

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 2024

Next review: Summer 2026

Reviewed every two years

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 offer:

- Parent funded places for a minimum of 15 hours per week for term time or up to 46 weeks per year (£8.50/£10 per hour - see Appendix 1).
- The entitlement to the government funded 15 hours early years education for eligible 2 year olds. (This is either via HMRC or the free entitlement scheme).
- The entitlement to the universal government funded 15 hours of early years education for all 3 and 4 year olds.
- The free additional 15 hours early years education for 3 and 4 year olds. (This is either via Camden or Government funded schemes).

The provision of quality nursery places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds will:

- Help enhance children's wellbeing and achievements promoting secure foundations for future learning and life.
- Help parents to return to work, education and training.

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.
- The nursery will issue invoices requesting payment and the onus will be on the parent to pay on time.
- All late payments (fees or Lunch) may incur a monthly interest/admin charge of £10 per month and for every subsequent month thereafter.
- Unpaid Fee and/or lunch accounts may be passed onto a debt collection agency.

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 46 weeks per year and is subject to availability.
- Parents are not obliged to purchase additional hours in order to secure any government funded hours.
- 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 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 50% will be offset against the first term invoice and the remainder will be held until the final term. Fees for the term should be paid monthly in advance, on or before 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 each term for the term in question and all accounts must be settled by the end of that term. Please speak to the School Business Manager or Head teacher if you are experiencing financial difficulties and we may be able to agree a repayment plan. Termly fees will be calculated based on parents declaring their hourly preferences prior to the commencement of each term and we reserve the right to refuse any further changes till the following term.

To guarantee a holiday placement, parents must inform us at the start of each term and all fees will be calculated accordingly and under these circumstances no refunds are available for non-attendance.

Holiday places are limited, subject to availability we may be able to facilitate holiday requests on an ad-hoc basis. Once agreed, fees will be collected in advance and no refunds are issued for non-attendance.

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. The 'settling period' can only be offered once.

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 2 year old

Eligible parents have the option of applying for the government education and childcare for 2 year old via the following link:

- <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-childcare-if-youre-working>

- <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-2-year-olds-claim-benefits>

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 you will find the eligibility clearly outlined and an online application form which you 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.

You will receive reminders from HMRC to renew this code every three months. Please bear in mind that if this code expires we can no longer receive government funding and you will be liable for the fee.

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. 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 has an authorised absence e.g. illness they will not be charged for a meal. Any overpayment will be settled at the end of the academic year.
- We ask parent/carer's to set up a monthly standing order using the name of their child as the reference.
- The bank details for lunch payments to nursery are:

NatWest
 L.B Camden - Thomas Coram Centre
 Sort code: 60-80-07
 Account number: 79418066

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 an email reminder

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/email and ask them to settle their outstanding debt immediately. Otherwise the child will not be able to stay for lunch and an additional £10 admin charge will be rendered against the outstanding invoice.

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 and/or the School Business Manager will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss resolution of the debt. If an agreement to settle the outstanding debt cannot be reached then we reserve the right to withdraw the charged element of the child's place. The parent will be reminded that the £10 admin charge will continue to be accrued for every month that the debt remains outstanding.

Level 4

At two months, if no further progress has been made in reducing and/or clearing the outstanding debt, we reserve the right to consider using a debt collection agency.

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 an email reminder

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/email and ask them to settle their outstanding debt immediately. Otherwise the child will not be able to stay for lunch and an additional £10 admin charge will be rendered against the outstanding invoice.

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 and/or the School Business Manager will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer to discuss resolution of the debt. If an agreement to settle the outstanding debt cannot be reached then we reserve the right to withdraw the child's lunch place. The parent will be reminded that the £10 admin charge will continue to be accrued for every month that the debt remains outstanding.

Level 4

At two months, if no further progress has been made in reducing and/or clearing the outstanding debt, we reserve the right to consider using a debt collection agency.

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.

APPENDIX 1

Thomas Coram Centre and Nursery School - Fees Tariff 2024/25

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

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 £65,000 per year

Hourly Rate	Daily Fee (Core day* - 6 hrs)	Daily Fee (Extended day- 9hrs)
£8.50	£51.00	£76.50

Band 2 Total household income over £65,000 per year

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

If you are not entitled to Free School Meals the additional cost for lunch will be £2.50 per day on top of band 1 or band 2.

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
- any holiday or 'all-year round' hours

Evidence of income will be required for Band 1 applications.

Band 1 Total household income under £65,000 per year

Hourly Rate
£8.50

Band 2 Total household income over £65,000 per year

Hourly Rate
£10.00

The government funded universal offer of 15 hours early education per week is only applicable to 09:30 to 12:30 Monday to Friday.

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

If you are not entitled to Free School Meals the additional cost for lunch will be £2.50 per day on top of band 1 or band 2.

Many families who are not entitled to the full 30 hours of government funding want the child to stay for lunch. This additional hour is charged at a preferential rate of £5 per day (£2.50 for lunch + £2.50 towards nursery costs).

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.