**Early Education Childcare Places**

Dear Parents

As you may be aware, all nursery schools in Wandsworth Borough opted into the Nursery Education Grant scheme for 3 and 4 year olds over a decade ago. The system has operated successfully to provide considerable financial support to parents and accessibility to schools of their choice. In terms £5 per child per hour provided by the grant cannot adequately cover the costs of the high quality staff, rent, rates, resources etc. However, private providers have been able to charge extra fees to supplement the grant.

The Department of Education announced last year that the Nursery Education Grant (also known as Universal 15 hour ‘free place’) was to be replaced with a new scheme continuing the 15 hour ‘free place’ and in some cases extending up to 30 hours. Although initially welcomed, the details of the new scheme have now been published and it was immediately evident that the conditions of this new scheme were significantly different from the existing one. The key change is that this grant can no longer be supplemented to incorporate the very real additional costs that private nurseries have, but must now represent the total cost and be a ‘free place’. As a result, we thought we would have to opt out of the Nursery Education Grant entirely.

As a member of Wandsworth Independent Nursery School’s Association (WINA) which represents much of the private provision in the Borough, our concerns have been voiced with Wandsworth’s Early Years Department who have been equally concerned that this new legislation would result in a near total opt out by the private provision in the Borough.

Members of the WINA committee also met recently with Justine Greening the Secretary of State for Education to seek a minor change in this legislation to allow the private sector to continue to charge for the extra costs. It was felt from the meeting that she was very receptive to the issue and that it was not the intent of the legislation to make opting into the grant unworkable for so many private nursery schools.

Wandsworth Early Years Department have now informed us that we can stay in the scheme and that parents will still be able to receive the universal 15 free hours the term after their child’s 3rd birthday but you will be charged for the additional services and extra curriculum activities programme which we provide at Alphabet that are inclusive in the current fees that you pay, before your child is eligible for the Nursery Education Grant.

Alphabet Nursery School is a high quality nursery with an excellent reputation and Outstanding rating from Ofsted. We have a high ratio of qualified teachers and I am not prepared to compromise for a price.

A completely free offer may be available at another provider and you can contact the EECP team for more information if needed.

Our model for the funding offer at Alphabet Nursery School will be up to 15 hours, plus additional services package and any additional hours.

Wandsworth Early Years are currently updating their paperwork and Nursery Grant Declaration Forms. I will send these out as soon as I receive the new ones. I will also send out detailed invoices via email.

If you are satisfied with these new terms and conditions in relation to the Nursery Education Grant for next term, please sign and date below and return to me.

Many thanks.

Allison Mckenzie-Lewis

Child’s Name –

Parent’s Name –

Parent’s Signature –

Date -