

1st September 2019

30 hours free nursery provision offered at Cranmere

Currently all families are entitled to 15 hours free childcare for 3 and 4 year olds (the 'universal offer'), but for some working families there is a possibility of extending this free childcare to 30 hours, which is funded by the Government. This letter provides information about what Cranmere is offering in terms of the '30 hours' of free childcare.

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 per week 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 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 Wednesday timings), 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 either 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 need to ensure 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 (and received your eligibility code) then you can complete our application form, which is available from our website or by contacting the school office.

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. Wednesday timings are 8:45am to either 2:45pm or 3:15pm – see below for further information.

Wednesday top-up payments:

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 two options: you would either need to arrange to pick up your child at 2:45pm on a Wednesday (instead of 3:15pm); or you would need to pay a top-up fee in advance so that they could stay for the extra 30 minutes and finish at 3:15pm along with the rest of the children. We have set this top-up rate as £3.25 per week, which has not changed since 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 the 30-hours offer.

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 there is a grace period to give people the chance to re-qualify. The grace period normally runs until the end of the current term. 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.

How do I keep the code valid?

You need to reconfirm your code every term, and you will be given an 'expiry date' when you initially get given your code. It is important that you reconfirm this on or before the expiry date because otherwise you may drop out of eligibility. You should get emailed reminders from the Inland Revenue about reconfirming your code (these do not come from school).

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?

You can normally take the 30 hours in the term after you receive your code (as long as your child is already 3 at the start of that term). The Inland Revenue do not allow you to apply for a code and start using it immediately, it usually has a 'valid-from' date which will either be September, January or April. For example, if you apply for it and you receive a code over the summer then you may be able to start with the 30-hours in September, as long as we have spaces and we have checked the validity. 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. Please see the admissions policy for more details.

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, when the day finishes later?

If you are eligible for the additional hours, and you want your child to finish at the normal time of 3:15pm on Wednesday, then you would need to pay us £3.25 for the extra half-hour (we will invoice half termly in advance for these additional fees). If you don't want to pay the extra then you would need to collect your child at 2:45pm, rather than 3:15pm, on that day.

Why can't I just have 9am to 3pm on a Wednesday?

It is difficult for staff to monitor the individual times that children come and go from Nursery and it can get very disruptive if children start at different times (because staff are usually running an activity first thing and they don't always hear the doorbell). To avoid the need for complicated arrangements for each child we are just offering the top-up fee for the extra 30 minutes at the end of the day. 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, and your child can have their lunch at school (as they will on 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 (from the Inland Revenue) prior to handing it in, because your eligibility code needs to be included on it.