



Alternatives Policy

Government guidelines require settings to be transparent about any 'extras' that are charged to parents who claim government funding and requires settings to give parents the opportunity to 'opt out' of paying such extras so that they just received the basic level of early education that the funding covers.

Barnett Wood Pre-School believes that the 'early years' are some of the most important in a child's life. The setting feels it is important to go beyond the basics of childcare (as stipulated by the government) to ensure that every child has the best start. The setting expects families to support this ethos and to help ensure the sustainability of the setting for future children. The document below sets out the setting's policy regarding the charging of consumables and the alternative that is available to parents who do not wish to opt into this.

By paying the voluntary consumables charge parents are 'opting in' to the enhanced curriculum that is on offer. Families are invoiced a Voluntary Consumables Charge before the start of each term, based on the number of funded hours being claimed. This will enable the setting to continue to offer high-quality, nurturing care and education and ensure that it remains financially viable.

The Voluntary Consumables Charge covers costs incurred by the setting for providing items that government funding does NOT include, such as:

- Any food or snacks
- Wipes, sun cream, tissues and nappy sacks, emergency spare clothes
- Enrichment activities
- Gardening resources, cooking activities
- Special events such as the leavers celebration
- Festival celebrations with additional resource requirements
- Additional high-quality resources such as our discovery area, playdoh station
- Access to online learning journal and care diary.
- Extra-curricular activities and classes.

In addition to this Barnett Wood Preschool works on a 1:4 ratio for 2yr olds (instead of 1:5 as stated in the EYFS) and have a high level of staff trained in Paediatric First Aid (rather than the statutory minimum).

Should a family decide to 'opt out' of paying the Voluntary Consumables Charge this is binding for the academic year to which it relates. However, should a parent wish to change their mind during the academic year, they can make a request to the setting in writing.

There is no option to opt out of certain elements of the setting's provision. Where a parent has a combination of funded hours and private hours, any decision to opt in or opt out will apply to both their child's funded and private paid hours.

Parents who choose to opt out will be able to receive the funded government provision of 15 or 30 hours without additional charges, however they will be required to provide additional items/resources for their child in lieu of the Voluntary Consumables Charge. Parents will be supplied with a list of everything they will be required to bring in for their child. Where they are required to bring in items daily, staff will need to check this before the child is left at the setting and if there is anything not supplied that is needed for the day, then alternative arrangements will need to be made.

Under no circumstances will the setting refund any sessions that a child is unable to attend because a parent/carer has omitted to bring in the necessary item(s) for that day.

By selecting to opt-out parents are agreeing to the following alterations to their child's provision for the academic year. Government guidelines require us to itemise the consumables charge as follows:

Food Consumables	
Opt In	
- The setting provides a range of healthy snack options. - Children have snack once in the morning and once in the afternoon. - This is prepared by staff following Safe Food guidelines. - Special dietary alternatives are available where requested in advance.	
Opt Out Alternative	
- Parents must bring in a snack each session for their child in a named box, which is separate to any lunch items they might have brought in. - If a child is staying for a full day, two snacks must be provided. - Snacks must be limited to fruit and vegetables or a dry alternative from a stipulated list. - Snack must be pre-prepared (ie cored/peeled/chopped) in such a way that reduces the risk of choking (ie carrots into sticks not circles). - Any food being bought on site for snack that does not list its ingredients must come with these details (excluding fruit and vegetables) - Drinks will be provided by the preschool. If a parent forgets to bring in the child's snack one must be delivered to the setting before 10am (morning session), or 2pm (afternoon session).	
Non Food Consumables	
Opt In	
- The setting provides sensitive skin wipes & nappy sacks for those in nappies. These may also be used for children needing a clean during the session. - The setting supplies sun cream which is used at lunchtimes to 'top up' those children who attend for a full day. This is always a children's factor 50 sensitive skin sun cream. - The setting aims to celebrate various festivals through the provision of additional resources (e.g. food tasting for Chinese New Year). - The setting offers two parent consultations each year, these take place out of hours in a quiet area of the building. Parents who are unable to attend a parent consultation can opt for a telephone call instead. - Termly summaries are sent out at the end of each term. These contain a summary of progress and individual photographs. - Parents will have access to Tapestry and receive a daily entry for each day their child attends. This shares group photos along with a summary of the activities on offer. It is great for sharing with children at home to discuss what they have been doing. Parents also receive notifications if their child has had an accident at the setting and can log in to see Care Diary entries for their child. Parents can complete an All About Me for their child on Tapestry before their Settling Meeting.	
Opt Out Alternative	
- Parents to supply wipes and nappy sacks for their child. A quantity must be supplied on the first day of each term (not their child's first session) by 9am. The setting will contact parents as and when further supplies are needed. - Parents to supply a named bottle of sun cream for their child. This must be supplied on the first day of the autumn term (not their child's first session) by 9am.	

- Where the setting is celebrating a festival, parents will be emailed two weeks beforehand with a list of items they need to provide so that their child can take part.
- Parents will not be invited for a parent consultation. Instead, they will have a longer hand over at drop off/collection time with their key person. This will be at a time which is convenient for the setting.
- Parents will not receive a termly summary with photos of their child but will be given a verbal update instead.
- Parents will not have access to Tapestry, therefore will not receive 'daily diary' updates, care diary entries or accident notifications. Instead, this information will be shared verbally. Parents will be required to complete an All About Me for their child via email rather than on Tapestry. This must be done before the child's Settling Meeting.

Activities

Opt In

- The setting employs specialist providers to enhance the experiences that children benefit from. In the past this has included yoga, sport providers, drama lessons.
- The children go on regular outings to the local areas, mainly the duck pond, train station, common, greengrocers. Staffing ratios are enhanced during trips.
- The setting holds a leavers celebration for Butterfly children at the end of the summer term. Butterfly children who opt into the consumables charge will be automatically invited to this.
- The setting periodically plans cooking activities with the children. The costs of this are covered by the consumables charge.
- The setting has two guinea pigs. The children have opportunities to interact and help with their care. The consumables charge helps to cover the cost of their food and care.

Opt Out Alternative

- Parents will be invoiced individually for the cost of their child participating in any such activities. The price will vary depending on the cost to the setting for facilitating it. Should parents choose not to pay this fee, their child will take part in an alternative activity at the setting. There is no guarantee that the child will be with other children from their own group during this time.
- The child will not be included in outings but will remain at the preschool with other children. There is no guarantee that they will be with children from their own group.
- Parents will be asked whether they would like their child to attend the leaver celebration. If they wish to attend this would be invoiced to help cover the cost of the entertainment/staffing and gifts
- Parents will be emailed two weeks before cooking activities are planned with a list of items they need to provide for their child to take part. Parents will need to have weighed out their child's ingredients at home and provide ingredients lists where appropriate.
- Parents will be asked to provide items at the start of each term to contribute to the care of the guinea pigs (e.g. hay, straw etc)

If you do not provide the agreed materials this will affect your child's access to the provision on offer, we do not want any child to be at a disadvantage/excluded from our provision.

Policy written July 2025