

Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School

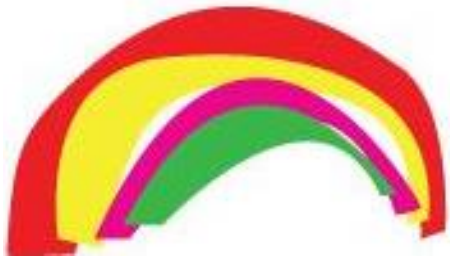
Staff Handbook



Thomas Coram Centre
and Nursery School
49 Mecklenburgh Square
London WC1N 2NY



Reviewed and Approved: September 2025	Next review: September 2026
Reviewed annually	



Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook

Revised September 2025-2026

Please note, all statutory policies are available on the school website. All staff should keep themselves updated on all policies. All staff should re-read this handbook at the start of each new academic year. Copies of the handbook are kept in the staffroom and a digital copy is stored in the handbook folder, in the 'staff-shared' area. A copy has been emailed to every staff member.

As part of new staff induction, you are required to read this handbook, and meet with the senior leadership team. Induction of day-to-day duties and practice will be delivered by your middle leadership team lead.

INTRODUCTION

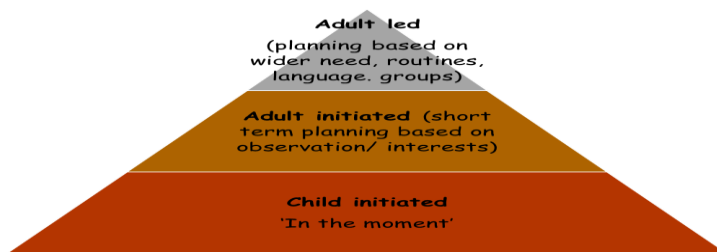
Our work is based on the belief that the early years of a child's life are really important. During the first five years much of children's lifetime learning takes place.

Aims

Learning is a shared activity and the adults around them significantly influence children's attitudes. The way we present an experience can either encourage children to become involved or lead them to avoid the activity. Child-initiated and adult-led experiences are part of a continuum. This continuum includes:

- Child-initiated play with or without adult support;
- Adult-guided or initiated playful learning activities;
- Adult-directed activities with little or no play.

We believe that there is a role for carefully planned, adult led experiences which enable children to learn specific skills and knowledge or be introduced to some new ideas. However, it is through **play** that **children learn most effectively** and where we gain an understanding of what children have understood. We therefore offer a curriculum which is dominated by play and has lots of opportunities for free play (sometimes with the direct support and involvement of adults), alongside some time spent in planned, adult-directed activities (see below). However we teach, we always endeavour to be 'child centred' and to think carefully about what is appropriate and engaging for children at this stage of development.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are an equal opportunities employer and the governing body has adopted Camden's Equality Policy. We seek to reflect the rich cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of our community in all aspects of our work, including resources and community festivals.

Any prejudice-related incidents should be reported to the Head of Nursery school (Perina Holness) or in her absence the Deputy Head teacher (Jan Stillaway).

A copy of the equality policy and plan is displayed in the staff room.

SAFEGUARDING

The welfare of the child is paramount. It is the responsibility of all adults to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. All staff owe a duty of care to the children. To take no action, where the outcome is that a child injures him/herself, or another, including staff, could be seen as negligence. The duty of care is in part, exercised through the development of respectful and caring relationships between adults and children. It is also exercised through the behaviour of the adult, which at all times should demonstrate integrity, maturity and good judgement. All staff must wear their I.D. badge at all times on the premises. If you lose your badge, please ensure that a member of the admin team is made aware immediately.

Camden's Safeguarding Policy

We follow Camden's Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures. **All staff must ensure that they have read 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' Part One (and Annex A).**

Any Safeguarding incidents must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Perina Holness or in her absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Jan Stillaway or Marcia Fraser. Please complete the nursery school concerns form, which is available from the office and in the classrooms.

DBS update check

This check is in addition to the requirement of every member of staff to make the Council aware of any offence they are charged with, or criminal conviction, bind-over or caution they receive during the course of their employment, in line with the Code of Conduct.

If nursery school staff become aware of any behaviour that we believe provides a strong indication that an individual should not be working with a vulnerable group, we always report the

matter to the *DSL* or the governor responsible for safeguarding, Sue Parry Davies (Sue's contact details are available on request from the school office).

If an allegation is made against a member of staff we will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (**LADO - 020 7974 4556**) for advice and guidance.

Whistle blowing

On rare occasions parents or colleagues may express a concern or complain about a member of staff. All concerns are treated seriously and investigated. At all times the well-being of the children is our paramount concern.

- Where there are issues regarding the welfare of a pupil- **MASH - 020 7974 3317 or out of hours on 020 7974 4444.**
- Camden Council's confidential and independent help-line for protected disclosure on **0800 374 199** where there are issues regarding the schools overall procedures around safeguarding.
- Staff, volunteers and members of the public are also at liberty to contact OFSTED whistle blowing line on 0300 123 3155 if they have any concerns about the centre.

Health & Safety (see 'Health & Safety' policy)

The Head teacher and Governors are committed to ensuring a safe and healthy working environment for all staff, children in our care and visitors including the provision of safe equipment and procedures. A 'Health & Safety' noticeboard can be found in the staff room.

The Health & Safety policy, available on the school website and updated annually, sets out the protocols and day-to-day local management of Health & Safety. All staff are expected to work and abide by the key aspects of this policy, as outlined below.

Fire Safety

All staff complete the mandatory fire safety induction which gives detailed information about the school's fire evacuation procedure, including individual evacuation plans. Fire Action notices are displayed in classrooms and corridors. Evacuation route(s) out of the building and the fire assembly point are clearly identified in each wing. A fire drill takes place at least twice a year.

All staff are responsible for keeping the evacuation route clear at all times and ensuring combustible materials are stored safely.

For further information about any aspect of fire safety or fire training, please speak to the **Head teacher** or **School Business Manager**.

If you discover a fire, activate the first fire alarm you see and under no circumstance attempt to tackle the fire. Follow the evacuation procedure, close doors behind you to help prevent the fire from spreading and listen to instructions given by the Fire Marshal and/or SLT.

First Aid

First Aid provision is available at all times where practicable, while people are on the school premises. The First Aid co-ordinator (First Aid at Work) is **Marcia Fraser** who is responsible for maintaining and replenishing First Aid equipment in each wing. A list of first aiders is updated termly and displayed in each room. The majority of 'key persons' at Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School hold the Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate.

First Aid should be administered by a qualified adult, with reference to a child's health plan (allergy/diet information etc). All staff must know the location of emergency medication (eg. epi-pens). Every accident must be recorded on an accident form found in the First Aid folder ('bumps' book) in each classroom. The **child's full name** including surname, date of birth, date, time and details of the accident and treatment given must be recorded for each incident. The report must be signed by the member of staff and / or the person who administered first aid and parent/carer. A copy is given to the parent / carer and another retained by the nursery school for our records. Please notify Perina of any injuries which may cause further concern. Always call a First Aider or Paediatric First Aider to treat injured person. A list of first aiders should be kept up-to-date in the classrooms and the staffroom.

In the case of head injuries, a letter **must** go home to parents advising them to seek medical advice if they are concerned. More serious accidents requiring external medical treatment must be recorded by the Head or Deputy using the HSE accident book in the school office. Full details of first aid provision, on- and off-site, are set out in the school's First Aid policy.

A qualified member of staff and a First Aid kit is required for all off-site visits as per the risk assessment.

Site Security & Emergency Planning

The Head teacher and Governing Body are responsible for the security of the school premises and will take steps to ensure it is a safe environment and securely protected against trespass and / or criminal damage.

Emergency planning for major incidents such as power failure or intruders etc is regularly reviewed and communicated to all staff.

School Trips

Any off-site trip requires a risk assessment. Before the trip, staff, parent, volunteers and children should be clearly briefed about potential risks and the expectations we have of the adults taking part in the outing.

Full details of procedures (and practical advice on managing risks) can be found in the 'Educational Visits' policy, available on the school website.

Maintenance

The School Business Manager (BSM) and the caretaker are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the site. In conjunction with Coram and Camden Council, a schedule of regular inspections and testing is used to keep the premises in good working order. Any safety concerns, incidents or 'near misses' should be reported in the first instance to the School Business Manager and the Head teacher.

Supervision and maintaining ratios

It is vital that the correct ratios are maintained at all times and enhanced to meet the needs of particular children if necessary. Always call a member of the Senior Leadership Team if ratios are breached, or if you need additional help or support.

Ratios:

- 2-year-olds: 1 adult to up to 5 children
- 3-year-olds upwards: 1 adult to up to 13 children

To ensure appropriate ratios and supervision, we have put in place the following arrangements:

- Morning registration closes at 9.42am. This is to ensure safeguarding, we know who is in and to maximise learning opportunities. Children are admitted after this time only by prior arrangement and for exceptional reasons. The decision to admit a child after this time lies with the head teacher.
- All children are allocated a key group and key person. Key group places are decided by the head teacher. Class lists are maintained up-to-date at all times by the admin team who are responsible for providing SLT and classroom practitioners with the most current lists.
- In the garden, staff should be mindful when children are using potentially dangerous equipment such as the climbing frame and should therefore position themselves nearby to support children accordingly.
- If staff need to leave an area to go to bathroom etc, in order to maintain ratios, please call the SLT for cover if necessary. Please tell a colleague if you are leaving the room. Please ensure you minimise the amount of time you are away from the children by using the bathroom facilities before your work-time begins.
- To minimise distractions, maintain professionalism and ensure good supervision, conversations with colleagues while with children should be limited to *brief* exchanges of *vital* information. Ensure practitioners are spaced so that all areas where the children are playing can be viewed.
- Children should always be in sight or sound of an adult, preferably both. Particular care should be taken when children are using the bathroom independently.
- A member of staff should be in or near the bathroom supervising Kinder children before and after lunch and other times when a lot of children are accessing the bathroom e.g. before tea. Please ensure the bathroom areas are kept clean and tidy. All staff should ensure the bathrooms are maintained to good hygienic standards.

HEALTH, WELL BEING AND SAFETY (See Health and Safety policy)

Camden Counselling Service

Most people experience times in their life when pressures mount up and it becomes difficult to cope. Camden recognises this, and is committed to providing employees with the help and support they need to balance the many demands on them. The service is confidential, free and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

UK number: 0800 243 458 International number: +44 (0) 208 987 6550

Email: assistance@ear.co.uk [EAR Online Resources](#)

Alcohol and drugs

You must not come to work under the influence of alcohol or non-medical substance, such as drugs, as this can affect your ability to care for children. If your doctor gives you any medication that may have a negative effect, you should inform your head teacher in confidence.

STAFF CODE OF CONDUCT

We have high expectations of each other. As a staff team we will do all we can to help each other to reach them. We believe that our behaviour should demonstrate a respectful, professional and thoughtful manner to parents, children and each other.

We all have a responsibility to maintain public confidence in our ability to safeguard the welfare and best interests of the children in our care. It is therefore expected that, staff will adopt high standards of personal conduct in order to maintain the confidence and respect of the public in general and all those with whom they work.

Each adult will continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the centre's policy. Each member of staff and volunteers will sign the code of conduct agreement on appointment that sets out our expectations with regards to standards of professional behaviour.

Upon resigning from the school, you are required to hand back any TCC property (camera, sim card, laptops, keys, badges, swipe cards, etc...)

Confidentiality

As a member of the nursery school staff team you will have access to confidential information. You may also have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child to do so. USB sticks should only be used to store confidential information if they are encrypted.

If you are in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential you must seek guidance from a senior member of staff.

Dress code

While dress and appearance are matters of personal choice and self-expression at work we should dress in ways which are appropriate to our role in the nursery school and this may need to be different to how we dress when not at work. Our dress-code is 'smart-casual', which ensures a balance between wearing clothing which is practical for our duties but also shows us to be professional. The clothes we wear should be appropriate for the tasks and the work we need to undertake at the centre. Dressing in a manner which could be considered as inappropriate could render us vulnerable to criticism or allegations. Therefore, staff should dress in a way that:

- Is not likely to be viewed as offensive, revealing, or sexually provocative for example by showing midriff or low-cut tops, ripped jeans, etc.
- Does not distract, cause embarrassment, or give rise to misunderstanding.
- Is absent of any political or otherwise contentious slogans.
- Is not considered to be discriminatory and is culturally sensitive
- Is safe and enables us to be active with the children. All sandals must be suitable to run in. High heels are not appropriate.
- Please be mindful of possible hazards which can be caused by your attire. Please do not wear large, hoop earrings or have very long nails. Please tie back hair as needed. Your attire cannot inhibit your ability to work effectively and should not present a risk to you or the children in your care.

Physical Contact

Staff need to be aware of sensitivities about physical contact with children. Contact between staff and the young children we work with is appropriate for a variety of reasons, including:

- We do NOT carry children
- Providing calming/reassuring/comforting contact
- Offering support by holding hands
- A gentle touch on the arm to re-focus attention
- Guiding (without force) a child away from a situation or location.
- Changing a child's nappy or clothing (children of the appropriate age and development should be encouraged to use the toilet independently, once they are toilet trained)

Physical Intervention

Children should not experience physical intervention whilst in nursery school except in an emergency. Physical intervention is an action of last resort and is not a substitute for strategies which promote positive behaviour as outlined in our 'Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy'.

If a child is behaving in a way that could pose a risk to others, our first priority is to remove objects and move other people away from the child to remove any risk of harm. The child then needs to be given time and space to calm down. Do not chase the child and do not carry the child. Please call a member of SLT if you are unsure what to do or need support.

If ***exceptional*** circumstances arise that require physical intervention **ALWAYS** ask for help from a second adult who can:

- Reduce the risk of injury (to staff or child)
- Act as a witness to the situation (for the protection of adult and child)
- Diffuse the situation - the second adult may not be the focus of anger and could take over
- Remove other children from the situation
- If an adult does need to physically intervene in an emergency to keep a child safe, this must be recorded in writing and given to a member of SLT and head teacher informed.

The types of intervention which may be appropriate:

- The use of sufficient physical force - without causing injury - to remove a dangerous object from a child's grasp.
- Physically preventing a child from exposing themselves to possible danger- for example by leaving the premises.

It is illegal to use corporal punishment in all state-maintained schools.

Different adults respond in different ways to psychological stress. Support following incidents where physical intervention has been used should reflect the individual needs and strengths of each member of staff including, where necessary, time for the member of staff to have a breathing space and de-brief after an incident. Any use of physical restraint should be recorded, reported immediately to the head teacher and incidents will be monitored.

One to one situations with children

For most of the time staff will be working alongside colleagues. There may be occasions when staff need to work with children one to one e.g. when changing a child or implementing an intervention for a child with additional needs. One to one situations have the potential to make children more vulnerable to harm by those who seek to exploit their position of trust. Adults working one to one with children may also be more vulnerable to unjust or unfounded allegations being made against them. For these reasons it is essential that staff follow the following procedures:

- No member of staff should be working with children in an area where they are not visible to others. We must not work in rooms which have doors and windows which do not allow other staff and adults to see in. Glass panes must not be covered.
- The staff office must not be used for work with children.
- Your team leader and colleagues must be aware of where you are going before you leave your allocated room, conservatory or garden to go to another part of the centre.
- Always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry during 1:1 situations to a senior colleague and document the incident.

Differences of opinion

Inevitably, there will be times when a difference of opinion occurs between individual staff members. If this happens the individuals will discuss the issue away from the children at an appropriate time having arranged cover if necessary. The discussion will take place in a respectful manner with both parties aiming to listen as much as they talk.

If the meeting does not resolve the situation the matter will be referred to a team leader and then to the head teacher, or deputy. The member of MLT/SLT will listen carefully to both parties and then, if possible arrange for both parties to meet together with the MLT/SLT member to find a solution/ way forward.

If it is not possible to resolve a difference of opinion after talking to the head or if the difference of opinion is with the head, please see grievance procedures.

Use of mobile phones and cameras

We take steps to ensure that there are effective procedures in place to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults from the unacceptable use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

Personal mobile phones

- Personal mobile phones belonging to members of staff are never used in the classrooms and studio if the garden is in use by children, during work hours. Use in the staff room and sensory room is permitted on breaks, when no children are present.
- Apple watches or Smart watches which connect to the internet can only be worn as watches. The internet connection to emails, texts etc must be switched off during your hours of employment- i.e. only use during your lunch break, in line with mobile phone rules.
- At the beginning of each individual's shift, personal mobile phones are stored in lockers. If no lockers are provided or keys are missing, they must be stored in an office drawer. Please ensure your phone is on silent at all times.
- In the event of an emergency, for example if you are waiting for an important hospital call, personal mobile phones may be left in the office or with SLT, with permission from the head teacher.
- Members of staff ensure that the school's telephone number is known to immediate family and other people who need to contact them in an emergency.
- If members of staff take their own mobile phones on outings, for use in the case of emergency, they must not take or receive personal calls as this will distract them.
- Members of staff or visitors will not use their personal mobile phones for taking photographs of children on outings.
- Parents and visitors are requested not to use their mobile phones in the classrooms. There is an exception if a visitor's company or organisation operates a lone working policy that requires contact with their office periodically throughout the day. Visitors will be advised of a quiet space where they can use their mobile phone, where there are no children present.

Cameras and videos

As part of our work with children we take or record images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well-being of children. Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from the child, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose. Members of staff must not bring their own cameras or video recorders into the setting. Photographs or recordings in the nursery school are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting. Images cannot be uploaded from school cameras onto personal devices. If a special event has taken place and an individual staff member wants a photo of themselves (that was taken in school) for personal use, they must seek formal permission from the head teacher who will check that safeguarding and confidentiality are not being breached.

Where parents request permission to photograph or record their own children at special events, permission will first be gained from all parents for their children to be included. When hosting an event where parents are permitted to take photographs, we must make it clear from the start that any images taken must be for private use only.

Photographs and recordings of children are only taken of children if there is written permission to do so (found on the individual child's Registration Form). It is not appropriate for staff to take photographs of children for their personal use.

As a general rule, we do not watch TV programmes at Thomas Coram Centre. Occasionally, during special events permission may be sought from the head teacher for the children to watch a DVD or downloaded and pre-checked programme. Staff do not use their own personal devices for this purpose.

Contact with children and parents outside the school

While the nursery school encourages positive relationships between staff and families, these need to be of a professional nature for as long as the staff member has a professional responsibility towards that child. Staff should be aware that social contact with children and families who use the nursery school may leave them vulnerable to allegations and staff are strongly advised to inform nursery school management of social contact with children or their parents.

To prevent any misunderstandings, staff should be aware of the following guidance and good practice:

- Staff must not share their personal phone number or email address with parents.
- Staff must have LGFL emails if their role needs correspondence access.
- Staff are not allowed to work for current parents under any situation including collection from nursery, baby-sitting.
- Children and / or parent visits to your home should not occur, unless the reason for this has been clearly established and agreed with nursery school management. The nursery school will not expect or request that private living space be used for work with children and parents.
- In no circumstances should children and parents assist with chores or tasks in your home or the homes of your friends and family.
- It is good practice to approve any planned social contact with children or parents with the head teacher.
- There may be situations in which children or parents seek to establish social contact where it is not possible to notify the head teacher in advance (i.e. coincidental meetings in a social setting). In these cases staff should exercise professional judgement and are advised to notify nursery school management at the earliest opportunity.
- If staff believe that any social contact with a child or parent may give rise to concern they must report this to the head teacher.
- Staff must report and record any situation that they believe may place a child at risk, compromise the centre, or their own professional standing.

Accepting gifts

Care should also be taken to ensure that adults do not accept any gift that might be construed as a bribe by others or lead the giver to expect preferential treatment.

There are occasions when children or parents wish to pass small tokens of appreciation, such as a box of chocolates or bunch of flowers, to staff as a thank-you and this is acceptable. However, it is unacceptable to receive gifts on a regular basis or money or of significant value (over £15). Please speak to SLT if you are given a gift above this value. Staff do not give personal gifts to children. On leaving each child is given a gift book or similar by the school.

Communication with Children and Parents (including the Use of Technology)

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and parents including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet-based websites. Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the organisation's policy.

Conduct on social networking sites

- Do not make disparaging remarks about your employer/employees/ colleagues. Doing this in the presence of others may be deemed as bullying and/or harassment.
- Other users could post a photo on their profile in which you are named, so think about any photos you appear in. On Facebook, you can 'untag' yourself from a photo. If you do find inappropriate references to you and/or images of you posted by a 'friend' online you should contact them and the site to have the material removed.
- Parents may access your profile and could, if they find the information and/or images it contains offensive, complain to your employer.
- Ensure that any comments and/or images could not be deemed defamatory or in breach of copyright legislation.

Privacy

- To ensure that your Facebook or any other social media account does not compromise your professional position, please ensure that your privacy settings are set correctly.
- Do not under any circumstances accept friend requests from a person you believe to be a parent at your school.

Privacy Settings: Required Security Level - Friends Only

NURSERY SCHOOL PROCEDURES

We draw on Camden's terms and conditions and model policies for schools for a number of our procedures.

Please ensure that you always **sign in and out** (writing time of entry/ exit from the building) at the front desk in reception when you enter the building, including when you go out on a break or for any other reason. This is important for fire safety. Please note, staff must be ready to start work and in place at the beginning of their shift. This means arriving a few minutes before your shift time starts.

Holidays

A small number of staff have additional days leave they may take based on spinal points and length of service and the following conditions apply:

- The leave year runs from 1/9 to the 31/8 and any leave entitlement has to be taken between these dates.
- Leave is booked in advance. Dates for each academic year (1 September - 31 August) will be released in the proceeding June and all eligible staff are able to complete a leave form with their preferred date and given 2 weeks to return the form.
- One member of staff can be on leave at any time.
- Leave will not be granted on INSET days - except for exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the head teacher.
- Teaching staff are contracted to work 195 days per year directed time and any other time needed to complete their professional duties.
- Requests for unpaid leave or to carry over leave are at the discretion of the Head and Governing body and are only granted in exceptional circumstances.
- Staff who have 'All Year Round' contracts may have a limited opportunity to take leave during school holidays when the nursery school is open.
- Requests should be made in advance from the head teacher.

Contact Arrangements

All staff members must be proactive in communicating with colleagues and the senior leadership team. All reasonable efforts must be made by every employee to keep in contact. This includes downloading Parent Hub to your mobile phone and regularly checking for updates. If you cannot download the communication app, ensure the business manager and SLT know. You will need to be even more proactive in seeking information if you do not have the app. All staff must also regularly check their LGFL email account. If you have supplied the school with a private email address, the SLT team are at liberty to use this contact point.

Staff Absence and Sickness

Most staff manage their absence very well and we recognise that some absence is inevitable.

Sickness

- If you are too sick to come to work, please call **before 8am** and leave a message and then call back to briefly confirm with the head teacher that your message has been received. It is not acceptable to text a colleague to pass on your absence or to email.
- Please call **between 3.00 and 3.30pm** to let us know how you are and your intention to return to work so that we can plan. Please note, if you don't remember to follow these procedures, the office team or SLT will reluctantly be forced to call you to find out how you are. Failure to call in by 3.30 will be recorded as a breach of procedures.
- When you return to work, **please fill in a return to work form and pass it to Philli**, in the office.
- You can 'self -certify' for up to 5 days taken together (or 7 including the weekend) but you must get a note from your doctor to take any more days.
- If you are given a sick note by your doctor please arrange for us to get this as soon as possible (i.e. Send it in either by post or email).
- If you are off for a period of time please keep in touch with us by calling in regularly, giving us your 'end of sick note' date and give as much notice as possible if this changes. You must always telephone to speak to the head teacher to confirm your return to work on your last day of illness.
- If staff have been absent on 5 separate occasions or for more than 8 days in a rolling year (or if a pattern is developing that suggests that this will happen) or more than 20 days continuous absence, they will be invited to a meeting with the senior leadership team to discuss any underlying problems. The aim is to help staff identify any problems and support them in overcoming them. When there is a concerning or reoccurring pattern over time or absences go over 20 days/5 occasions staff will be referred to HR/OH for advice and support.

Dependency leave

- This is intended for unforeseen emergencies i.e. childcare breaking down and is for exceptional circumstances (this doesn't routinely include taking a dependent to a pre-arranged appointment only for emergency treatment - proof of any appointments should be provided). This leave is at the discretion of the head teacher and is not a formal entitlement.
- A dependent is a child (under 18), a parent or another person who lives with the employee and is dependent on them for aspects of their care
- Dependency leave is granted at the head teacher's discretion and must be requested (it's ok to sort this out when you return to work but please keep us informed about what is happening by calling the centre)
- You can usually take up to 5 paid dependency leave days (pro-rata) in a rolling 12 month year - always at the head's discretion - usually we'd expect you to take only a day at a time, which should allow you to fix the care arrangements or whatever is needed and return to work asap.

Long term health conditions and particular health appointments

Some health appointments may be attended with no need to make up time or take leave, however as much as possible we'd ask you to try and arrange these at a sensible time such as the end of the day.

Hospital appointments

- Please provide evidence of a hospital appointment - show a member of the SLT (letter, email or similar from the health care provider). We won't take a copy.
- We will ask you to make up the time unless it is for an urgent hospital appointment. You will usually be required to take a shorter lunch break or change the time of your lunch break to reduce the impact of your absence on the children and your colleagues.
- Please give as much notice as possible (the day before is too late!) and authorised absence may not be granted.
- If it is possible to re-arrange the appointment to be at an easier time (e.g. at the beginning or end of the day) this helps everyone. Term-time only staff should try to make appointments (except for emergencies) during their 12 weeks of holiday time.
- Part-time staff are required to make appointments on the days they do not work.
- We record when someone has a hospital appointment.

Doctors' appointments

- You are expected to arrange these in your own time as much as possible or failing that have them at the end of the day- if you work part-time you should **only** have emergency doctor's appointments in work time.
- You will be asked to pay back time for doctors' appointments (unless you have a long term or serious medical condition and have discussed this with Perina).
- SLT will arrange how and when you will give this time back to the school and you must agree when you will be doing this with a member of SLT when you arrange the time off. Please never repay time unless it's expressly agreed with an SLT member **in advance**. **You can expect it will not be recognised unless it is explicitly agreed.**
- We record when someone has a doctors' appointment.

Special leave

- This is any leave granted by the head teacher for an exceptional situation.

Compassionate or bereavement leave

- The length of paid leave following a bereavement is dependent on the individual situation- please talk with Perina about your situation as soon as you're able (a quick call when you receive the news is sufficient initially- we can discuss the leave taken when you return)

'Time back'

- We want to minimize this as much as possible, but we recognise it's sometimes necessary.
- 'Time back and time owed' is agreed by the head teacher. Always agree this information is correct at the time the arrangements are agreed. Please note, it is rarely helpful to the running of the school for time back to be repaid in 10 minute 'bites'.
- Please never do additional time unless it's expressly agreed with an SLT member **in advance**. **You can expect it will not be recognised unless it is explicitly agreed.**
- If you have accrued time back please discuss with Perina as soon as possible when you'd like to take it. This is normally within the same calendar month and is at the discretion of the head teacher.

Travel difficulties

You must make every effort to get into work on time even if this means changing your normal travel arrangements. We accept that on the first day of any travel difficulties you may not be able to get to work at your normal start time or, after making every effort, you may not be able to get into work at all. We expect that employees will be able to get to work after the first day. We expect you to take annual leave, flexi leave, time off in lieu or unpaid leave for any travel difficulties and / or to make up time you have missed (barring exceptional circumstances).

If you are running late due to travel disruption, please contact the school at the first opportunity. On arrival, you will always need to discuss your lateness with the head teacher and agree how time back will be paid.

Lunch breaks

The timings of lunch breaks are at the discretion of the leadership team and is not solely determined by shift patterns. When colleagues are absent, staff may be asked on the day to change their lunch break time. Staff should swap their break time with a colleague if they need to leave early for an appointment and take a shorter break.

We expect everybody to arrive at work so that they have sufficient time to put their bags away and be in class and ready to work by their designated start time.

If you are late arriving to work, you are expected to check in with the head teacher or in her absence with another member of the senior leadership team to explain your delay, make them aware that you have arrived and to agree how to pay the time back.

Please note: Practitioners should not eat or drink anything at any time in the classrooms that the children are not allowed to eat.

Reimbursement

Please check with the Head Teacher and School Business Manager before making any purchase for which you intend to be reimbursed.

Once agreed, reimbursement will be made via BACS payment into your personal bank account.

Maternity and Paternity leave (See Camden Policy)

Staff development

We have regular INSET days which are attended by all staff. Annual leave should not be booked on these days.

Camden and other organisations may also provide opportunities for training.

Notice of leaving

(See Camden's policy and contract of employment)

Grievance, Capability and disciplinary procedures

See Camden Model Schools Policy adopted by nursery school

Supervising students

We are committed to supporting potential early years practitioners and from time to time you will be asked to supervise a student. Please refer to policy document for advice and guidance.

Hygiene

All staff must wear the aprons and gloves provided when changing nappies or soiled clothing. All nappies and protective wear should be sealed in a plastic bag prior to disposal in the nappy bins. Any other waste products should also be sealed in a bag prior to disposal in a nappy bin. Children need to wash hands on arrival, before snack and lunch times.

All children should be encouraged to flush the toilet after use and then to wash hands with soap.

Classroom equipment must be regularly and routinely cleaned.

Personal Telephone calls

We aim to give the children our undivided attention and request that you restrict personal phone calls to lunch breaks. Messages will be taken and you will be notified at your next break time, unless it is an emergency when you will be contacted immediately. Mobile phones must be left in your locker or a desk drawer if office based. Similarly, Smart watches will be routinely checked by SLT and MLT leaders to ensure they are off-line whilst staff are working in the classrooms.

Security of possessions

Each member of staff has a locker to keep their personal belongings in. TCC cannot be responsible for damage or loss to property.

CHILDREN

Relationships between children and staff are warm, relaxed and respectful. Hugs and cuddles are part of nursery life. However, it is important to be mindful of the cultural practices of families and the rights of the children. Children's wishes must be respected. For example, at sleep time ask the child if they wish to be patted and ask a child if they would like a hug if they are upset.

Sickness

Please refer to the Health Protection Agency Guidelines for infection control in schools and settings Children who become ill during the day should be monitored closely and a decision made by the team leader and in conjunction with SLT whether or not to call the parent. Children with high temperatures should be cooled down by removing excess clothing and their temperature taken regularly.

Individual Health Plan

If parents raise any issues about children e.g. not eating certain foods due to allergies, cream they wish us to apply (except sunscreen), medications they wish us to use... parents need to be given an **Individual Health Plan** form that needs to be filled in by a **Medical professional such as Health visitor, Nurse or Doctor**.

Meal and snack times

As well as providing nutrition meal times, snacks and celebrations are social occasions where children can enjoy sharing food with each other and with the adults. Sharing food is an important way of bring children from a wide range of backgrounds together and developing a sense of belonging. When birthdays are celebrated, encourage families to bring fruit or vegetables to share in place of cakes. Party bags and similar are not allowed and celebrations should be limited to your key group of children. It is important to celebrate special events and for all children to be made to feel special via a shared ritual - equally, a **treat** is something that is **good** for you.

Sleep and rest

Toddlers sleep according to their own routine in their base room. They are always supervised during sleep-time. Kindergarten children who need to rest can have a quiet time. There is no provision to sleep in Kinder.

Nappy changing procedure

Children in nappies are changed according to the details outlined by their parents on their starting sheet. Please remind parents when nappy supplies are running low. During their time in the Toddlers most children will be ready for toilet training and this is carried out in consultation with their parents. In the Kindergarten children are given sensitive support to enable them to become increasingly independent. Children aged 2 or older should be changed standing up whenever possible. All staff must wear the gloves and aprons provided when changing the children.

Garden policy

Staffs' role in the garden is to play with the children and engage them in meaningful activities, whether planned or spontaneous. Children and adults are encouraged to wear appropriate clothes to enable them to enjoy the garden throughout the year. Please make sure that children are warmly dressed before they go outside if it is cold or damp. In wet weather add wellies and hats. In the summer, please ensure that they are wearing sun block and shoulders should be covered as well as a hat if the weather is hot. Children are not allowed to ride bikes over the bridge.

Displays

We want to ensure that the school looks as wonderful as we can make it, all signs need to be consistent and we generally use Comic Sans font. Children's work and other displays are to be placed on the pin boards in each area or displayed in clip frames attached to the wall. Staples, Blue Tack, masking tape and Sellotape etc ... are not to be used on the plastered / painted walls. Staples should never be used on wood. Sellotape must be carefully removed from glass and staples from boards when displays are changed.

All displays of children's work should include the following - legible writing, an explanation of significance, children's comments or reactions, photos of work in progress, illustrations, artefacts and books related to the display, names of children involved, work should usually be mounted or framed. As far as possible the children should be actively involved in creating displays of their work. We want to value their creativity and give all the children a chance to have their work displayed. Displays must be up-to-date and regularly changed to be relevant, informative and have more impact.

Registration

The daily registers are held securely in the school office overnight. These are important, legal documents and must be accurate at ALL TIMES. Any changes in collection routines must be communicated to reception staff, class staff and noted in the message book. Office staff must inform practitioners about absence and vice versa promptly. Practitioners do not accept fees or dinner money and should re-direct parents/ carers to the school office. Children arriving late should be marked accordingly with time and reason included. Children leaving school early must be marked out immediately by the class staff. Parents are required to call the school to notify us of any absence. If parents do not call us we will call them. This is to encourage good attendance habits and is also an important aspect of safeguarding.

- Breakfast starts at 8.30am. Staff should be in the breakfast rooms before the children arrive, ready to work. Trolleys should be in place, in the breakfast rooms at 8.30.
- 9.30-9.40 am children should be taken to their class by their parent / carer. Parents leave by 9.42 when children begin to play inside or outside.
- The school closes at 5.30pm.

Children cannot go to their classes before 9.30am without prior arrangement as staff are busy setting up the rooms, garden and preparing work.

Collection

Children can only be collected by a pre-agreed person. Children can never be collected between 3.00 and 3.15pm due to key group time. Children who are collected early should be collected at 2.55pm only, to cause the least disruption. Parents must notify the school in advance if they wish to collect early and regular early collection must be agreed formally.

If children are not collected by the end of their session, please notify the team leader or senior leadership team. The child stays in the class or if the child is going to be collected very late and there is a space, they should join tea club. The late parent needs to wait at reception for their child to be brought to them. There will not usually be time for the key person to talk to the parent.

After 15 minutes we will try to contact their parents by phone, then we will try to contact other nominated individuals by phone. If we cannot contact anyone by 5.15pm we will contact Safeguarding and Social Care (MASH). A note must be kept of the time of late collection so that regular lateness can be effectively monitored.

Partnership with parents/carers (See also Parents Booklet and policy)

We are committed to working in partnership with parents and families who use the nursery school. This partnership is based on the belief that parents have specialist knowledge of their children while we have specialist knowledge of children at this stage of learning and development. All parents are treated equally and their culture, class, gender or parenting skill respected.

Visitors policy

We welcome visitors to the campus and all visits are booked in advance, with Perina being notified and the visit added to the diary.

As part of visitor/ student induction, you are required to read the Induction/ Safeguarding summary and meet with the senior leadership team.

Induction of day-to-day duties and practice will be delivered by your middle leadership team lead.



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CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT ACADEMIC YEAR 2025-2026

All statutory policies are available on the school website. All staff should keep themselves updated on all policies. All staff should re-read this handbook at the start of each new academic year. Copies of the handbook are kept in the staffroom and a digital copy is stored in the handbook folder, in 'staff-shared' area. A copy has been emailed to every staff member.

At Thomas Coram Nursery Centre and Nursery School, all staff and volunteers strive to set a good example to children through their own conduct and behaviour and by maintaining high standards of professionalism and appropriate boundaries.

We seek to work in an open and transparent way applying the same professional standards regardless of culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and / or sexual identity.

As adults we are responsible for our own actions and behaviour and avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question our motivation and intentions.

I have read the contents of this Code of Conduct.

I understand that the Code of Conduct, Staff Handbook and related policies represents the expectations for all staff who are employed by Thomas Coram Centre.

Name:

Signed:

Date: