

MONKTON NURSERY

30 Hours Free Childcare Entitlement

We introduced the 30 hours offer at Monkton Nursery in September 2017. Our Nursery offer is Monday to Friday and the times set out as below:

Morning session	8.30am – 11.30am	Free 15 hours
Break	11.30am – 12.40pm	Option to stay for additional hours for a £1 per day cost to cover extra provision – <i>paid weekly in advance</i> (home packed lunch required)
Afternoon session	12.40pm – 3.40pm	Free 15 hours

In order to check your eligibility for the 30 hours offer please visit <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/> and also see the attached information for parents/carers taken from the DfE guidance.

Once your eligibility has been verified, you can then apply for a nursery place at the setting which best meets your requirements. If you would like to take up your 30 hours entitlement at Monkton Nursery under the above offer, please complete the attached Parent Declaration Form and return it to the school office **along with your child's admission forms**, so that we can verify your 30 hour place.

Please note that you do not need to apply via the digital service if you only want the universal 15 hours entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Miss Watkins in the school office.

Applying for and reserving a 30 hours place

What is the difference between the universal 15 hours entitlement and the extended 30 hours entitlement?

- The application process for receiving the extended entitlement is through the digital childcare service. Further details below.
- However, providers delivering both the first and second 15 hours are required to follow the EYFS. Ofsted will not differentiate their inspections between the first and second 15 hours. We expect local authorities to fund providers at the same rate for both the first and second 15 hours.

How will parents know what to do?

Parents can check whether they could be eligible for a range of government childcare offers, including 30 hours, via Childcare Choices at: <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk> or the Childcare Calculator at: <https://www.gov.uk/childcare-calculator>. Those who could be eligible for 30 hours and/or Tax-Free Childcare (see page 18) will be directed to the digital childcare service to apply.

The eligibility criteria for 30 hours and Tax-Free Childcare are broadly aligned. For a more detailed guide to the 30 hours eligibility criteria see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-eligibility>. Parents will be able to apply for both 30 hours and Tax-Free Childcare at the same time by entering their details once. HMRC will check parents' eligibility for both schemes at the same time.

Parents will be able to apply for Tax-Free Childcare and the extended entitlement through the digital childcare service.

Parents will not need to apply through the digital childcare service if they only want to claim the universal 15 hours entitlement for three and four year olds.

How will parents apply for 30 hours?

As part of the application process, parents will be asked to enter personal details including their name, address and National Insurance number and the same details for their partner (if they have one). They will also be asked whether they expect to meet the income requirements over the coming three months and whether they are in receipt of any relevant benefits. This information will help HMRC decide whether the parent (and their child) are eligible for 30 hours. At the start of the application process, parents will create a Government Gateway account if they don't already have one. If parents encounter any problems with the application process or accessing the childcare account, they should direct their queries to the childcare service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097.

At the end of the application process, parents will have a childcare service account. In the "secure messages" section of their account, parents will receive messages regarding their eligibility. If parents are eligible for 30 hours, they will be given an 11 digit 'eligibility code' for their child. They will be asked to take this code (along with their National Insurance number and child's date of birth) to their provider to claim their 30 hours place. These codes normally start with '5000'. However, there are a small number of cases where parents might have a temporary code starting with '11'.

Parents can find their eligibility code in the '30 hours free childcare' section of their childcare service account (see Image A) and in their secure messages (see image B).

Image A – Viewing your 30 hours code in parent's childcare service account

GOV.UK The childcare service

ALPHA This is a new service - your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it. [Get help](#) [Sign out](#)

Childcare service account

This is your childcare service account. Here you can manage your details and payments.

- Your Tax-Free Childcare account**
 - Childcare accounts
 - Childcare providers
 - Payments
- 30 hours free childcare**
 - View your 30 hours free childcare codes
- Secure messages**
 - View messages about your application and account
- Contact details**
 - Add, change and view
- Reconfirmation**
 - Reconfirm your eligibility every 3 months. You'll next need to reconfirm on 23 April 2017
- Security**
 - Reset your password, change and view your security challenge questions
- New child application**
 - Submit an application for a new child
- Your applications**
 - View or resubmit your previous application

Image B – Eligibility Code on Secure Message

Dear <Parent Forename >

30 hours free childcare application for <Forename and Surname of child>

This letter confirms that you meet the income criteria for 30 hours per week of free childcare over 38 weeks of the year. Your child will also need to meet the age as set out below.

It's possible to stretch your entitlement, by taking fewer hours over more weeks of the year (such as 24 hours a week over 48 weeks of the year).

The eligibility code for <Forename and Surname of child> is **<child's eligibility code>**.

This code is important as you'll need it to get your 30 hours free childcare. You can find the code in your childcare service account if you need it at a later date. You should contact your childcare provider now to reserve your place. If your provider is not offering 30 hours, you can contact your local council to find out which providers are offering 30 hours in your area.

You can't use this code to claim 30 hours free childcare if your child is in full-time reception. If your child has reached compulsory school age, they won't be eligible for free childcare.

Parents will be prompted every three months to reconfirm the details they entered on their application are still accurate. This is to check that they are still eligible. They will be prompted, via text message and/or email, four weeks before their reconfirmation deadline and again two weeks before the deadline if they still haven't reconfirmed. If their circumstances have changed, they will log into their childcare service account, amend their details and then resubmit their details. If their circumstances have not changed, they only need to reconfirm their details.

If parents miss the reconfirmation deadline, they will receive a message telling them that their eligibility has lapsed. Although they are no longer eligible, they may be able to retain their childcare place for a short period; this is known as a grace period. Parents are directed to speak to their childcare provider about this - see Image C below.

Image C – Message where parent is no longer eligible on reconfirmation

Dear <Parent Forename >

Important: 30 hours free childcare will be stopped for <Forename and Surname of child>

Unfortunately, our checks have shown that you're no longer eligible for 30 hours free childcare for <Forename and Surname of child> because:

- <eligibility code response>

However, you may still be able to access 30 hours free childcare for a short period, known as a grace period. You can check what your grace period arrangements are with your childcare provider or local authority.

You can still access the 15 hour universal early education entitlement for 3 and 4 year olds.

The link between eligibility and claiming 30 hours

Parents must apply for the extended entitlement through the digital childcare service (not through their local authority or provider). HMRC is responsible for checking whether a parent is eligible and issuing an eligibility code. Providers and local authorities are responsible for verifying (or confirming) eligibility by checking that the parent's code is valid. Local authorities and providers will use the Department for Education's Eligibility Checking Service (ECS) to verify the code (see the graphic on page 8 – 'Provider guide to checking validity of 30 hours eligibility codes').

In contrast to the universal entitlement (which only has an age criterion), parents also need to meet a set of eligibility requirements (i.e. income requirements). A parent can only claim 30 hours once both of these conditions are met, i.e. the term following the child's third birthday and the term following receipt of their eligibility code from HMRC (whichever is the later). Parents should be encouraged to apply the term before their child meets the age criterion to ensure they can access a place at the start of the term after their child turns three. If not, they will need to wait until the following term to access their 30 hours place.

Once a code has been successfully verified, a parent can reserve a place for their child with their provider. The graphic on the next page sets out the code validation process.

Parents who need assistance to apply (or who do not have access to the internet) can call the childcare service Customer Interaction Centre on 0300 123 4097 and apply over the phone. Parents that complete their original application over the phone will need to phone the Customer Interaction Centre to reconfirm their eligibility.

Parents may receive eligibility codes before their child is three but they can only start claiming their 30 hours place the term following the child's third birthday or the term following the date the eligibility code was issued (whichever is the later).

If a child is taking up their universal 15 hours entitlement and a parent becomes eligible for 30 hours part-way through the term, the parent can start claiming their additional hours the term following the date on which they received their code. **Parents should be encouraged to apply for the extended entitlement the term before they wish to claim their place.**

Parents cannot claim 30 hours free childcare once their child has reached compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday). Due to the three monthly cycles of reconfirmation, and to allow for those children who do not reach compulsory school age until a while after their child turns five, some parents may still have a code after their child reaches compulsory school age. It is therefore important that providers check the age of the child as well as the code.

Parents cannot claim their 30 hours in addition to a full time reception place in a maintained school or academy. Therefore, parents cannot use their eligibility code to claim their 30 hours if their child is in a full-time reception place.

When a parent loses eligibility

The grace period

The grace period enables parents to retain their childcare place for a short period if they become ineligible for 30 hours. The updated statutory guidance (which comes into force from September) outlines the specific grace period cut-off dates.

Parents reconfirm their eligibility around every three months depending on when they first applied for 30 hours. There will be three dates attached to each code (only the local authority and provider sees these dates).

The 'validity start date' is the date on which the parent has applied and been issued a code. The 'validity end date' is the parent's 'deadline' for reconfirming. Their 'grace period' date is the last date on which they should receive their 30 hours place.

The ECS will automatically assign grace period end dates to every eligibility code. When local authorities undertake their audits (see next section), they will inform providers which children are in their grace period (and for how long).

Example:

- Child turns three on 3rd March; parent successfully applies for 30 hours on 15th March (can take up a place from 1st April). Parent is issued a code with a validity start date of 15th March and end date of 15th June.
- Parent is able to reconfirm their eligibility for 30 hours up to four weeks before their validity end date (i.e. from 15th May). The parent reconfirms on this date but their circumstances have changed (e.g. job loss) and they are no longer eligible. Therefore, the parent's eligibility ends on 15th June.
- The grace period will apply from 16th June until 31st December.

A grace period will not continue beyond the age that a child has achieved compulsory school age (the term following their fifth birthday).

Table 1 - Grace period dates

Validity end date:	LA audit date:	Grace Period End date:
1 Jan – 10 February	11 February	31 March
11 Feb – 31 March	1 April	31 August
1 April – 26 May	27 May	31 August
27 May – 31 August	1 September	31 December
1 September – 21 October	22 October	31 December
22 October – 31 December	1 January	31 March

The full document is available from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/30-hours-free-childcare-la-and-early-years-provider-guide>