**FIFE COUNCIL – EDUCATION SERVICE**

**EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PARTNERSHIP FUNDING SESSION 2025-2026**

Every age eligible child is entitled to a maximum of 1140 hours pro rata early learning funding per academic session. There are 4 payment periods in the session. Please note action Timeline below.

Funding for eligible 3–5-year-olds will be paid at a rate of £7.96 per hour (this includes 42p per hour for a meal) which means the maximum a child can receive in any academic year is £9,074.40.

Funding for eligible 2-year-olds will be paid at a rate of £8.71 per hour (this includes 42p per hour for a meal) which means the maximum a child can receive in any academic year is £9,929.40.

Shared Care / a blended model is allowed between Local Authority nurseries and a funded partner or two or more funded partners. If a child is attending a Local Authority setting in addition to a partner setting, then funding is allocated first to the Local Authority setting, with any unclaimed hours being available to claim at the partner setting.

**Funding eligibility:**

1. Children must be 3 years old on or before 31st August 2025 to be eligible to receive funding from Period 1 onwards.

1. Children must be 3 years old on or before 31st December 2025 to be eligible to receive funding from Period 3 onwards.

1. Children must be 3 years old before on or before 28th February 2026 to be eligible to receive funding for Period 4.

**Deferred entry:**

Children who are automatic deferrals, those who are not 5 by the 20 August 2025, **will** be funded for a further year in a partner setting. Deferring a child can have implications and any decision should be given careful consideration.

Children who are 5 before the start date of the new school session are **not** entitled to but parents can request a further year in nursery education. This is known as a **delayed start** to Primary 1. Decisions on delayed starts are made by Education Managers based on information provided to them including assessment by the Headteacher and staff of the nursery, and the link educational psychologist. Requests are not always approved.

A **delayed start** to school has significant implications for any child and these decisions are not taken lightly. There needs to be careful consideration of how a child’s needs can be best met, with full knowledge of the support that can be provided within a nursery setting, a mainstream primary school or a more specialist provision. If a delayed start is in a child’s best interest, existing resources are used to accommodate the additional year within a Local Authority Nursery.

**Period 1** - Dates: 18th August 2025 – 24th October 2025 (child must be 3 on or before 31st August 2025)

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| June | The following documents will be emailed to all childminders (CM):  Timeline, new application form, blank funding calendar, funding guide. |
| By Fri 29 Aug | **CM** to email/post an application for any **new** children receiving a funded place from August. Email to [Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk) or post to Education & Children's Services, DOT Funding Team, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes, KY7 5LT |
| From Mon 8 Sept | **CM** will receive a forecast report for period 1 |
| By Fri 12 Sep | **CM** must check forecast and report any issues by email: [Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk) |
| By Wed 24 Sep | Payment will be processed, and a payment report will be emailed. *Note: it will be the following week before funding is in your bank* |

**Period 2 –** 27th October 2025 – 2nd January 2026 (child must be 3 on or before 31st August 2025)

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| By Fri 31 Oct | Email/Post any **new** applications to the Funding Team and ensure you have informed the funding team of any changes to current children i.e. change to funded hours, leaver |
| From Mon 10 Nov | **CM** will receive a forecast report for Period 2 and any Period 1 adjustment |
| By Fri 14 Nov | **CM** must check forecast and report any issues by email: [Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk) |
| By Fri 21 Nov | Payments will be processed, and a payment report will be emailed. *Note: it will be the following week before funding is in your bank* |

**Period 3 –** 5th January 2026 – 17th April 2026 (child must be 3 on or before 31st December 2025)

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| By Fri 9 Jan | Email/Post any **new** applications to the Funding Team and inform of any changes to current children i.e. new pattern of attendance or leaver |
| From Mon 19 Jan | **CM** will receive a forecast report for Period 3 and any Period 2 adjustment |
| By Fri 23 Jan | **CM** must check forecast and report any issues by email: [Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk) |
| By Fri 30 Jan | Payments will be processed, and a payment report will be emailed. *Note: it will be the following week before funding is in your bank* |

**Period 4** – 20th April 2026 – 14th August 2026 (child must be 3 on or before the end of February 2026)

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| By Fri 24 April | Email/Post any **new** applications to the Funding Team and inform of any changes to current children i.e. new pattern of attendance or leaver |
| From Mon 4 May | **CM** will receive a forecast report for Period 4 and any Period 3 adjustment |
| By Fri 8 May | **CM** must check forecast and report any issues by email: [Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk](mailto:Partnership.Funding@fife.gov.uk) |
| By Fri 15 May | Payments will be processed, and a payment report will be emailed. *Note: it will be the following week before funding is in your bank* |

**Term Time Non-Funded Dates**

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| **Term Time - dates that are non-funded** | |
| **Period 1** | **Period 2** |
| Monday 18 August | Friday 14 November |
| Tuesday 19 August | Monday 22 December to Friday 2 January |
| Monday 13 October to Friday 24 October |  |
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| **Period 3** | **Period 4** |
| Wednesday 11 February to Friday 13 February | Monday 4 May |
| Friday 3 April to Friday 17 April | Thursday 7 May |
|  | Monday 1 June |
|  | Monday 6 July to Friday 14 August |

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| **Local Authority 46 Week - dates that are non-funded** | |
| **Period 1** | **Period 2** |
| Monday 18 August | Friday 14 November |
| Tuesday 19 August | Wednesday 24 December to Fri 2 January |
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| **Period 3** | **Period 4** |
| Wednesday 11 February | Monday 4 May |
| Monday 6 April to Friday 10 April | Thursday 7 May |
|  | Monday 20 July to Friday 31 July |

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| **Local Authority 49 week – dates that are non-funded** | |
| **Period 1** | **Period 2** |
| Monday 18 August | Friday 14 November |
| Tuesday 19 August | Wednesday 24 December to Friday 2 January |
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| **Period 3** | **Period 4** |
| Wednesday 11 February | Monday 4 May |
|  | Thursday 7 May |
|  | Monday 20 July |