**Funded Hours & Charges Policy (EYFS 2025)**

**Policy Statement:** At Little Acorns preschool, we are committed to delivering high-quality, affordable, and accessible childcare services in line with the statutory guidance on early education and childcare entitlements. This policy outlines how we offer government-funded early education hours, additional charges, and our approach to transparency in invoicing, in accordance with the latest Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory guidance and the Early Education and Childcare Entitlements guidance, effective from 1 April 2025.

**Funded Early Education Entitlement**

We offer government-funded childcare places as part of the **15-hour and 30-hour free entitlement scheme** for eligible two, three, and four-year-old children. These funded hours:

* Are available **free of charge** to parents.
* Can be accessed without any mandatory additional charges.
* Are offered during agreed sessions, in line with the EYFS requirements.

**Additional Charges**

While the government funding covers the cost of delivering high-quality early education, it **does not** cover

* Consumables (nappies, wipes, sun cream, etc.).
* Additional activities such as trips, extra-curricular experiences, or specialist classes.

**Voluntary Contributions:**  
Parents **may choose** to contribute towards these additional costs, but these charges are entirely optional and must not be a condition of accessing a free place.

**Transparency & Invoicing**

To ensure transparency and compliance with statutory guidance, our invoices will clearly itemise the following:

1. **Free entitlement hours received.**
2. **Additional private paid hours (if applicable).**
3. **Non-food consumable charges.**
4. **Activity charges (if applicable).**

Preschools are **not required** to publish their charges online, but this information will be clearly communicated to parents via written agreements and invoices.

**Charging for Private Hours**

Parents **may choose** to book additional childcare hours beyond their funded entitlement. These additional hours:

* Are subject to standard hourly rates.
* Must not be a requirement for accessing a funded place.

**Deposits & Fees**

* A **refundable deposit** may be required to secure a funded place, but this must be returned once the child starts attending.
* **Non-refundable registration fees** must not be charged for entitlement-funded places.

**Flexibility of Hours**

* Parents will receive clear information on how many **free hours** they are entitled to per week.
* There will be **no artificial breaks** in free entitlement hours that prevent parents from using their full entitlement in a way that supports their work commitments.
* Patterns of provision will depend on availability within the childminding setting.

**Fee changes or increases**

Any changes or increases in fees will be clearly communicated to families. Any changes will be made with a minimum of one terms notice.

**Alignment with EYFS 2025 Changes**

This policy reflects the latest EYFS updates effective from **September 2025**, ensuring that our setting remains compliant with new requirements, including:

* **Clearer invoicing** and **breakdown of charges** by January 2026.
* Ensuring **fair access** to free places without mandatory charges.
* Offering **reasonable alternatives** for additional chargeable items.

**Signed:** Chairperson  
**Date:** September 2025