GEMS TINEY HOME NURSERY

HOME FROM HOME CHILDCARE

Funded Hours Policy

Purpose

Gems tiney Home Nursery provides eligible early education entitlement hours free of charge within the places and session patterns available. We explain the funded offer, private hours and voluntary extras before a family accepts a place. We follow current national guidance, Surrey County Council funding conditions and relevant tiney requirements.

Types of entitlement

All eligible three- and four-year-olds can receive up to 15 hours a week over 38 weeks, equivalent to 570 hours a year, from the term after their third birthday until the entitlement ends. Eligible two-year-olds may receive 15 hours through Surrey's Funded Early Education for Two-year-olds scheme, known as FEET.

Eligible working families can receive up to 30 hours a week over 38 weeks, equivalent to 1,140 hours a year, from the term after the child turns nine months until they start school, subject to the scheme's rules. For three- and four-year-olds this includes the universal 15 hours; the entitlements are not added together to make 45 hours.

Eligibility is determined by the relevant authority or HMRC, not by the nursery. We support families to understand options and apply through official routes. A funding code or eligibility letter does not itself guarantee an available nursery place.

Checking eligibility and declarations

Before funded care begins we confirm the child's age, relevant eligibility and agreed hours and complete Surrey's parental declaration and required consent checks.

Working-parent codes must be valid for the funded period and checked through Surrey's system before a place is confirmed as funded.

For a new working-parent entitlement, parents should obtain a valid code by 31 March for April, 31 August for September or 31 December for January, as applicable, and meet the scheme's start rules. Parents normally reconfirm eligibility every three months through their government childcare account and tell Gemma promptly about changes.

If eligibility is lost or reconfirmation is missed, a grace period may apply. We check Surrey's confirmed end date and explain the effect before any change to fees or sessions. Private care after funding ends requires clear agreement; we do not assume entitlement continues or retrospectively top up funded hours.

Session patterns and stretched funding

Funded hours are offered within our normal Monday to Friday opening hours of 8 am to 6 pm, subject to available places and Surrey delivery rules. We confirm the actual funded days, hours and weeks in writing. Parents do not have to buy private hours to access an available funded place.

The entitlement may be used over the funded term-time weeks or, where agreed and available, stretched across more weeks with fewer funded hours each week. Stretching spreads the same annual total; it does not create additional hours. The written schedule identifies closures, funded periods and any agreed private sessions.

Surrey funded dates do not necessarily match school term dates. We use the current council funded calendar and each child's agreed allocation, rather than assuming every week labelled term time is funded. Changes to bookings must be agreed in advance and reflected in declarations and claims.

Sharing a place and attendance

Parents may split eligible hours between providers, within scheme limits, and must declare the allocation so the same hours are not claimed twice. We liaise appropriately with the family, Surrey and other providers where needed. Unused hours cannot be exchanged for cash.

We record actual attendance and follow up unexplained absence under the Attendance Policy. Please tell us about illness, holidays and changes to attendance. Prolonged absence, transfers and leaving dates are handled under Surrey's current claim rules. A child's absence does not turn funded hours into a private charge.

If we cannot deliver agreed funded care, we explain the disruption and consult Surrey about any required claim adjustment and permitted alternatives. We do not charge parents for the missing funded provision or promise replacement hours without checking arrangements.

Voluntary extras and a free option

Any meals, snacks, personal consumables or optional additional activities that we charge for are voluntary, permitted by funding rules, explained in advance and itemised. Families may opt out of the charge and the associated optional item or activity without losing access to the funded place.

For food and personal consumables, parents may provide suitable items from home under our food safety, allergy and care procedures. Where that is not workable, we agree another reasonable free alternative, including waiving the charge where appropriate. Families should speak to Gemma to arrange this before attendance.

Children not taking an optional paid activity receive suitable supervised EYFS provision and the same quality of care. We do not charge top-ups, business running costs, essential learning materials or required SEND support as a condition of funded provision. Buying private hours is optional.

Invoices deposits and private sessions

Invoices distinguish free entitlement hours, additional private hours, food, non-food consumables and optional activities. The parental declaration records the funded pattern and any extras chosen. We provide clear current information about available sessions, charges and free alternatives.

No non-refundable registration fee or retainer is required for a funded place. Any reasonable refundable deposit is explained before payment and refunded according to Surrey's current required timetable. We do not ask parents to pay for funded hours pending council payment. Private hours and private booking terms are explained separately under the Fees Policy.

Inclusion records and concerns

Funded provision follows the EYFS and our inclusion arrangements. We discuss additional needs with families and seek appropriate support or funding without making the parent pay for legally required adjustments. Funding information is collected, stored and shared securely for valid administration, audit and safeguarding purposes.

Please raise questions or concerns with Gemma. Families can use the Complaints Policy and contact Surrey's funded early education team at fundedearlyeducation@surreycc.gov.uk about funding delivery or charges. We cooperate with council checks and correct inaccurate claims.

Reviewed annually and sooner if the funded offer or rules change. References: Department for Education Early education and childcare statutory guidance effective April 2026; GOV.UK Free Childcare for Working Parents; current Surrey provider agreement, charging guidance, funded calendar and stretched funding guidance.

Policy owner: Gemma Bayley
Reviewed: November 2026
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