

WIDLINGS

HARDSHIP FUND POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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Wildlings wishes to be an inclusive setting, where no child or family miss out on the opportunities we offer based on their financial circumstances. All evidence towards outcomes for children points towards a quality early years experience having an impact on their life opportunities and future development, and it is our mission to ensure that we are accessible to all. While our fees must reflect the cost of running our setting, we want to be able to offer support to those who need it. Our hardship fund is one method we wish to offer towards financial support with our fees. Should any family find themselves in unforeseen or extreme circumstances, and unable to continue at Wildlings because of this, we urge you to contact us so we can make arrangements to remain affordable and for your child's early years setting to remain with us. The cost of the hardship fund will be met by Wildlings.

Hardship Fund Criteria

- We have no set criteria for access to our hardship fund, all circumstances are assessed on an individual basis
- The Manager and Committee will decide each case on an individual basis and support will be customised
- Children classed as disadvantaged by definition below are supported to join Wildlings on an individual basis

The Department for Education identifies disadvantaged pupils as:

- Eligible for Two Year Funding
- Looked After Children (LAC), or those who have previously looked after by the state, but are now adopted or are subject to a special guardianship order or a child arrangements order or a residence order
- Children with parents in the armed forces.

It is assumed that these children are disadvantaged in comparison to others because of low family income, little or no family support (LAC) or lots of setting moves all of which have been proven to have a negative impact on progress and attainment when compared to others.

(Families may find themselves in unexpected circumstances such as job loss, death or loss of a family member, sickness or poor health and low income, all of the above and more are considered when applying for support)

Hardship Fund Procedure

- A parent/carer should contact the Manager as soon as possible should they find themselves in difficult financial circumstances. The Manager and setting remain supportive and non judgemental towards each family and an open door policy is in place to enable sensitive discussions to be had
- The Manager and parent/carer will spend time discussing the circumstances and at what point the family need support (such as fees, resources and kit, food items, or anything else that is considered essential for the families welfare)

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- in one working week,
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- The family will be notified by email to confirm the support offered by Wildlings
- The agreement will be reviewed each term
- The Manager and Committee reserve the right to cancel or amend the hardship fund support at any time with a one week notice period