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Dear Parents / Carers

Re: Eligibility and how to apply for 30 hours Free Childcare

We recently wrote to you regarding changes at Havannah Primary School with Pre-school provision and Breakfast and Afterschool Club provision starting in September.

Also starting in September, is the increase in Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) available to parents with 3 and 4 year olds. The latest changes in the funding have not just affected how much additional funding is available, but how you can use your funding effectively to give you more flexibility for early years childcare (3 and 4 year olds). This will apply to ANY establishment that has agreed to provide the additional hours free funding (LA maintained nurseries like Havannah Preschool, private nurseries and preschools, Sure Start centres, or childminders). Although most providers will offer up to 30 hours, it is still their decision as to how, or even IF they wish to provide this, so it is better to check first.

I would urge you to start taking steps NOW to ensure that you are eligible to the entitlement and to register for the additional hours soon.

I have made reference from The Department for Education's "Early Years Entitlements - Operation Guidance. April 2017" - [Where to go to find out the best childcare option for you.](#)

"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 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 just 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."

There are some significant changes to the new parameters set out in the latest guidance, which gives parents greater flexibility. These are:

- no session to be longer than 10 hours (**Same as previously**)
- no minimum session length (subject to the requirements of registration on the Ofsted Early Years Register) (**Used to be 2.5 hrs**)
- not before 6.00am or after 8.00pm (**Previously was not before 7.00am or after 7.00pm**)
- Parents can split their free entitlement between multiple providers, though no more than two sites in one day. (**Previously parents could only split their total free entitlement between two providers**)

This means that you will be able to use some of the funded hours for your 3 and 4 year olds, towards breakfast and afterschool club if you wish.

If your child is approaching 3 years old, you should apply for funding from the **CHILDCARE CHOICES** website in the same term as your child reaches 3, as funding will not commence until the following term.

<u>If your Child's 3rd birthday is between</u>	<u>APPLY</u>	<u>Funding will commence</u>
1 January to 31 March (Spring Term)	ASAP Before 31st March	The beginning of term on or after 1 April (Summer Term)
1 April to 31 August (Summer Term)	ASAP Before 31st August	The beginning of term on or after 1 Sept. (Autumn Term)
1 September to 31 December (Autumn Term)	ASAP before 31 December	The beginning of term on or after 1 January (Spring Term)



There is currently no active promotion by the Government of how to apply for 30 hours funding, but it is very important that you know NOW how to access this funding and ensure that, if you want it to commence in September 17, that you have this confirmed by the end of this current term, as parents will only be able to access the additional funds the term AFTER they have applied. E.G. Anyone who applies in September will not be entitled to additional funding until January. By registering now for admissions in September 17, you will be 'in the system'. Although the eligibility code you will be issued with has 3 month's validity, you will be reminded by email near to the end of the deadline to pop back online and revalidate your code. It is still better to do this than leave it until just before September.

I also found some useful links to websites which give further information on both 30 hours funding and Tax Free Childcare.

<http://www.madeformums.com/news-and-gossip/30-hours-of-free-childcare---will-my-child-get-it/38143.html>

http://www.dorsetecho.co.uk/news/15208709.Martin_Lewis_What_you_need_to_know_about_The_Tax_Free_Childcare_scheme/

The new Parent Declaration Forms have yet to be finalised by Cheshire East, but we have been informed that these will be available in the next fortnight. The new forms will have spaces in which to put your National Insurance Number and your additional hours code. You can then state the hours you wish your child to attend.

Once the initial checks have been completed at the start of the funding application, all subsequent renewals will be much easier. You will be contacted each half term by email to confirm whether your circumstances have changed. If not, then the funding will continue. If they have changed and you are no longer eligible, then you will be given a period of grace before funding ceases. It is usually at the end of that term.

I fully appreciate that yet another new process for us all means that there is a good deal more to consider. I hope however, that this has gone some way to help you with your childcare funding options for September.

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Debra Ball
School Business Manager

