

20<sup>th</sup> October 2017

Dear Families

### **30 hours free nursery provision offered at Cranmere from September 2017**

As I'm sure you are all aware, from September 2017 our nursery has been offering a small number of free '30 hours' places to families who wish to take up the offer from the Government.

Currently all families are entitled to 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds, and this has not changed, but for some families there may be a possibility to extend the childcare to 30 hours. This letter provides information about what Cranmere is offering from September 2017 and going forward.

#### **Eligibility:**

You are likely to be eligible if both you and your partner (if you have one) are:

- in work (or getting parental leave, sick leave or annual leave); and
- each earning at least the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage for 16 hours a week - this is £120 if you're over 25.

You're **not** eligible if:

- your child doesn't usually live with you, or the child is your foster child
- either you or your partner has a taxable income over £100,000

#### **Cranmere offer:**

Childcare providers have a choice about whether or not they wish to offer these additional hours in their setting, but we are pleased to say that following our consultation we are able to offer up to 6 pupils the chance to stay for the additional hours. These will be offered as an extension from half a week to a full week in Nursery. The timings of the nursery day will not change (although see the note below regarding lunch on a Wednesday), but if you are eligible for the extended offer then your child will be able stay all week, instead of just 2 and a half days.

Unfortunately we are unable to accommodate 'part-weeks' which means if you were eligible for the 30 hours offer then you would have to take all 30 hours at Cranmere (or 15 hours at Cranmere and your additional 15 hours at a different nursery setting or with a registered childminder).

#### **Next steps:**

We ask that families check their eligibility first via the Government's online portal, which is available at the following address <https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow> Once you have confirmed that you are eligible we would ask that you get back in touch with us for an application form.

#### **Timings – (please note that Wednesday arrangements would be slightly different to the current 15 hour offer):**

For Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday the hours of nursery are 9am to 3pm and these will not change.

However, on a Wednesday (the 'half day' of the core offer) we have already had to allow for a half hour break between the morning session leaving and the afternoon session starting. This means that if you wanted to take up the 30 hours offer, and you are eligible for it, then you would have a few options: you would either need to arrange for your child to be collected during that half hour window at lunchtime; or their start time could be moved to 9:15am; or you would need to pay a top-up so that they could stay for an extra 30 minutes. We have set this top-up rate as £3.25 per week from September 2017, but the benefit would be that the nursery day would be 30 minutes longer than usual on a Wednesday (8:45am to 3:15pm).

We have put together answers to some frequently asked questions (see overleaf). If you wish to discuss anything in more detail then please contact me or my School Business Manager, Louise Mellors.

Yours faithfully



Mrs Kathie Daniels  
Headteacher

P.S. Please note, the 30 hours offer is entirely different from the 'free early education offer for two-year olds' (FEET funding offer). Children will need to be aged 3 or 4 to qualify for this new Government initiative.

## Frequently asked questions:

### **How can I check to see if we are eligible for the 30 hours offer?**

You can use the online 'eligibility checker' which is available on the Government's website (gov.uk). This should provide you with an 'eligibility code' which you would need to give us. This check will last for 3 months, and you would need to reconfirm that you are eligible on a regular basis in order to keep the place. We will ask families to recheck their eligibility at the start of each new term, so that it will cover as much of the term as possible.

A link is shown below to the Government website where you can check your eligibility and apply for the additional hours.

<https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk/par/app/applynow>

### **What happens if I no longer meet the eligibility criteria?**

You would stop being eligible for the free additional hours, although we believe there will be a grace period to give people the chance to re-qualify. You will still be eligible for the universal 15 hours of free childcare and this will be known as the 'core offer', but your child's hours would be reduced back to the core offer only.

### **Do I need to be working 16 hours a week to qualify?**

The eligibility checker has been designed to accommodate parents with fluctuating incomes, such as seasonal workers, those on zero hours and the self-employed. So you do not need to actually be working 16 hours every week but your earnings over 3 months must be equivalent to the amount you would earn if you worked 16 hours a week at the National Minimum Wage or the National Living Wage.

### **When can my child start taking up the additional free hours?**

This will be available at Cranmere Nursery from September 2017 as long as your child is 3 before the start of the new term. If your child is under 3 at that point then they will become eligible in the term following their third birthday, as long as there are spaces available.

### **How will you allocate the places?**

Assuming parents are eligible, places will be allocated in accordance with our admissions policy and we will maintain a waiting list if we are over-subscribed. Eligibility will be reviewed on a termly basis.

### **What if I am eligible but I don't want to take all 30 hours?**

Because of the limited spaces in our Nursery we are unable to offer the top-up from 15 to 30 hours on a session by session basis. Families would either have to take all 30 hours in our Nursery or they would need to use the additional 15 hours at a different setting (or with a registered childminder).

### **If I don't qualify, or if I become ineligible for the free offer, can I pay for top-up sessions instead?**

Yes, but only if we have spaces available. This will be reviewed on a term by term basis.

### **What is meant by the 'core offer' and why is it important?**

At the moment all families are entitled to 15 hours of free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds regardless of their income. This is known as the 'core offer' and we would allocate these core hours to each family prior to their child joining the Nursery. So, for example, your core offer may be a 'first half of the week' session and, if you were eligible, your top-up offer would be the second half of the week. If you lost your entitlement then your hours would revert to the core offer.

### **What happens on a Wednesday lunchtime?**

If you are eligible for the additional hours and you want your child to stay for lunch on Wednesday then you would need to pay us £3.25 for the extra half-hour (and provide them with a packed lunch). If you don't want to pay the extra then you would have a few options: either collect your child at 11:45am and drop them back to us at 12:15pm on a Wednesday, or ensure they were dropped off at 9:15am rather than 8:45am. If your child stays at lunchtime then we will invoice for the extra time spent in Nursery at the start of each half term and we would require payment half-termly in advance.

### **Why can't I just have an earlier pick-up on a Wednesday?**

It is difficult for staff to monitor the individual times that children leave Nursery and it will get very disruptive if children leave at different times. Also, if you are late to pick up we would have to start charging for any extra time taken. To avoid the need for complicated agreements about adding surcharges we are just offering the top-up fee for lunchtimes. However, in return for this charge you will get an additional half hour per week of childcare, because the timings on Wednesday are longer than the other days of the week.

### **Where can I get an application form?**

Forms are available from the school office or from our website, but we ask you to do an initial eligibility-check prior to handing it in, because your eligibility code needs to be included on it.

### **Where can I get more information about the Government's offer?**

The Surrey Early Years Team have more information on their website: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/family-information-service/choosing-childcare-for-children-and-young-people/paying-for-childcare>