



## **PAYMENT POLICY**

Ashton Gate Out of School Care (AGOSC) requires payment in advance for all childcare fees. AGOSC's main source of income is from fees. Late and non-payment of fees will cause the club financial difficulties.

AGOSC does not offer refunds for absences. This includes sickness and holidays. When a place is booked the parent/carer is then liable for the full fees of the session/s booked. AGOSC sets staff numbers for sessions according to the number of children booked in.

The parent/carer agrees to pay for all booked sessions, including absences, at the time of registration. The registration form is not valid unless they have signed their agreement to our terms and conditions.

Fees are to be paid in person to the Playcentre Manager, Deputy Playcentre Manager, Senior Playworker or Administration Officer at the Caretakers House. When payment is made parents/carers should ensure they receive a receipt as proof of payment in the event of any discrepancy.

Fees may also be paid by post and by online electronic transfer. Receipts are written for payments by post and given to the parent/carer at the earliest opportunity. Receipts are not issued for online payments by vouchers or electronic transfer.

Invoices are sent by our Administration Officer at the beginning of each school term and at the start of the summer holiday playscheme.

### **Payment Options**

AGOSC accepts cash, cheques (payable to Ashton Gate Out of School Care or AGOSC), online payments and childcare vouchers (please speak to the administrator about which schemes we are registered with).

### **Help with Fees**

Every effort will be made to ensure that families are aware of the options available, including:

- Inland Revenue Tax Credit Schemes
- Colleges providing financial assistance
- Child care vouchers – salary sacrifice schemes, there will be a need to talk to employers regarding this.
- City Council employee – salary sacrifice scheme.
- Other voucher schemes.
- If a parent/carer requests to pay using a voucher scheme that is new to the organization, the administrator undertakes to make every reasonable effort to enrol with that voucher scheme.

### **Late Collection of Children**

If a child is booked into a Holiday Playscheme for collection at 4pm and the parent/carer is late (over 15 minutes) collecting them a late collection fee of £2 (equivalent to being booked in for 6pm collection) will be applied to the account.

If a child is collected after 6pm, when the After School Club and the Holiday Playscheme close, parent/carers will be charged the equivalent of one hour's wages for two members of staff. (This will be a maximum of £18.77 depending on which members of staff have to wait.) The charge will not be applied if a parent/carer is late **once** and they contact the club, in advance, to notify staff of the situation. Please refer to our Lost and Uncollected Children Policy.

### **Arrears Procedure**

When fees are outstanding the following course of action will be taken:

1. Each week, the accounts are reviewed and each parent/carer with more than £75 in arrears receives a polite email reminder or a letter from the Administration Officer.  
Accounts with "stale" arrears that over three weeks old and are more than £15 also receive reminder notices on the same schedule
2. If at the end of two weeks the parent/carer is still over £75 in arrears, the Administration Officer sends a second letter explaining our terms and conditions and requesting immediate payment. The family is charged a £3 administration fee.  
Accounts with "stale" arrears will also receive a second letter and be charged a £3 administration fee.
3. If, at the end of another two weeks, the parent/carer is still over £75 in arrears, the chair of the management committee sends a final demand letter requesting immediate payment.
4. If the account is still unpaid after a further two weeks, and there has been no communication from the parent/carer to explain the circumstances, the parent/carer is no longer able to use our services.
5. The Administration Officer, with support from the Treasurer, will continue to endeavour to collect unpaid fees from the parent/carer.

The Treasurer and the Playcentre Manager are kept informed of the arrears situation weekly by the administrator. The management committee is regularly informed of any parents in arrears.

### **Difficulties in Payment**

If a parent/carer is unable to pay their child/ren's fees in a timely fashion, they should tell the Playcentre Manager or the Administration Officer as a matter of urgency. This may be as simple as informing the Administration Officer of the date when the fees will be paid (for example, at the end of the month when wages are received or a voucher scheme makes a regular payment). The Playcentre Manager and the Treasurer will be notified of this.

In more complex cases, where either a significant sum of money is owed and/or the parent/carer is unable to pay within a short timeframe, the Treasurer and Playcentre Manager will work with the parent/carer to resolve the situation.

In the most serious cases, a formal payment schedule may be agreed. The arrears procedure (see above) is suspended for a parent/carer who has agreed to an alternative payment schedule. The Administration Officer monitors the parent/carer's compliance with agreed payment plans and restarts the arrears procedure if payments are not made on schedule.

The management committee is regularly informed of any parents in difficulties.

### **Represented Cheques**

When a parent/carer pays by cheque it is taken in good faith that the bank will honour the cheque. When a cheque is returned to AGOSC unpaid the club incurs bank charges from their bank in addition to the loss of funds from fees.

When AGOSC receives notification from the bank of a represented cheque the following will apply.

1. On receipt of a letter from the Bank notifying us of a represented cheque the Administration Officer will immediately notify the parent/carer and ask that they pay in **cash** the amount of the returned cheque **plus** the bank charges incurred by AGOSC. This amount is currently £4. I've never done this!
2. The parent/carer may be allowed to pay again by cheque, at the discretion of the Treasurer
3. If another cheque is represented to AGOSC in the name of the parent/carer the above will apply but all future fees must be paid in cash and the Administration Officer will put this in writing to the parent/carer. A copy of this will be held with the registration information. A cash only arrangement will be reviewed at the next registration and revoked at the discretion of the Management Committee.

### **Swap Policy**

If a parent knows that the child is not going to attend a particular session, then they can request that this session be "swapped" for another session that the child was **not** booked to attend. AGOSC allows swaps as a courtesy to parents. We have the right to offer or not offer them at our discretion, keeping in mind the guidelines below:

1. There are sessions available for the child to swap into. If all sessions are fully booked, then it is not possible to operate a swap system.
2. The parent gives AGOSC at least three working days notice so we can offer the unused session to other parents.
3. Swaps must be used within six weeks of being incurred or they expire.
4. Each parent may have no more than two outstanding swaps per child.

### **Children of Staff**

A 50% reduction in fees will be applied when staff are working in the club, if financially feasible.