Belsay Daycare Ltd
Fees Policy 2026-27

Incorporating the Schedule of Charges agreed by the committee, July 2026

Policy statement

Belsay Daycare is a community managed, not-for-profit charitable organisation. Our aim is to provide high quality childcare which is affordable for all families. We provide Early Years preschool education open to all children from 2 to 5 years old, delivered from our purpose-built classroom within the grounds of Belsay Primary School, enabling us to combine our preschool provision with wraparound care for pupils of Belsay Primary School.

Our fees are set on a single principle: one hourly rate for every child, every age and every session type, matched to the hourly rate Northumberland County Council sets for funded early education. Session costs are decided at committee meetings, which are open to all members to attend and vote on. A full schedule of charges appears at the end of this document.

Funded early education entitlements

Early years education can be delivered flexibly, in line with parental demand and setting capacity. Funded children can use a maximum of three providers at any one time (including before and after school clubs) but may only use their funded entitlement at two sites on any given day.

Working families entitlement (30 hours from 9 months)

Eligible working families can claim up to 30 funded hours per week, over a minimum of 38 weeks per year (1,140 hours), from the start of the term after their child turns 9 months old until the child starts school.

You can usually claim if you (and your partner, if you have one) are:

- in work, or on sick leave, annual leave, or shared parental, maternity or adoption leave
- each earning on average at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week (this earnings requirement does not apply if you are self-employed and started your business less than 12 months ago)

You are not eligible if your child does not usually live with you, if either you or your partner has an adjusted net income over £100,000, or if your immigration status means you have no recourse to public funds. If you cannot work, you may still be eligible if your partner is working and you receive Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Carer's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance.

Parents must apply online at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk before the end of the term prior to when they wish to use the entitlement. You will be issued with a code which the setting must verify, and you must reconfirm your eligibility every three months. If during any period of attendance a child no longer remains eligible, they will be placed into a grace period, usually lasting until the end of the term. Once the grace period ends, parents will be charged for any sessions currently booked beyond any remaining entitlement, unless we have received written cancellation of the additional hours.

15 hours entitlement for eligible 2 year olds (disadvantaged families)

Separately from the working families entitlement, funded places of up to 15 hours per week (570 hours per year) are available from the beginning of the term after a child's second birthday where the family receives one of the following:

- Income Support
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit, with household income of £15,400 a year or less after tax, not including benefit payments
- tax credits, with household income of £16,190 a year or less before tax
- the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- the Working Tax Credit 4-week run on

2 year olds can also get a funded place if they are looked after by a local authority, have an education, health and care (EHC) plan or statement of special educational needs (SEN), receive Disability Living Allowance, or have left care under an adoption order, special guardianship order or child arrangements order.

Universal entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds

All 3 and 4 year olds are entitled to 15 funded hours per week (570 hours per year) from the beginning of the term after their third birthday until they begin primary school, regardless of parents' working status. These hours can be topped up with extra sessions, for which fees are payable.

Further information on all entitlements is available at www.childcarechoices.gov.uk and www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs, from your Health Visitor, local Children's Centre, or the Northumberland Families Information Service on 01670 623563 (https://northumberland.fsd.org.uk).

Charges alongside funded hours

In line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance (effective 1 April 2025), the funded entitlements are free at the point of delivery and there are no mandatory charges in relation to funded hours. We may charge for meals, snacks and consumables (such as nappies or sun cream) and for optional additional activities, but these charges are voluntary: parents may opt out and provide their own equivalent items, and a child's funded place is never conditional on paying them. Children accessing funded hours receive the same quality of and access to provision in all cases.

Our invoices itemise funded entitlement hours (at £0), additional paid hours, food charges, non-food consumables and activity charges separately, and our current charges are published and available to parents before a place is offered.

General conditions

- All parents will be asked to sign a contract at the beginning of each term stating the hours their child will attend and the payment to be made in relation to them. This is also a time to discuss with a key worker how many hours your child may need or benefit from.
- Changes to the agreed contract can normally only be made when the new contract is drawn up for the next term, although we do try to be flexible and accommodate permanent or occasional changes to days where session capacity and staffing levels allow.
- We are required by the authority to report any instances of non-attendance for sessions they are funding, so you must keep us fully informed during any absence due to ill health. For the same reason you will be asked to complete a holiday form in advance of any planned absence, however short.
- 2 year old children can start at any point after their second birthday; however, we reserve the right to restrict the sessions available to young 2 year olds not yet in receipt of funding, should the daycare manager deem it necessary. Always discuss with your key worker which sessions would be most appropriate for your child, whatever their age.
- Funding is normally only available from the beginning of each term. For example, if funding is claimed for 10 hours per week and parents wish to increase this mid-term to 15 hours, funding for the additional hours is only available from the start of the next term; in the meantime the additional 5 hours will be charged at our standard hourly rate (£5.90 from 2 November 2026).

- Any contracted additional chargeable hours or items will be invoiced to the parent or carer at the end of the month in which they were scheduled to be used.
- Ad hoc sessions may be available on request, subject to appropriate staffing ratios being practicable. We cannot guarantee availability: always telephone the preschool to check whether space is available.
- Written notice must be given where a child is to leave the preschool. Fees are payable for any contracted hours during the remainder of the half term in which the child leaves.
- Session fees remain due during holidays. Please give staff notice if a child is to take holiday during session time; holiday forms are available from the daycare manager.
- Session fees remain due in the case of sickness. Please ring to notify the preschool on the first day of sickness.
- If the preschool is unable to open (for example, due to adverse weather conditions), fees are not payable.
- **Suspension or exclusion for behaviour.** If a child is suspended under our Behaviour Management and Staff Behaviour Policy (12), fees remain payable for sessions booked or contracted during the suspension. If a child is collected early as a precautionary step and the manager does not confirm a suspension, sessions missed as a result are not charged. If a child is permanently excluded, fees are payable up to the date the exclusion takes effect and no notice period applies. Funded hours are never charged. This is separate from the suspension of chargeable sessions for unpaid fees, described under "If fees are not paid" below.
- In exceptional circumstances we may agree to waive notice periods for children leaving the preschool or reducing their hours. Please ask the daycare manager.
- We may agree a more flexible contract for children starting at the preschool for the first time, to allow parents to assess whether their child is ready for the preschool environment. Please ask the daycare manager.
- Preschool children may also attend breakfast club and, subject to the age conditions in the schedule below, after school club. Funded hours can be used for these sessions; any additional hours booked over and beyond funded sessions are payable in accordance with this policy.

OOSC (Breakfast Club 7:45am to 8:45am and After School Club 3:15pm to 6pm)

- Fees are payable for every session or part session that a child attends.
- There is no registration fee, although registration details must be completed before a child attends their first breakfast club or after school session.
- All sessions should be booked as far in advance as possible. Last minute places may be available, but we cannot guarantee this: check availability by telephoning the daycare as soon as you become aware of your need. Staff are normally on site to take calls from 7:30am to 6:15pm; at busy times you may need to leave a message and we will return your call as soon as a member of staff is available. Do not presume a place is available unless the daycare has confirmed it.
- Parents can use the working families entitlement in the breakfast and after school clubs, with full flexibility between 7:45am and 6pm. 2 year olds entitled to funded hours can use their entitlement in the breakfast club.
- Fees are payable for after school care booked but cancelled with less than 24 hours' notice. This applies whatever the reason for cancellation, including sickness, school trips and school events. To cancel a booked session, telephone the daycare; if nobody is available a message may be left, including at weekends. For example, to cancel a session booked for a Monday evening, leave a message by 3pm on the Sunday afternoon.
- Belsay Daycare Ltd is an independent charitable limited company and is not part of or controlled by Belsay Primary School or Northumberland County Council. The cancellation fee remains payable even if a session is cancelled for a school event. You must also advise the school of any days your child will attend after school club so that we can be correctly authorised to collect your child; failure to do so could lead to your child missing a session for which you will still be charged. Similarly, if your child is usually

booked into after school club on a particular day, advise the school if they are instead to be collected or to go home on the school bus.

- From time to time Belsay Daycare may offer holiday clubs or additional sessions. By reserving a place in these sessions you agree to pay the advertised fee and accept that different booking, payment and cancellation terms may apply; these will always be clearly stated in the advertisement.

Payment

- A detailed statement of due fees will be emailed every month, with the balance to pay stated clearly with the words "PAYMENT DUE IS". For OOSC attendance by Belsay Primary School children, fees are chargeable one month in arrears.
- **Invoices are payable within 14 days of the date they are issued.** The due date is shown on each invoice.
- Payments can be made via BACS using the details given on your statement. Please use your child's name as the payment reference. All payments should be made directly to Belsay Daycare; no payments should be made via Belsay Primary School.
- Belsay Daycare is registered to receive payments from government Tax-Free Childcare accounts. For every £8 you pay in, the government adds £2, up to £2,000 per child per year (£4,000 for disabled children). Accounts are available to qualifying working families with children under 12 (under 17 where the child is disabled); the qualifying criteria are similar to the working families entitlement. Visit www.gov.uk/tax-free-childcare for details and to apply.
- Fees may also be paid via Childcare Vouchers under an employer salary deduction scheme for parents already enrolled. Note that voucher schemes closed to new applicants in October 2018; parents not already in a scheme should use Tax-Free Childcare instead.
- Funding for entitlement hours is claimed on your behalf by Belsay Daycare as an approved provider. We can only do this once we have all required information, including proof of your child's date of birth and any eligibility codes. Failure to pass on information within the deadlines set by the daycare manager could result in the loss of funding for the following term, in which case you will be required to pay all session fees arising. When a funded child attends more than one setting, the parent indicates how they wish the funding to be split; where a child attends a maintained nursery class, the local authority will allocate funding via the headcount process.
- Returned cheques and direct debits will incur an administrative charge equal to the amount charged by the daycare's bank, passed on in a revised invoice.

If fees are not paid: our recovery process

Belsay Daycare is run by a small dedicated team and overseen by a committee of volunteer parents. We rely on fees being paid on time to pay our staff and keep the setting running for every child. If paying is ever difficult, please talk to the daycare manager or treasurer as early as possible. We will always try to agree a payment plan, and raising it early means we can help before any charge or restriction applies.

Our recovery process has two stages: reminder and support, then escalation. The same process and the same charge apply to every account, preschool and wraparound alike.

When	What happens
Due date (14 days after the invoice date)	Payment is due.
7 days after the due date	**Stage 1: friendly reminder** by email or text, in case the invoice has been overlooked.
14 days after the due date	**Stage 1: second reminder** by phone or in person, followed by an email. We ask whether there are any difficulties and offer a payment plan.
28 days after the due date	**Stage 2: final notice** in writing. An administration charge of £5 per month may be added from this point while the balance remains unpaid. The notice explains that chargeable sessions will be suspended if the balance is not cleared within two months of the invoice date.
Two months after the invoice date	**Stage 2: suspension notice.** The child may attend funded sessions only, and no further chargeable sessions are provided until the balance is cleared. This may be waived where an agreed payment plan is being kept to.
After suspension, if the balance is still unpaid	**Stage 2: final collection notice.** If payment is not made by the date given, the matter may be referred to the small claims court. Any court fees will be added to the amount owed.

- **Funded hours are never affected.** A child's funded entitlement continues whatever the state of the account.
- Suspension of chargeable sessions for unpaid fees is separate from suspension under our Behaviour Management and Staff Behaviour Policy (12).
- If a parent disputes part of an invoice, we pause the process and do not add the administration charge for the disputed amount while it is looked into. Any amount that is not in dispute remains payable. Unresolved disputes are dealt with under our Complaints Procedure (14).
- All outstanding fees must be paid before a child leaves the setting.
- Staff use the standard letters in the Fees and Payment Recovery: Staff Toolkit for each stage, and record each step on the family's account.

Late collection

- Preschool children not collected by 3:05pm may, where space and ratios allow, join the after school club and will be charged at the applicable after school rates.
- Where a child is collected late from a booked session, late collection fees apply: £15 for the first 15 minutes and £20 for every 15 minutes thereafter. Within a sibling group the fee is applied once only, to the first child.
- Persistent late collection, or a child remaining uncollected, is managed under our Non Collection of Children Policy (13), available on request.

Schedule of charges 2026-27

At the meeting of the committee in July 2026 it was agreed to set charges for the 2026-27 school year at £5.90 per hour (or the equivalent session rate). The new rates apply to sessions from Monday 2 November 2026, after October half term; sessions before that date are charged at the 2025-26 rates. £5.90 matches the hourly rate Northumberland County Council pays for funded 3 and 4 year old early education in 2026-27, and it is our policy that our hourly rate tracks the county funded rate each year. One rate applies to every child, every age and every session type; the only exception is the discounted late afternoon rate after 4:30pm, which is held below the hourly rate to keep longer days affordable.

Charges for pupils of Belsay Primary School

Session	Charge
Breakfast Club (7:45am to 8:45am)*	£5.90
After School Club to 4:30pm	£7.40
Each additional 30 minutes, 4:30pm to 6pm	£2.50
After School Club to 6pm	£14.90

**Breakfast is not routinely provided at breakfast club. Children who have not already eaten at home may bring their own healthy breakfast option; facilities are available and staff will assist in preparation where appropriate. Children who have missed breakfast, or who tell staff they feel hungry on arrival, will be offered a cereal option.*

Charges for pupils of Belsay Preschool

	Collect 12pm	Collect 1pm*	Collect 3pm*	Collect 4:30pm**	Collect 6pm**
Arrive 9am	£17.70	£23.60	£35.40	£42.80	£50.30
Arrive 7:45am	£23.60	£29.50	£41.30	£48.70	£56.20

All preschool charges are calculated at £5.90 per hour to 3pm; children staying beyond 3pm join the after school club and the after school rates above apply. Children who attend preschool between 12pm and 1pm will have lunch in the dining area of Belsay Daycare. These children may bring their own healthy packed lunch or, alternatively, a hot meal can be provided by Belsay Primary School at a cost of £2.80 (price set by the school and subject to change).

**Pupils must reach age 30 months before they are able to attend lunchtime and afternoon preschool sessions, or when their key worker determines they are developmentally ready to take this step.*

***After school club is available to preschool children from age 2 on an individual child basis, at the discretion of the daycare manager and subject to staffing ratios and space.*

Voluntary charges alongside funded hours

Where a child's hours are funded, charges for lunch and any consumables or optional activities are voluntary and itemised separately on invoices. Parents may opt out and provide their own equivalent items; a funded place is never conditional on paying these charges.

Approval and review

Version	**3.2, October 2026: adds the payment recovery process, 14-day payment terms and a single £5 administration charge; new rates apply from 2 November 2026; school hot lunch price updated to £2.80, 22 October 2026 (3.0 approved by the management committee, July 2026)**
Effective from	20 October 2026 (approved by the management committee). The new hourly rate applies to sessions from Monday 2 November 2026.
Review date	September 2027
Policy number	28
Companion document	Fees and Payment Recovery: Staff Toolkit (standard letters for each stage)
Signed on behalf of the committee	 **Adam Goldwater**, Chair of Trustees Date: 21 October 2026
Signed on behalf of the staff	 **Lisa Mulholland**, Manager Date: 21 October 2026
Related policies	Admission Policy (1); Safeguarding Policy (8); Behaviour Management and Staff Behaviour Policy (12); Non Collection of Children Policy (13); Complaints Procedure (14); Out of School Club Policy (42)
Charity number 1124855	Ofsted registration number EY403336