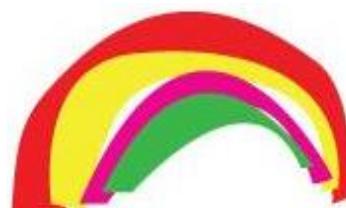


Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School

Staff Handbook



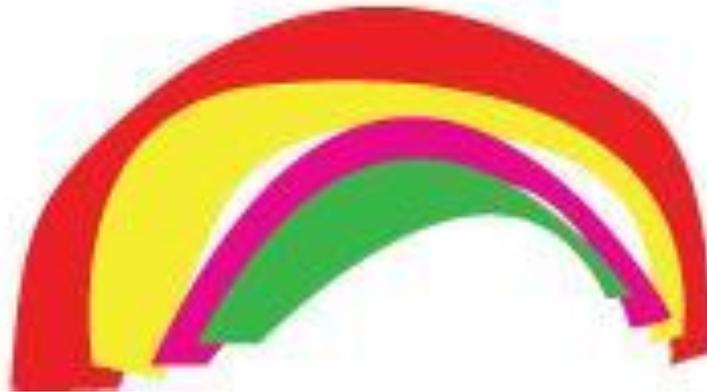
**Thomas Coram Centre
and Nursery School
49 Mecklenburgh Square
London WC1N 2NY**



Reviewed and Approved: September 2021

Next review: September 2022

Reviewed annually



Code of Conduct and Staff Handbook

Revised September 2021

Please note, all statutory policies are available on the school website.

INTRODUCTION

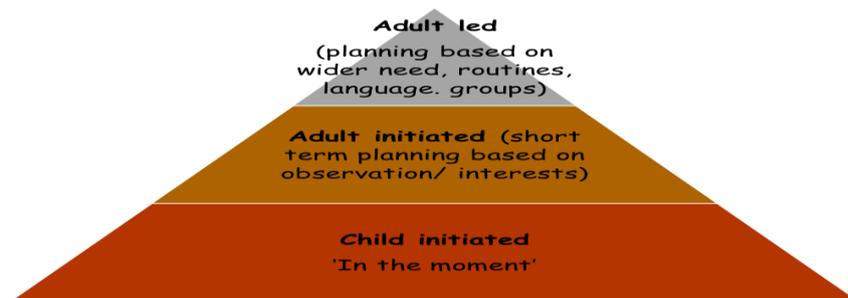
Our work is based on the belief that the early years of a child's life are really important. During the first five years much of children's life time learning takes place.

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.



Our aim is to support the learning and development of each individual child and to provide a secure learning environment, which enables children to be:

- respectful of themselves and others
- happy and confident
- independent and interdependent
- compassionate and caring
- tolerant and patient
- curious and creative
- appreciative and appreciated

We want to:

- provide a safe, secure, stimulating environment which embraces all children and values their race, gender, age, disability, culture, class and religion
- value all children as individuals and appreciate their uniqueness
- parents and carers as the primary educators of the child
- have high expectations of ourselves and the children
- value the wider community as a means of adding to the richness of our curriculum and nursery school

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

We are an equal opportunities employer and the governing body has adopted Camden's Equal 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

All staff will:

- promote an inclusive and collaborative ethos in their key group and in the entire school
- challenge prejudice and discrimination
- deal fairly and professionally with any prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- plan and deliver curricula and lessons that reflect the school's principles, for example, in providing materials that give positive images in terms of race, gender and disability
- maintain the highest expectations of success for all pupils
- support different groups of pupils in their key group through differentiated planning and teaching, especially those who may (sometimes temporarily) find aspects of academic learning difficult
- keep up-to-date with equalities legislation relevant to their work.

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

Duty of care

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.

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).**

Safeguarding covers a broad agenda and aims to achieve the following:

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's health or development
- ensuring children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- undertaking a role so as to enable children to have optimum life chances so they can enter adulthood successfully.

Safeguarding is a preventative agenda that helps children to achieve their full potential regardless of negative factors such as poverty or social exclusion by providing services and support to overcome

barriers to achievement. We will safeguard and promote children's welfare by focussing on preventative actions and services so that all children are able to fulfil their potential.

Recent guidance also explains that where a member of staff discovers that female genital mutilation (FGM) has been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, (or may be carried out) he/she must report this to the police.

The guidance explains what staff should do where they have concerns about another staff member (including the Headteacher) or the school's safeguarding practices. Staff should speak to the DSL (the Head teacher, Perina Holness) *or in the case of a concern about a member of the Head teacher to the Chair of Governors (Lucy Razzell's contact details are available on request from the school office).*

The Prevent Duty is the duty in the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and demands that all school-based staff have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

DBS update check

Since a DBS disclosure is a 'snap-shot in time', Camden operates a rolling programme of further checks, to be undertaken usually at three-year intervals.

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.

The nursery school takes every opportunity to create and reinforce an 'offender-aware' culture. This may include activities such as:

- including a safeguarding-related objective in each employee's annual appraisal
- having a regular 'safeguarding' slot at team meetings
- reinforcing the message, e.g. through supervision sessions, team meetings and individual conversations, that inaction in the face of doubt is not a neutral act and may result in harmful behaviours being continued. Staff are encouraged to change their thinking from '*what if I'm wrong about this?*' to '*what if I'm right and I do nothing?*'

Acting on Concerns

If you have any concerns about a child's or vulnerable adult's well-being you must contact the designated member of staff: Perina Holness (DSL and Head teacher) or in her absence Jan or Marcia. Please complete the nursery school concerns form, which is available from the office and in the classrooms.

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).

We also comment on any indications that an (ex-) employee is unsuitable for a safeguarding post in any requests to provide a reference.

Child Protection

Child protection is part of the safeguarding agenda that focuses on preventing maltreatment and protecting children at risk of neglect or abuse. Under the Children's Act 1989, Safeguarding and Child Protection Team (also known as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH) have a legal duty to investigate and take any action to protect children where there are concerns that they are at risk of suffering **significant harm**, which is defined as:

Neglect: failure to provide basic care to meet the child's physical needs, such as not providing adequate food, clothing or shelter; failure to protect the child from harm or ensure access to medical care and treatment.

Physical abuse: causing physical harm or injury to a child.

Sexual abuse: involving children in sexual activity, or forcing them to witness sexual activity, which includes involving children in looking at or the production of pornography.

Emotional abuse: failure to provide love and warmth that affects the child's emotional development; psychological ill treatment of a child through bullying, intimidation or threats.

All staff have a responsibility to identify those children who maybe suffering from abuse or neglect and to ensure that any concerns about the welfare of a child are reported to the designated member of staff, Perina or in her absence, Jan or Marcia.

All staff need to be aware of possible signs of abuse and immediately report any possible incidents to the designated member of staff. Please ensure that you have kept a detailed record of incidents with the date, why the behaviour/comment was worrying and anything the child or parent has said. If a problem or pattern causing concern is apparent, we will contact Safeguarding and Child Protection Team (also known as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub - MASH) for advice and guidance (0207 974 3317) *this number is also displayed in the staff room.*

If a child discloses to a member of staff that they are being abused, the member of staff should;

- listen to what is said without displaying shock or disbelief and accept what the child is saying
- allow the child to talk freely
- reassure the child but not make promises that it may not be possible to keep, or promise confidentiality, as a referral may have to be made to MASH
- reassure the child that what has happened is not their fault and that they were right to tell someone
- not ask direct questions but allow the child to tell their story
- not criticise the alleged perpetrator
- explain what will happen next and who has to be told using language appropriate to the child's stage of development
- make a formal record and pass this on to the designated member of staff

Concerns raised by a member of the public

Where a member of the public has concerns relating to the safety of a member of a vulnerable group, they may raise the matter by contacting the school. For the purposes of this document, a 'member of the public' may also be a Camden service user.

Any member of staff receiving such an allegation, either by telephone, in person or in writing, should note the name and contact details of the person making the allegation, if they are prepared to provide this information.

Irrespective of whether the allegation is made anonymously or by an individual who is prepared to give their name and contact details, a written note should be made of the report, including the date and time received, and the nature of the allegation.

The employee should then report the matter to the designated member of staff or any other member of the leadership team if they are not available so that it can be properly investigated. Failure to report an allegation is a disciplinary offence.

Concerns raised by a Camden worker (including volunteers)

If a member of staff has concerns relating to the safety of a member of a vulnerable group, they should raise the matter immediately. The Nursery school has robust child protection procedures, and all members of staff are encouraged to follow these by raising the matter with the designated member of staff. The designated person will then follow the child protection procedures, or similar procedure applied to other vulnerable groups as required.

Concerns raised against a Camden worker (including volunteers)

If an allegation is made against a member of staff we will contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO - 020 7974 6999) 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. The aim of the investigation is to explore the background of the complaint and to resolve any problems. At all times the well-being of the children is our paramount concern.

We recognise that there may be circumstances where staff feel unable to raise concerns or incidents of malpractice within the nursery school environment, if they feel, there is reasonable doubt that these would be dealt with adequately.

All staff and volunteers have a legal duty to raise concerns where they feel individuals or the nursery school are failing to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Where it is not possible to raise concerns within the school, staff and volunteers may report concerns to the following;

- Camden's lead officers for child protection or safeguarding 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 school.

First Aid

Any accident must be recorded on the first aid forms. 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.

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 4 children
- 3 upwards 1 adult to up to 13 children

During before and after school clubs, and during school holidays we use a 1 (adult):8 (children) ratio for children aged 3+ to provide more support for children attending a longer day/year unless a teacher is present when the ratios can increase to 1:13. For 2 year olds, the ratio remains at 1:4.

During parts of the day children are in mixed age groups and the staff with them are responsible for children other than those in their particular room/team.

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.
- In the garden, activities should be largely child initiated to enable all members of staff to monitor all the children in their care. Allowances should be made for children who specifically require 1:1 support, however a balance between the child's initiated play, engagement and safety should be adhered to in order to ensure children have access to an inspired, supported, broad and balanced curriculum. Staff should not wear large hoods which restrict their view- please wear a hat if required.

- 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.
- Staff need to be mindful that if the actions of a colleague are preventing them supervising the children or the colleague is comprising supervision of the children they need to take action even if that risks offending the colleague by telling them to stop talking and/or move away. It is better to offend a colleague then incur a risk to the children or leave yourself vulnerable to liability if an accident occurs.
- Children are to access woodwork tools when staff assess that supervision levels are appropriate. This will vary during the year for example in September with a lot of new children starting the emphasis will be on introducing the children to tools in ones and twos under close supervision.
- 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.
- Children, who have particular needs, e.g. find it hard to listen and follow instructions, are to wait to the end, so that an adult can accompany them to the bathroom at these times.
- Gate to staff lockers to be closed at all times.

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.

As part of Camden's investment in the wellbeing of every member of Camden staff, they have commissioned the services of an organisation called Employee Advisory Resource (EAR) to provide an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). EAR has access to a wide range of professionally qualified and experienced network of counsellors who can provide a range of specialist counselling services specific to the needs of the individual. 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.

There may be times, for example, when an adult's behaviour or actions in their personal life come under scrutiny from local communities, the media or public authorities. This could be because their behaviour is considered to compromise their position in their workplace or indicate an unsuitability to work with children. Misuse of drugs, alcohol or acts of violence would be examples of such behaviour. We should therefore understand and be aware, that safe practice also involves using judgment and integrity about behaviours in places other than the work setting.

Each adult will continually monitor and review their practice and ensure they follow the school'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. **Children's 'Little books'** should only be kept in the office - never taken off site or in lockers/cupboards.

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 or nominated child protection person.

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 children.

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:

- 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)

We need to ensure that physical contact is appropriate and leaves neither child nor adult vulnerable to allegations of abuse. Factors to consider might include:

- Knowledge of the child, e.g. history/background
- Age (and age difference) - of child and adult
- Context - where, when, why
- Relationship between staff member and child
- Gender

On occasions, we may need to use planned physical intervention to keep children and adults safe and included in our setting.

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'.

Physical intervention involves actions in which one restricts the movements of another; it is not the same as other forms of physical contact such as manual prompting, physical guidance or simply support which might be used in teaching, therapy or reassurance.

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

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. Corporal punishment may be defined as any act or threat of an act, such as hitting, kicking, slapping, punching, poking, prodding, biting, throwing an object, rough handling etc, which causes or threatens harm.

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 debrief after an incident.

Any use of physical restraint should be recorded 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. In most cases staff should be able to resolve any difficulties with each other and reach a conclusion that is satisfactory to both parties.

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 and recordings of children are only taken for valid reasons ie to record their learning and development, or for displays within the setting. Photographs or recordings in the nursery school are only taken on equipment belonging to the setting. Camera and video use is monitored by the head teacher.

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. Parents/carers taking pictures or recordings of their own children for own personal use is lawful. The difficulty arises with events such as plays etc in that other children may also be filmed. Parents must be made aware that it is illegal to sell or distribute any such recording without proper permission. 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.

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. Social contact in certain situations can be misconstrued as grooming.

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. Contact with children and families may leave staff vulnerable to allegations. In order to prevent this, staff are strongly advised to notify the head teacher of any contact with families.
- 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.

- Staff are encouraged to consider the appropriateness of social contact according to their role and the nature of their work. Where social contact is an integral part of their work duties (e.g. work in the community), care should be taken to maintain appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- When social contacts occur through interests outside of work or through personal or family networks staff are advised to take care in maintaining appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- It is recognised that in some cases staff may need to support a parent in particularly difficult circumstances. In these situations, staff should be aware of the potential for the parent to become dependent on the staff member outside of their professional role. In such situations staff should discuss with the head teacher, and if appropriate a referral will be made to the appropriate support agency.
- 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. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones, text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share personal information with a child or parent other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child or parent, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

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

- Always make sure that you log out of Facebook or similar social media site after using it, particularly when using a machine that is shared with other colleagues. Your account can be hijacked by others if you remain logged in - even if you quit your browser and/or switch the machine off. Similarly, Facebook's instant chat facility caches conversations that can be viewed later on. Make sure you clear your chat history on Facebook or similar social media sites (click "Clear Chat history" in the chat window).
- Parents/ potential employers/ANYONE may scour websites looking for information about you: Take care to remove any content you would not want them to see.

Working with parents experiencing stress

On occasions parents may be distressed and behave in an inappropriate fashion. Staff should respond in an understanding way to ensure the well-being of the children, other parents, themselves and their colleagues and send for help from a member of the senior management team.

It is important that we do not act in a judgmental fashion or make assumptions based on class, gender or biased assessment of parenting or professional skills.

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

The nursery school is closed: -

- On all Weekends and Bank Holidays
- For 2 weeks over Christmas and New Year
- Good Friday and Easter Monday and the 4 days before or following (depending on the date of Easter)
- for the last 3 weeks in August

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 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.

-If a number of staff are applying for leave on the same day/s priority will be given to staff that did not have these day/s last year.

- Many staff requests leave in the weeks around the Christmas and Easter closure and before the summer closure. Priority will be given to staff that have not had the 2 weeks before or after Christmas /Easter closures or the 2 weeks up to the summer closure the previous year.

-Leave will not be granted on INSET days- except for exceptional circumstances and at the discretion of the head teacher.

-If staff have applied for leave during more than one of the above periods in a year once they have been allocated one period other staff will have priority for the remaining periods.

-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. Only one member of staff at a time can have time away. As with all holiday, 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. We follow Camden's Sickness Management Procedures which is available from the office.

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.

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.
- Please call back **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.
- When you return to work, **please fill in a return to work form and pass it to Andrew** (Business Manager).
- 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.
- Please note, if you don't remember to follow these procedures we'll be forced to call you to find out how you are.

Usual procedure to signal monitoring of sickness is 8 days in a rolling 12 month period. We are not currently arranging return to work meetings after every absence but are likely to ask for one when your sickness reaches 5 days or more (in a 12 month programme). Another trigger point is more than 20 days continuous absence when we'll ask to discuss and review your absence or if you are signed off work by your doctor.

How to you know how much sickness you've had?

Absence will be inputted into the Oracle system which contains data on how many days absence an employee has had, so you can ask Andrew (Business Manager) for an update.

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)
- 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 applies) in a rolling 12 month year- always at the head's discretion- usually we'd expect you to take only a day or two at a time, i.e. you fix the care arrangements or whatever is needed and return to work asap. (See appendix for Camden's guidance on dependency leave)
- To check how much dependency leave you've had; please ask Andrew to check the system and update you.

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. These include,

- Breast screening (mammograms)
- Appointments related to long term and serious health conditions - please discuss your condition with Perina.

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 not usually ask you to make up time for a hospital appointment.
- Please give as much notice as possible (the day before is too late!)
- 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.

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** usually 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)
- We will ask you to arrange how you will make up the time for the appointment when you book the time off. When possible you should organise to do this in advance of the appointment. If this isn't possible you will be asked to make up the time by the end of the following week. You must agree when you will be doing this with a member of SLT when you arrange the time off.
- We record when someone has a doctors' appointment.

Special leave

- This is any leave granted by the head teacher for an exceptional situation.
- It is not for arranged, planned appointments or for repairs to the home (you will need to take unpaid leave or holiday entitlement).
- You must apply for special leave (this can be after the event if it is an emergency) and it is at the head teachers discretion.
- Examples of reasons that Special Leave might be granted; a relative (who is not a dependent) has an accident and you rush off to A and E or your child has a 'once in a lifetime' type event
- There is a limit to how much SL can be granted- at the head teachers' discretion - it is usually only a day/part of a day at a time.

- If special leave isn't granted but you still wish to take the time off you will be asked to take the time as unpaid leave and permission will still need to be granted by the head teacher otherwise the leave will be recorded as unauthorised and conduct proceedings will be investigated.

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)
- We are mindful of Camden's recommendation for bereavement leave- this up to 10 days if the person was your child, partner or a close relative you live with or if you are finalising the deceased person's affairs.
- In other situations, five days bereavement leave may be allowed.
- All leave is negotiated with their head teacher and may include taking unpaid leave.

'Time back'

- We want to minimize this as much as possible, but we recognise it's sometimes necessary.
- We really appreciate that staff work additional time when asked to support special events or cover a colleague.
- We record 'time back and time owed' in a folder in the office. Always agree this information is correct at the time the arrangements are agreed.
- 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.

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.

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. Information is shared via display in the staff room or staff meetings. More specialist training is available as and when needed. Supervision is provided regularly to all staff members usually via team or individual supervision with a member of the SLT or with your team leader/ line manager.

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- under *teaching staff*)

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 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 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 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.

Staff room and access to telephone and computers for personal use

We have a comfortable staff room with access to fridge, freezer, microwave and dishwasher. Please tidy up as you go (e.g. crockery washed or placed in dishwasher, newspapers etc taken away or binned after use) as in a large staff team the staff room can get messy and is then not a relaxing place to be. The computer in the staff room may be used for personal purposes such as checking emails but priority is given to those wishing to use it for work purposes.

The parent's room is for parents and is not available as an additional staff room. The sensory room is for quiet work such as writing reports and making confidential phone calls and is also not available as an additional staff room.

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

(See also Curriculum Statement and Parents Booklet)

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 - we follow this for every illness. There is also a supplementary booklet that gives more information

available in the staffroom & office. If a child has an upset stomach or is sick, they should not return to the nursery school until they have been eating normally and having regular bowel movements - at least **48 hours after the last episode**. Children who become ill during the day should be monitored closely and a decision made by the team leader whether or not to call the parent. Children with high temperatures should be cooled down by removing excess clothing and their temperature taken regularly.

Home visiting

The nursery school operates a home visits system as we believe that home visiting provides a good introduction to the nursery school for child and parents. Children have the opportunity to meet their new key worker in the security of their own home. However, home visits are optional and parents are free to decline the offer if they wish. 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

Our menus have been assessed by the Healthy Eating Team to ensure that they meet current nutritional guidance for children 0-5 years.

We have not included pork on the menu and we provide a vegetarian alternative at lunch and tea. We do not have food containing nuts.

If children have allergies or are unable to eat certain foods due to medical reasons, we try to avoid these foods if possible. If the food cannot be avoided we will arrange a substitute, for example soya milk instead of cow's milk. The menus are suitable for most children so that as many as possible will be able to share the same food and drink.

Staff act as positive role models and eat a **small** portion of the same foods as the children, commenting in a positive way about their meal. Our aim is to make mealtimes a happy, social occasion. We want to encourage a positive attitude towards food and instil the confidence to try new dishes.

Children usually sit with their key/co-worker for lunch. Children are encouraged to use 'please' and 'thank you', as appropriate for their age group. A little of each type of food is placed on the child's plate and they are encouraged to try it. No child is forced to eat.

All parts of our meals are nutritious and well balanced: The pudding is an essential part of the meal and not a treat or something to 'fill you up', and it is important that the children are able to enjoy it as part of their meal.

We are aware that children with additional needs may have particular requirements regarding the serving of their food and we will always endeavour to meet those specific needs.

Independence skills are strongly encouraged, so that children pour their own drinks, self-serve some of their meal and cut up their own food (as age appropriate).

At the end of the meal the children leave the table as a group and return to their base room or to play in the garden.

As part of our aim to promote healthy lifestyles, the children do not have access to sweets or sugary drinks while at school.

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 bringing 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

(in line with Healthy School guidelines we no longer allow 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 or sleep use the sofas or toddler rooms in their wing.

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 3 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
- 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 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, 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 5.30pm 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.

Rotas and routines

- Please read latest version of routine in the curriculum statement.
- Mohamed, the Coram Campus caretaker unlocks the building at 7.30 a.m. Please ensure that you have your swipe card with you to gain access to the building. If you lose your card please inform Andrew straight away.
- **Meeting and greeting** -Key workers and/ or co- workers must be in the garden or base room promptly at the beginning and end of their shift to greet parents at arrival and collection times. This is an opportunity to exchange information on the child and ensure a strong link between home and school. All key -workers must be in their base room by 9.28 each morning, teachers need to be in their rooms setting up at 9.00am
- **End of day** -If you are on the late shift please ensure that all windows and doors are locked before you leave and that fans and computers are turned off.

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.

Volunteers and students must read our Induction Summary, sign and complete the information sheet.

CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT ACADEMIC YEAR 2021 -2022

At Thomas Coram Nursery Centre 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.

During the Covid 19 Pandemic, a range of additional safety measures have been introduced. All staff must keep up to date with the requirements of the latest risk assessment, which can be found on the school website.

I have read, fully support and agree to abide by the Thomas Coram Centre Code of Conduct, Staff Handbook and related policies.

Name.....

Signed

Date.....