

Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School

Fees & School Meals Charging Policy



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



Reviewed and Approved: Summer 2023	Next review: Summer 2025
Reviewed bi-annually	

General

The Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School has adopted a strict no debt policy relating to nursery fees and school meals service, as it has incurred significant debts relating to the non-payment of dinner money and nursery fees in the past.

If debts are incurred, then the school budget has to pay for them. This means that money which should be spent on the children's education is used to pay for debts incurred by parents/carers. We are sure that every parent/carer will agree that this is unacceptable and we request that all parents/carers give this policy their full support.

Early Years Provision

We support the entitlement to free 15 hours early years provision for eligible 2 year olds.

We support the entitlement to free 15 hours early years provision for all 3 and 4 year olds and to free 30 hours early years provision for 3 and 4 year olds who are eligible for either the Camden or Government funded schemes.

We provide wrap around day-care for pupils attending Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School and this is chargeable in line with Appendix 1 of this policy.

The opportunity of on-site wraparound care will help enhance children's wellbeing and achievements promoting secure foundations for future learning and life.

The provision of quality nursery places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds will help parents to return to work, education and training. This will in turn support families in reducing the impact of poverty.

Policy Aims

- Ensure our charges are fair and affordable.
- Review all charges regularly.
- All parents/carers will be given notice of increased charges in the term prior to its effective date.
- The primary objective of any monetary increase is to sustain the nursery.
- Be aware of, and remain competitive with, the charges made by other nursery providers.
- The Government's free entitlement, which covers 15 or 30 hours per week, over a minimum of 38 weeks, will be maintained and encouraged by the nursery at all times.
- Ensure that the childcare we offer is flexible and meets the needs of working parents whilst maintaining a quality provision, which primarily considers the needs of our young children.

- Ensure parents can easily identify on their invoices what the charges are and when they need to be paid.

Childcare charges

- Extra childcare provision is available for up to six additional weeks across the year and is subject to availability. These weeks may also be referred to as 'holiday weeks' as they always fall within Camden's designated school holiday timetable.
- An additional wraparound childcare provision is available from 8.30-9.30a.m. and 3.30-5.30p.m, five days a week. The provision is available for up to 44 weeks per year and is subject to availability.
- Parents are not obliged to purchase additional hours or pay lunchtime charges in order to secure any free provision.
- No charge can be made for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) funded education place of 15 hours per week, but parents/carers can purchase additional childcare provision where available.
- If a place is offered, a Contract will be issued. This will contain an acceptance form which must be signed and returned as soon as possible.

Billing and Management of Fees

A four week non-refundable deposit will be required in advance and will be offset against the final payment when the child leaves the nursery. Fees for the term should be paid monthly in advance, preferably on or close to the 5th calendar day of each month, via bank transfer.

The bank details for the nursery are as follows:

NatWest

L.B Camden - Thomas Coram Centre

Sort code: 60-80-07

Account number: 79418066

Parents/carers must use their child's name as the payment reference, to ensure that funds are allocated to the correct child.

Fees will be billed at the start of a child's first term at the nursery and will be based on their proposed attendance pattern. Parents and carers will only receive subsequent invoices in an academic year if they request them or a child's attendance pattern is changed.

Parents/carers will not be charged for the first week of their child's place at the nursery. This is usually referred to as the 'settling period'. Beyond the first week, charges will be applied in full.

Full settlement of the fees prior to the end of each academic year is mandatory and a minimum of four weeks' payment notice is required in writing to change contract or leave the nursery.

The four week' payment notice is considered to be four chargeable weeks within term time. School holidays do not count towards the notice period.

In addition to the mandatory four week notice period, if a child wishes to leave the nursery in the final half-term of the academic year (between May half-term and the summer break) then the minimum notice period will be the remainder of term OR four weeks, whichever is greater. i.e - if notification is received by the school on 8th June 2024 then the notice period would run until 24th July 2024, the final day of the academic year. This would result in a notice period of 6 weeks.

In all instances fees are due for the notice period required.

A child could be excluded for non-payment of fees if a parent has been requested but has failed to communicate with the nursery regarding payment.

Funding for 3 and 4 year olds

All three year olds are eligible for 15 hours (per week) Universal Funding provided by the Government. This funding is available to the nursery the term following the child's third birthday.

In addition to this, parents/carers should apply for a further 15 hours funding from HMRC via the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs> . Here they will find the eligibility clearly outlined and an online application form which they should complete. HMRC will provide parents/carers with an 11 digit code starting with '500' if their claim is successful, which they must then forward to the office, if they are eligible.

If the HMRC application is not successful, parents/carers should apply for the Camden Enhanced Offer (CEO) via the following link: <https://forms.camden.gov.uk/cus/servlet/ep.app?ut=X&type=84839644467&auth=204>. Here they will find the eligibility clearly outlined and an online application form which they should complete. This is only available to Camden residents. Parents/carers should forward your confirmation to the office, if they are eligible.

Parents/carers should speak to the Head teacher or School Business Manager for more information.

School Meals

- If a parent/carer believes that their child qualifies for entitlement to Free School meals (FSM) they should apply via the Camden website here: <https://accountforms.camden.gov.uk/freeschoolmeals/> and notify the school office if their application is accepted.
- If a child is not eligible for Free School Meals, parents/carers must pay for a school lunch after their child has turned three years old. The cost per day for a lunch is £2.50, which equates to £12.50 per week. As an example, if there are 60 school days in a term then the lunch money total cost based on 100% attendance would be $60 \times £2.50 = £150.00$ per child.
- If a child is absent they will not be charged for meals. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to subtract £2.50 for every day that their child is absent before making their payments. For example, if they only attends 4 days in a particular week they would only need to pay £10.00.
- We ask parent/carer's to set up a weekly or monthly standing order using the name of their child as the reference, so they can be certain that they are regularly paying for their child's lunches.
- The bank details for lunch payments to nursery are the same as above.

Equality

At the Thomas Coram Centre we believe it is the right of all pupils, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, physical ability or linguistic, cultural or home background to have access to high quality learning experiences in a stimulating and supportive environment.

We will always welcome and celebrate diversity and challenge any form of stereotype or prejudice. We believe that it is the right of parents, carers and children to be included in all aspects of school life, have access to school information and participate in all activities.

Fees for nursery places - Debt recovery process

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into arrears of two weeks

Checklist

- Is this a fee paying child, are invoice details correct?
- Is there a possibility that payments have been made, but not been credited?
- Does this parent/carer normally pay on time, or is this just a one-off?

Action 1: Send a 'text reminder' (Appendix 2)

Level 2

Indicator: Nursery fees remain unpaid for a further two weeks

Checklist

- Is there a possibility that payments have been made, but not credited?
- Has this parent/carer made contact since Action 1?

Action 2: The school office will contact the parent/carer via telephone and email and ask them to settle their outstanding debt. (Appendix 3). A repayment schedule will subsequently be drafted, approved by the head teacher and sent to parent/carer.

Level 3

Indicator: Nursery fees remain in arrears for a total six weeks and the parent has made no contact.

Checklist

- Is there a possibility that payments have been made but not credited?

Action 3: The head teacher will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss resolution of the debt and ultimately the child's charged place at the nursery.

Lunch money - Debt recovery process

Level 1

Indicator: A child's account goes into arrears of more than two weeks

Checklist

- Is this child entitled to Free School Meals and are the dates correct?
- Is there a possibility that payments have been made, but not credited?
- Does this parent/carer normally pay on time, is this just a one-off?

Action 1: Send a 'text reminder' (Appendix 4)

Level 2

Indicator: Lunch money remain unpaid for a further two weeks

Checklist

- Is there a possibility that payments have been made, but not been credited?
- Has this parent/carer made contact since Action 1?

Action 2: The school office will contact the parent/carer via telephone and email and ask them to settle their outstanding debt. (Appendix 5). A repayment schedule will subsequently be drafted, approved by the head teacher and sent to parent/carer.

Level 3

Indicator: Lunch money remains in arrears for a total of six weeks and the parent/carer does not make contact.

Checklist

- Is there a possibility that payments have not been credited?

Action 3: The head teacher will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss resolution of the debt and the child's lunch time place at the nursery.

APPENDIX 1

Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School - Fees Tariff 2023/24

Toddler (2 year olds) Income based Fees Tariff - Term time

Evidence of income will be required for Band 1 applications.

Band 1 Total household income under £60,000 per year

Hourly Rate	Daily Fee (Core day* - 6 hrs)	Daily Fee (Extended day- 9hrs)
£8.00	£48.00	£72.00

Band 2 Total household income over £60,000 per year

Hourly Rate	Daily Fee (Core day* - 6 hrs)	Daily Fee (Extended day- 9hrs)
£10.00	£60.00	£90.00

For Toddler children, the above fees include the cost of lunch.

Kinder (3 & 4 year olds) Fees Tariff - Term time

This fee band should be used to calculate fees for any unfunded hours during the core day, all extended-day childcare hours and any holiday or 'all-year round' hours where a child attends the nursery.

Hourly Rate	Example
£8.00	A child is funded for 30 hours a week via the universal and HMRC funding schemes. Their parent/carer would also like them to attend from 8:30-9:30am and 3:30-5:30pm every day during term time. That is an additional 3 hours per day/15 hours per week, which would cost an additional £24 per day/£120 per week.

For Kinder children, the above fees do not include the cost of lunch (below).

*The Core day for children is from 9:30am-3:30pm.

Kinder (3 & 4 year olds) School Meal Tariff - Term time

Cost per child per day	Cost per child per week
£2.50	£12.50

Holiday weeks (Half-term/Easter/Summer) Tariff

If you would like your child to attend during our additional 'holiday' weeks during the half-term, Easter and summer breaks, the cost will be £10.00 per hour. This includes the cost of lunch and all activities.

APPENDIX 2

Dear Parent/carer,

The nursery has not received a payment for *Child's name*'s fees this month.

Fee payments are due between 1st - 5th of each month, as per your original invoice.

Please bring your payments up to date as soon as possible or contact the school office if you have any questions.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 3

Subject: Term fees overdue

Dear Parent/carer,

Contract reference : UPNXXXXXXXXX

For the Attention of : *Parent/Carer Name*

Home Address: Flat xx, AAAAA BBBBB Buildings, AAAAA Avenue, LONDON, ABXA XAA

Type of Contract: xxxxxx

The outstanding nursery fees for *Child's Name* for the XXX term amount to £x,xxx.xx

We request that you settle the outstanding balance within three working days. If you cannot make payment in full, please contact the office immediately.

The bank details for the nursery are as follows:

NatWest
Thomas Coram Centre
Sort code: 60-80-07
Account number:79418066

Please use your child's name as the payment reference.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 4

Dear Parent/carer,

The nursery has not received a payment for *Child's name*'s lunch money this term. Please contact the school office to bring your payments up to date as soon as possible.

Thank you.

APPENDIX 5

School Meals Arrears - *Child's name*

Dear Parent,

We have not received payment for school meals. The balance to date outstanding is £XX.XX

We request that you settle the outstanding balance immediately.

The bank details for the nursery are as follows:

NatWest
Thomas Coram Centre
Sort code: 60-80-07
Account number:79418066

Please use your child's name as the payment reference

If your debt is not settled within three working days you will need to make arrangements to take your child home for lunch, until full payment is made.

Thank you.