Dear X / Greeting,

We are writing to you about the impact of the Government’s updated guidance for funded childcare places and what this means for early years providers like us and you as families.

You may have seen the reports on the new guidance about charging parents for meals, snacks, consumables and other activities. These charges relate to things like meals, snacks, consumables and additional activities like days out and are explicitly **not included in the amount the Government pays us for delivering your child’s high-quality funded place**. As you know, we have not made any charges a mandatory requirement for being able to take up a funded place at our setting.

In its new guidance the Government states:

*Government funding is not intended to cover the costs of meals, other consumables, additional hours or additional services.*

However, the guidance emphasises the voluntary nature of the charges for all the things that go alongside your child’s funded place. Essentially the Government is offering funded childcare sessions but not paying for all that these entail.

This puts providers like name of nursery in a very difficult position. Recent research by the National Day Nurseries Association found that 92% of nurseries in England do not believe the current funding rates cover our operating costs. For three and four-year-old places the average funding shortall was reported as £2.13 per hour and £1.51 per hour for younger children.

The average staffing costs for nurseries is going to increase by 15% from April this year and for context the average funding rate will increase by 4.6% for the same period. In our area we receive £X.XX per hour and this has increased by only X.X%

(if applicable) We employ a chef/kitchen staff to prepare fresh, nutritious meals and snacks for your child each day they are with us. We have to charge you for this service because otherwise we wouldn’t be able to pay the chef/kitchen staff’s wages or buy the food they prepare.

(if applicable) We do not currently accept packed lunches or snacks from home for each child because:

* Nurseries like ours are inspected by Ofsted against providing nutritional balanced meals and snacks for all the children at our settings
* Some children are in nursery for long days, from breakfast to teatime so time for parents to prepare nutritious meals before children are ready for bed could be limited
* If a lot of parents wanted to provide packed lunches, we would struggle with storage space to keep food at the temperature required
* We would have less control over the food brought into nursery and the allergens they contain. We have a number of children with food allergies at the setting and we carefully monitor and cater for their dietary requirements.

(if applicable) Regarding the consumables we charge for, we know that it could end up being more expensive for you as parents to buy and provide your own nappies and wipes etc because we buy in bulk from commercial suppliers.

In addition to the early education and childcare places that the Government pays for, our nursery offers (insert details here such as forest school, trips, extra activities) which we also charge you for. This is optional for your child but a great opportunity to boost their learning opportunities and personal, physical and social development.

The Government is requiring us to be open and transparent about these charges and ask you to agree to paying these. We will set out to you what these will entail and ask you to please speak with us if you are genuinely going to struggle to pay these. We want what’s best for your child while they are at nursery but meals, consumables and activities do come at a cost.

We hope this helps you understand the reasons for and the benefits to you and your child, of the current charges we have in place. If you would like to discuss these with us and discuss what it would mean to opt-out of these, please let us know and we can discuss this further with you.

Sign off