

Fees and Refund Policy for Private Early Childhood Centres in Dubai (Effective March 23, 2026)

Frequently Asked Questions — For Parents

01 Deposits and Enrolment

Q1 The nursery is asking me for a deposit. When can they request this, and how much can they charge?

The nursery may only ask for a registration deposit after they have made you a formal offer of a place and you have accepted it. They cannot request any payment before this point. The deposit cannot be more than 10% of your child's annual programme fees and is not an additional charge — it is offset against the fees once your child starts.

Q2 I have paid a deposit, but we have now decided not to proceed with enrolment. Can I get a refund?

This depends on when you notify the nursery and the type of programme your child was enrolled in.

- If your child was enrolled in a structured programme (FS1 or FS2 or equivalent), you can get your deposit back if you formally notify the nursery at least 60 calendar days before your child's start date. If you notify them within 60 calendar days of the start date, the deposit is non-refundable.
- If your child was on a flexible arrangement, the refund terms are outlined in your Parent-ECC Contract. The nursery should have explained these to you clearly before you paid.

Example

You pay a registration deposit in June for your child to start FS1 (Pre-KG) in September. If you change your mind in early July — more than 60 calendar days before the September start - your deposit is refundable. If you change your mind in late August – within 60 calendar days of the start date – it is not refundable.

Q3 Can the nursery charge me an application fee before my child starts?

This depends on the type of programme your child is applying for.

- For children applying to a structured academic year programme — FS1 (Pre-KG) or FS2 (KG1), the ECC may charge an application fee of up to AED 500 to process the application, including any standard assessments. This fee is not deducted from programme fees.
- The application fee is refundable if your child is not offered a place.
- The application fee is non-refundable if a place is offered and you choose not to accept it.
- For children applying to any other attendance model — including flexible, hourly, drop-in, or provision for younger children — no application fee should be charged unless specifically approved by KHDA.

Q4 We paid a re-registration deposit to secure our child's place for next year, but now we are unsure whether we will be staying. What are our options?

If you decide not to return, whether you get the deposit back depends on when you notify the nursery.

- If your child follows a structured academic year (FS1 or FS2 or equivalent), and you notify the nursery at least 60 calendar days before the start of the next programme year, your deposit is refundable. Within 60 calendar days of the start date, it is non-refundable.
- If your child is on a flexible arrangement, the terms are outlined in your Parent-ECC Contract.
- In case of a government-enforced closure, you may still be eligible for a deposit refund even if you are within the 60-day period. You can submit your case to KHDA for review through official channels.

Q5 We didn't pay the re-registration deposit by the deadline, and are now withdrawing our child from the nursery. Can they still charge us a re-registration fee?

No, if the deposit was not paid by the stated deadline and your child is not attending the next programme year, the nursery cannot ask you to pay it afterwards.

Example

A re-registration deposit was due on May 15. The parent did not pay. The child withdraws on June 20, before the new year starts. The nursery cannot seek that payment as it was not collected on time, and the child is no longer attending.

Q6 We have just moved to Dubai, and my child has never attended a nursery or school here before. Do they need a Transfer Certificate to enrol?

No, if your child has never been registered at any KHDA-licensed ECC or school in Dubai, they are considered a new registration. No Transfer Certificate or Withdrawal Certificate is required. The nursery or school can proceed with enrolment directly, and your child's file will indicate that they have no prior educational history in Dubai.

02 Withdrawing Your Child

Q7 How do I formally withdraw my child from the nursery?

You need to submit a formal written withdrawal request to the nursery, stating the date you want the withdrawal to take effect. That date will become the official withdrawal date and cannot be backdated. The nursery will then issue a Withdrawal Certificate confirming that date as the official record that enrolment has ended.

Your child being absent does not count as a withdrawal. Fees continue to accrue as long as your child is registered. You should submit your withdrawal request as early as possible.

Q8 My child has not been attending nursery for two weeks. Am I still being charged?

If the nursery is open and providing its service, yes — fees continue regardless of whether your child attends. The only way to stop fees is to submit a formal withdrawal request.

However, if the nursery is unable to provide its service due to circumstances completely outside anyone's control — such as a government-ordered closure — fees stop from the day the service ceased.

Q9 The nursery told me that if I don't pay the next term's fees, my child will be removed from the KHDA system and won't receive a Transfer Certificate. Is this true?

No, a nursery cannot remove a child from the KHDA system or withhold documentation simply because a parent has not paid for a future term. Here is what the rules say:

- If fees for the period your child attended have been paid, the nursery must provide attendance records and any applicable leaving documentation (e.g. Transfer and/or Withdrawal Certificate).
- If fees are owed, the nursery may withhold the Transfer/Withdrawal Certificate until those fees are settled — but once they are paid, all documentation must be issued without delay.
- If you have decided not to continue into the next term, submit a withdrawal request. The nursery will issue a Withdrawal Certificate confirming the date and that all obligations for the period attended are fulfilled.

Example

Your child attends until the end of February. You decide not to enrol for the next term. You submit a withdrawal request on February 28. The nursery issues a Withdrawal Certificate. You use this when enrolling at a new ECC or school.

Q 10 Can the nursery withhold my child's documents if I owe fees?

Yes, the nursery is entitled to withhold the Transfer/Withdrawal Certificate until all outstanding fees are settled. Once fees are paid in full, the certificate must be issued promptly.

03 Refunds

Q11 How is my refund calculated when I withdraw my child?

Your refund is calculated from the withdrawal date — the date on the Withdrawal Certificate, which is the same date you put on your withdrawal request. You are refunded for the portion of fees paid that covers the period after that date.

- For children in FS1 (Pre-KG) or FS2 (KG1) on termly billing: if they leave two weeks or less into the term, one month's fees are deducted. For those leaving between two weeks and one month into the term, two months' fees are deducted. For those who have completed more than one month, the full term's fees are deducted.
- For children on monthly, weekly, or package arrangements, the unused portion from the withdrawal date is refunded on a prorated basis.
- For drop-in or hourly attendance, you are only charged for sessions booked in advance. Sessions not attended and not cancelled as per the nursery's notice requirements are not eligible for a refund.

Example

You pay AED 3,000 for November (November 1-30). You submit your withdrawal request on November 18. The nursery keeps 17 days of fees ($17/30 \times \text{AED } 3,000 = \text{AED } 1,700$). You receive AED 1,300 back.

Q12 I paid for optional extras — meals, transport, activities. Can I get a refund on those?

The refund terms for optional services depend on what was agreed in your contract when you signed up. The nursery must have given you these terms in writing before you paid. If they did not, the unused portion must be refunded when you withdraw. Fees for optional services paid before the programme year started are refundable as long as no binding third-party contract was involved.

04 Transfers, Moving On and Service Disruption

Q13 My child is leaving the nursery to start school. What documents do we need?

Your child will need a Transfer and/or Withdrawal Certificate from the nursery. This is the official document confirming they are leaving and that all fees have been settled. The new school cannot complete enrolment without it. Request it from the nursery once all fees are cleared — do this well before the school's enrolment deadline.

Q14 My child is in FS1 (Pre-KG) or FS2 (KG1), and we are withdrawing. Will this cause problems when we try to enrol them somewhere new?

Not necessarily. In the UAE, compulsory education begins at age 6 (Grade 1 / Year 2). If your child is below this age and withdrawing from FS1 (age 3–4) or FS2 (age 4–5), or equivalent, this will not affect their right to enrol at a new school when the time comes. You will need either a Transfer Certificate or Withdrawal Certificate from the nursery — both are accepted by receiving schools.

Example

Your child is four years old and attending FS2 (KG1). You withdraw in March. In September, you enrol them at a school for Year 1. Because your child is below compulsory school age, this is straightforward — present the Withdrawal Certificate from the nursery and the school can proceed with enrolment.

Once your child turns six, enrolment at a licensed school becomes compulsory. A Transfer/Withdrawal Certificate will be required at that point.

Q15 The nursery is closed but is offering online learning. Do I still pay fees?

Yes, when the nursery continues to deliver its programme through distance learning or another method approved by KHDA, fees remain payable in full. For children in FS1 and FS2

(or equivalent), online sessions and Centre-Led Home-Based Learning are recognised as valid modes of service delivery. If your child does not attend the online sessions, this does not mean the nursery has stopped delivering, and fees continue. If you do not wish to continue under these arrangements, you may formally withdraw your child, and the standard refund rules apply.

Q16 The nursery has closed one room for a few days due to a health concern. Do I get a refund for those days?

Not necessarily. Where the nursery closes a room, class, or the entire centre for five or fewer consecutive days due to documented health, safety, or safeguarding reasons — such as managing an infectious disease outbreak — no compensation or fee adjustment is required for that period. This recognises that such decisions are made in the best interest of the children. If the closure extends beyond five consecutive days, the standard compensation provisions apply from the sixth day onwards.

Q17. The nursery has had to close completely due to a government-enforced closure. What happens to the fees I have already paid?

When the nursery cannot provide its service at all due to a government-enforced closure, fees stop accruing from the day the service ceases. Any fees you paid that cover the period after that date are held on your behalf — they are not lost.

- The nursery retains all fees for the days the service was provided.
- Fees for the period after services stopped are held for you and must be settled using one of the options described in the following question.

Example

You pay AED 3,000 for November. The nursery is ordered to close on November 15. The nursery retains the fees for the 14 days it was open. The remaining 16 days of fees (approximately AED 1,600) are held for you.

Q18 What are my options for the fees being held on my behalf?

You and the nursery must agree in writing on one of the following:

- Credit note: the held amount is credited towards your future fees — but only if your child continues at the same nursery when it reopens. The credit note is valid for six months from the date it is issued. If it is not used within that period, it expires.
- Transfer to a sibling: if another child in your family joins the same nursery, the credit can be applied to their fees. This credit must be used within six months of the written agreement, after which it expires.
- Refund: the held amount is returned to you for the period during which service could not be provided.

If you and the nursery cannot reach an agreement, either party may refer the matter to KHDA.

Q19 I have a disagreement with the nursery about fees or a refund. What should I do?

Begin by raising the issue directly with the nursery through their internal complaints process. This step must be completed before anything is escalated. If the matter remains unresolved, either party can refer it to KHDA through its official channels. KHDA will review the case and might ask both parties for documentation.