: 2 children - 10%, 3 children - 20%, 4+ children - 25%. HOWEVER, sibling discount does not apply where one of the sibling's sessions is funded i.e., the parent/carer does not pay for all their children's sessions.	

We would like to take this opportunity to remind parents/carers of various government initiatives which, if eligible, may help you with your childcare costs and we would strongly encourage you explore your possible entitlement to these offers:

- For **Pre-school children**, there is the 15-hour universal entitlement for all 3- and 4-year-olds and eligible two-year olds. Additionally, the 30-hour extended entitlement is available for eligible working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds.
- For **Non-funded Pre-school and School-age children**, the Tax-Free Childcare Account is available for working parents/carers whose children are under the age of 12 years, or under 17 years, if the child has a disability. For every £8 you pay into your account, the government will add another £2.

You can check your eligibility for all government childcare support on the Childcare Choices website: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk.

Cygnets are registered to accept payments from Tax-free Childcare accounts, and we will continue to accept childcare vouchers from providers with whom we hold an account, until they are phased out by government.

Our snack contribution will increase to £1.50 per week, per child. The snack charge will remain voluntary for funded pre-school children but will become mandatory for all fee-paying children. The entire amount goes towards providing your children with a healthy carbohydrate snack and fresh fruit/vegetables and milk/water.

The registration fee will remain at £10.00 for those children who are not funded when they join Cygnets.

We appreciate this increase in fees adds to financial pressures for some families. If you do encounter difficulties paying your invoice, please speak to Carolyn as soon as possible, so a mutually acceptable resolution can be reached. It may be possible to put a payment plan in place, enabling families to pay by weekly/monthly instalments, spreading the cost across each half-term, instead of a one-off payment for the entire invoice amount. Please be assured all such matters are dealt with confidentially.

Cygnets' management committee hope you will understand the reasons for a further increase in fees: a decision reached only after lengthy debate and consideration. Having also explored our local competitors' charges, we believe we remain competitively priced.

Our Fees Policy is currently being updated and amended to reflect the new prices and will be published shortly on the Parents' Noticeboard, and in due course on our website, www.cygnetschildcare.co.uk. If you would like a hard copy, please speak to a member of staff who will be pleased to provide you with the policy.

If you have any comments or questions concerning fees, please do not hesitate to speak to Carolyn.

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