**Daily charges.**

Dear Parent/Carers

We at St Mary’s Pre-School thrive on ensuring our setting reaches the highest of standards, which is recognised by Ofsted. To achieve this all the staff have worked extremely hard and have spent many of their own hours enhancing, resourcing and preparing activities at home in their own time. We currently work above ratios to ensure we provide a higher quality of care to the children and maintain a high-quality setting. The job we do is not a highly paid role - we all do this job because we want to make an impact and support children’s early start in life. Our job is hard but can be rewarding.

The reason for this letter, as you may be aware, is that new government guidance came out on 21st February regarding granted hours and charging for consumables. We understand it is not clear from the government what the education grant covers, as this has changed several times over the last five years, hopefully this will provide you with some clarity.

The new guidance comes into force on 1st April 2025 whereby it states that every parent has a choice to opt out of paying the additional costs/consumable fees during funded hours, this fee will increase in September 2025 to £4.00 per day or £2.00 half a day. If your child is in receipt of EYPP, you can also request to put your EYPP money towards this cost.

We currently charge £2 a day and £1 for half a day, this is increasing from after Easter to £3.00 these charges are low and we have reduced many enhanced activities that we used to do, to keep the costs low as our outgoings, bills, wages, rent, food and resource charges have dramatically increased. We believe that Nursery and Pre School should be affordable, however we have to be sustainable, in the current climate this is extremely difficult, with the low funding rates and high outgoings, Nurseries and preschools are now in extremely difficult positions, to keep surviving and to be able to run as we currently do, is a challenge. Compared to many Nurseries and Pre-Schools we have kept our costs extremely low.

The new guidance states how the funded granted hours throughout the day are funded. We currently provide these funded hours by operating between the hours 9am – 3pm covering the granted free 6 hours per day, which is the maximum number of hours you can claim in a day. Any hours outside of these times are chargeable.

What is not clear is what the grant covers and doesn’t cover, and it only covers the basics of education. During Covid the government stated it only covered staff wages and no other aspects of running an educational setting/business, however the government have now changed this stance.

**What the grant does not cover is the following:**

* Enhanced activities, which we purchase extra resources for such as Easter, Mother’s Day, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Diwali, Father’s Day, Valentines Day, Pancake Day, Halloween, Cooking activities, Christmas parties, any different celebration or activity which we do to encourage children’s learning and development.
* The Graduation party, the party, the rent for the room, any food or games we arrange for the children at the end of year.
* The leavers service where we also give the children a leaving gift.
* The visitors we have in, all of which provide extra experiences from external professionals.
* The printing and laminating of resources to support learning and developing.
* The printing and laminating for visual aids and language support
* The home school book bags, identi plays bags, copy play bags, specific learning intention bags that can be taken home , and the cost to replace the items that get lost or broken accidently at home.
* Nappies, nappy sacks, wet wipes, suncream and additional cleaning products to sanitise after every use to ensure the environment is hygienically clean.
* Famly to ensure you have access to your child’s learning, can message us and can see what’s going on in preschool weekly along with the observations and the time it takes staff to upload the information. We could cancel this and you would no longer receive written or photograph observations and would be updated via a monthly letter instead of being able to communicate via the app daily.
* We currently provide at least 6 different pieces of fruit each day at snack time and often offer other items that support areas of learning we are focusing on.
* The ratio changed for 2-year-olds from 1:4 to 1:5 and Rachel’s qualification as a Early Years Professional Teacher is classed as 1:13. We currently do not work to these ratios as we want to provide a higher ratio for quality of care, education and believe a change in ratio would jeopardise the safety and care of the children.
* We still use a minimum of 1:4 in our two year room and 1:8 in our preschool room,
* We provide SEN support that is not covered by the grant.
* The EYFS states that the amount of time spent doing observations and writing reports is at a minimum and its about knowing the children and understanding where they are in their development. We understand being parents ourselves, that we would like to know more, which is why we have continued to write reports and inform you in writing of your child’s development.
* Children who need additional support, such as being with an adult for most of the day, requiring language and communication, physio support, children with inclusion funding or EHCP do not cover the cost of having an adult with them for the majority of the day, this affects all children as when the high needs child has an adult, there is another adult to support the other children, which is why we usually have at least an extra two adults in every day.
* Inset days and enhanced training.
* Setting up the preschool and packing it away every day, we do not have any income for the time everyone is in before the children arrive and after they leave.
* Our setting is part of the recognised language champions setting in South Gloucs, where we attend meetings in the evenings and ensure we are up to date with new initiatives, we are also trained in using the Henen language approach to support children’s language and communication development
* There is also staff who are trained in the speech therapy preventative measure ‘ ‘Talkboost’ which is a nationally recognised early intervention language programme that St Mary’s has been using for 8 years. The programme covers sentence sequencing and structuring. It supports building children’s confidence and social skills as this activity is held in small groups. We have trained local preschools and attending meetings to share our success with other settings. Our setting is part of the recognised Language Champions in South Glos, where we attend evening meetings and ensure we are up to date with changes.

The programme was expensive to purchase and enrol. However, we feel this greatly benefits the children’s language skills and sets our setting above others. We ensure we bought extra resources so we could offer it to a larger group and extend it to home. We share with you the assessments and observations to support your children’s progress.

* The staff are also trained in Autism education trust, where we develop and use a range of different strategies to support children who learn in neurodiverse ways.

As a setting we want to be inclusive to everyone which is why we try to keep the costs at a minimum and provide the wonderful activities and resources to benefit all children. Our intention is not to discriminate against anyone.

As a setting we could reduce the costs by reducing the ratios, however how we currently work provides a higher level of care. We do not believe in the current climate that we would be able to meet our children’s needs if we worked in a lower ratio, more children need more support to manage their emotions, regulate themselves, to communicate and to engage in school life, there are more children with delayed toileting and self care and independence skills, this in its self takes more adults to help all the children practice these skills, keep them healthy and hygienic.

We could only allow children who need additional support to attend for the hours that their funding covers.

We could reduce the preventative strategies and resources we use to help encourage all children to develop and learn, this is our higher achievers as well as our children who have delays.

Hopefully one of the reasons you chose St Mary’s Preschool is because of our quality of care and the wonderful extra activities we provide at the setting. We also think this is what has made us successful and supports our reputation within the local authority, with ofsted and with the families who have used us.

We would like to continue to provide a high level of care and education and hopefully this letter will help you understand the costs involved which are not covered by the education grant and the reasons why we have had to increase the fees recently.

The new guidance comes into force on 1st April 2025 whereby it states that every parent has a choice to opt out of paying the consumable fees of £2.00 per day, this is increasing in September 2025 to £4.00 a day.

There are many nurseries, preschools who are currently talking about refusing to sign provider agreements with local authorities, refusing to take any funding and becoming fee paying only. Our local authority has not yet produced our provider agreement we are in talks with them to ensure that we are all able to provide the care for early years children that we are currently doing. There are nurseries who are reducing their hours and closing due to the financial strains and demands that are now put on us.

If you decide to opt out of the consumable fee you are agreeing to take responsibility to purchase the consumables listed above and unfortunately agreeing to opt out would mean that you do not wish for your child to take part in all the extracurricular activities, they we currently provide. If you choose to opt out of the consumable fee you will also need to contact us to find out what snack options are available each week to ensure your child is included. If you choose to opt out, you will need to ensure that your child bag has nappy sacs, wet wipes, cleaning materials to support them.

If you would like more information before you decide please come and speak to Rachel .

**Choices available from April 2025 September 2025.**

**1.**Opt in for all inclusive consumable charge at £3 a day - increase to £4

2.Opt in for snack only charge at £2.00 a day - increase to £3

**3.Opt out and will pay individually for all additional services - charge for all additional services**

**If you choose to Opt out, You are choosing to Provide your child with all the resources, food, that are required to ensure the child is included in the daily events.**

**You will need to sign on your registration form which option you choose.**

**Opt in/ Opt out additional charges April – September 2025**

Child’s Name : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

I choose option \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**This letter must be signed and returned to Pre-School with your choice, it is a legal requirement from April 1st 2025.**

1, Opt in for all inclusive consumable daily charge - £3.00 a day /£1:50 half day

2. Opt in for snack only consumable daily charge - £2.00 a day and pay for all additional services as and when , these charges will be put on your family invoice and require payment on the next invoice date.

3. Opt out and pay individually for all additional services

Option 3 – I will provide my child with a healthy fresh fruit selection daily which I will chop and prepare as per NHS healthy choking guidelines , I understand that for my child to be fully included into the snack bar , I would need to provide six different fresh fruit items chopped as per NHS healthy choking guidelines.

I will be charged for every additional item that is used if my child needs to be cleaned from a toileting accident or if they wear nappies, I must provide Nappies, wet wipes, nappy sacs, or I will be charged for each item used.

I will be charged for all additional events, learning activities and parties.

I will need to pay upfront for all additional activities if I wish my child to join in to ensure that the preschool can afford to run the experience for all children who are opting in / opting out and paying or provide those other children with different activities, this could mean we would be unable to run some of the activities and additional services that we currently do.

We have always been a fully inclusive setting and these changes will be a challenge to ensure all children are fully included

Please see attached letter and our fees, Policy to offer funded places without charges Policy for more information or speak to a member of staff

There is currently legal action to put a holt to these government changes due to the risks of more settings closing and the effect these changes will have on Early Years sector as it already has a staffing, recruitment crisis along with funding difficulties .