



Parent Handbook

How families & staff work in partnership to support children's learning and wellbeing

www.thelondonacornschool.co.uk



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Welcome from the Headteacher

Welcome to The London Acorn School, a creative and progressive school for children from 2 to 9 years old in the heart of Morden Hall Park.

Our vision is to provide an unhurried introduction to education, where emphasis is placed on the natural world as well as on academic excellence.

We are an enthusiastically inclusive school where we encourage all our children to find their passions, create enduring friendships and take time to find out what really makes them unique. Our children are the innovators, creators and architects of the next generation. They are active creators, and not passive consumers.


Our academic curriculum challenges our pupils, and our “hidden” curriculum offers all our children the opportunity to build resilience, imagination and curiosity. We place an emphasis on independence and our children thrive in an environment which trusts them to make decisions and be responsible for themselves.

We have a strong sense of community, and our families are encouraged into school regularly for workshops and events which celebrate our school culture. We follow the rhythms of the seasons, and our children have a strong sense of their place in nature and the environment.

We work closely with our sister school, Hall School Wimbledon, to ensure a smooth transition into upper key stage two at their campus on the outskirts of Wimbledon Common.

A London Acorn child has a quiet confidence, an understanding of their place in the world and the ability to succeed and make friends wherever life takes them.

We look forward to welcoming your child to The London Acorn School.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'R Bochenski'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'R' at the beginning.

Rachel Bochenski, Headteacher

Our School Ethos

“The fact is that given the challenges we face, education doesn’t need to be reformed – it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardize education, but to personalize it, to build achievement on discovering the individual talents of each child, to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can naturally discover their true passions.” **Ken Robinson**



The London Acorn School is a committed and vibrant community of pupils, staff, parents and carers united by a set of ten shared beliefs.

1. We believe the most valuable gift we can give our children is an innate curiosity and love of learning

In an ever changing world, the only certainty is uncertainty; the skills we learn today may be obsolete tomorrow. Our focus is equipping children to thrive whatever happens by imbuing them with the skills, resilience and desire to learn throughout their lives.

2. We believe that an over-reliance on technology is detrimental to children

Our increasing addiction to smartphones and other devices limits the downtime that the brain needs to process, wander and dream and is particularly detrimental to the development of young minds. While we introduce technology

later on, in the early years we are very careful about exposing our children to screens.

3. We believe in the nourishing power of nature

Just as technology can be detrimental, so nature is beneficial, providing children with the space for their bodies and their imaginations to run wild. For this reason, we based our school in London's most eco-diverse park and ensure that all pupils spend time every day in nature.

4. We believe that children learn best in an intimate, un-hurried environment

Numerous studies have shown that the large class sizes and exam pressure heaped upon children from an early age is counterproductive, leaving them anxious and turning them off learning. So, we create a gentle environment where children in small classes learn at a pace in keeping with their developmental needs.

5. We believe that children thrive when they have clear boundaries

A secure and ordered environment with consistent daily rhythms is essential to learning. We uphold the highest standards when it comes to behaviour.

6. We believe in academic excellence

We have high academic expectations for our children; we believe that a gentler approach to education in the early years is conducive to academic achievement later on.

7. We believe in educating the whole child

Though important, academics are not the 'be all and end all'. Supporting children's emotional, physical, creative, technical and spiritual development is as important as fostering academic accomplishment. We take a holistic approach, equipping children for life, not just for exams.

8. We believe in drawing from a variety of educational approaches

Rather than limiting ourselves to a single philosophy or approach, we stand on the shoulders of educational giants. Our curriculum is a blend of the National Curriculum with elements of Steiner Waldorf education and aspects from other pedagogies that align with our values.

9. We believe that we are at our best when we are open-minded and open-hearted

Situated in a truly global city and fortunate to count people from a wide variety of ethnicities and backgrounds as part of our community, we recognise the tremendous value that people with different experiences and perspectives can provide our community and embrace them.

10. We believe that we are stronger together

Our greatest asset is our community. Together we are charting our own course, creating a school for the future with every decision we take, dictated by the best interests of our children. We welcome others who share the passion to rethink what a school can be to join us.

The History of The London Acorn School



The London Acorn School first opened its doors on 15th September 2013 with just six children.

It began with a founding group of parents exploring the prospect of setting up a new school in London with a holistic approach. Taking inspiration from progressive educational settings, such as Steiner Waldorf and Montessori, the founders wanted children's wellbeing to be prioritised and their needs met beyond academic progress. At the same time, the governance, clear standards and robust, accountable structures of mainstream settings were regarded as equally important in establishing a school.

Where was the prep school in London that understood that childhood is not a race and which was open-minded enough to see that there is not 'one method' to achieve this?

A visit to the Cotswolds to see the work of Sarah and Graeme Whiting at The Acorn School in Nailsworth was a key inspiration due to the high standard of work in their holistic setting. Our school is named in tribute to this original source of inspiration. The London Acorn School has since developed its own identity, curriculum, ethos and structures.

The first teachers were founders Cathy Brick and Sarah Thorne, joined by Eileen Riley, a wonderful Kindergarten teacher who formed the base ethos of the Kindergarten provision we have today.

In our first three years, the Junior School was primarily shaped by a blend of Steiner and mainstream approaches to robustly meet the developmental needs of all our pupils, and this work has continued since.

Founding and building a school from scratch is a huge endeavour, and there have been many challenges and learning points along the journey so far. Through all this, the strength of our community has been an inspiration. We work closely together with our families to ensure our children are supported both at home and at school and we follow the success of our pupils into secondary and beyond.

Throughout our evolution the school has continued to build on the founding principles, and we are proud to boast a talented and hardworking team, who are dedicated to nurturing and educating the children in their care.

Since 2022, we are proud members of the Chatsworth Schools family. As part of this family, we are closely linked to Hall School Wimbledon, an inclusive independent school for 10 -18 year-olds in Wimbledon Village. We work together to establish core threads that will define a pupil's experience at every stage. HSW supports our values and aims and our pupils can, if they choose, enjoy a smooth transition through to upper key stage two (aged 10) and secondary school beyond.

What this means at Home

- Parents understand that their children are at a unique school that offers a blended approach of different pedagogies.
- Families enjoy belonging to a community where structured parent involvement and volunteering is encouraged, expected and respected.

What this means at School

- A stream of clear communication on the exact nature of our blended approach flows to families through class teachers, newsletters, and regular parent evenings.
- The school undertakes to maintain structures for parental involvement and to ensure that engagement is as easy as possible.

Meet the Faculty

All staff at the school are deeply committed to maintaining a high level of educational excellence and ensuring children’s wellbeing throughout their time at school. With a considerable wealth of experience, each class teacher is well equipped to provide students with stimulating material presented in a creative and engaging way.

All Kindergarten children are guided by their Kindergarten Teacher, who works closely with a Kindergarten Assistant Teacher. Pupils between the ages of 6 and 9 are guided by their respective Class Teacher. Teachers often remain with classes for sequential years, ensuring continuity and stability, but this is reviewed on an annual basis and with the children’s needs in mind.

Contacting Staff Members

The Headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school in all its departments and, in conjunction with the Governors (Chatsworth Schools) for long term development planning.

Safeguarding Team:

Our Safeguarding Policy can be found on our website.

If you have a safeguarding concern. please raise it with one of the following members of staff:

Rachel Bochenski – Safeguarding Lead:
head@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk

Emily Cook – Deputy Safeguarding Lead:
emilyc@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk

Vivianne Thompson – Designated Safeguarding Lead Chatsworth Schools:
vthompson@chatsworthschools.co.uk

Staff Members:

Senior Leadership Team	
Rachel Bochenski (Headteacher)	head@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Emily Maskell (Head of Operations)	emily@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Little Acorns Parent and Toddler Leader	

Jo Pearce	littleacorns@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Kindergarten Teachers	
Ya-Hsin Cheng	ya-hsin@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Helga Pinter	helga@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Kindergarten Assistants	
Blerta Alushi	blerta@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Aleksandra Wojcicka-Janik	aleksandra@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Junior School Teachers	
Emily Cook (Year 2)	emilyc@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Martin Cooper (Year 3)	martin@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Chantel Martins (Year 3)	chantel@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Stacey Brien (Year 4, SENCO)	stacey@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Pippa Cox (Forest School Lead)	
Howard Rogers (French Lead)	
Jody Smith (PE Lead)	
Teaching Assistants	
Arianna Boyd-Allen	arianna@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Emma Le Gendre	emma@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Blerta Alushi	blerta@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
School Office	
Emily Maskell (Head of Operations)	emily@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Tamara Chaplin (School Admin/Admissions)	tamara@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk ; admissions@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Emma Le Gendre (Office Assistant/Clubs)	emma@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk

Coordinator)	
Jody Smith (Site Manager)	jody@thelondonacornschoo.co.uk
Aneta Alshalby (Housekeeper)	

Your child's Class Teacher will be happy to speak to you about school and home-related matters, or to direct you to helpful literature. In general, arrival and departure times are not appropriate for lengthy conversations. The teachers will be available to speak to you by arrangement, on all other matters please contact the school by email.

As parents, we often want to know how our children have spent the day but find that sometimes our children are not forthcoming. The Class Teacher welcomes your enquiry and is always willing to share their insights and listen to your concerns. It is good practice to discuss difficulties you are having at home, sooner rather than later, with the teacher. Please let the teacher know if there is anything affecting your child's well-being.

Contact Telephone Numbers

School Office: 020 8544 9769

Curriculum



Head, Heart, and Hands

The key intent for our school curriculum is to create a positive purposeful and effective drive for learning in our pupils that will enable pupils to contribute to society and last a lifetime.

In order to fulfil our intent the TLAS curriculum engages the head, heart and hands in its thematic approach. Our curriculum is deep-rooted in a philosophy for education that allows all of our children to have the opportunity to access and engage in lessons that are creative and innovative with interconnectivity across subjects. Our intention is to enable our children to reach high levels of academic, creative, and artistic achievement and to grow into fit healthy young people.

How is TLAS wonderfully different?

Morden Cottage in Morden Hall Park is a nurturing environment which fosters a family atmosphere. Class sizes are small and relationships between teachers, children and families are strong. From the Kindergarten years to the Junior years the supportive framework at TLAS allows children to develop into curious learners, and creative and socially confident young people. TLAS employs a supportive framework which is relationship based and develops empathy, understanding and cooperation between children. In a small school the emphasis is on providing boundaries and working closely with children to support choices which demonstrate empathy and help to create a harmonious family atmosphere. We believe firmly that it is important for children develop positive habits through gentle approaches and routines rather than oppositional approaches.

We begin formal learning, in tandem with many education systems globally, at age 6. Our unhurried academic approach works brilliantly as is evidenced by worldwide research. With less pressure and more nurture and an ambitious thematic education, our children remain enthused by their learning and are motivated, curious and independent learners when they leave our school.

TLAS has a low-tech approach. In a world which surrounds our children with tech our curriculum design prizes the creative, artistic and the outdoors. Rather than 'swiping right on an ipad' our children are to be found lighting campfires, creating a compass out of wood in our workshop and enjoying sport or yoga. In the upper years, technology is a creative companion in some lessons. All the children receive the skills they need to use technology safely and confidently by the time they leave our school. Children need time and space to 'grow' their abilities and to discover their passions; TLAS allows children this time.

How does our curriculum design and environment help to deliver a rich learning experience for children?

As our children enter into formal learning our curriculum design is such that it allows children the time, space and opportunity to be in a state of 'flow'. The connectivity of our curriculum themes and longer lesson times allow children the time, space and opportunity to be completely absorbed by a learning experience and task.

TLAS ensures learning is 'experiential' providing opportunities for pupils to use their full sensory intelligence, opportunities to create, be in nature and have real agency in their learning. Weekly forest school and woodwork sessions, partnership projects with Merton Music Foundation and daily access to Morden Hall Park ensure there is breadth to the curriculum.

Subjects are taught in the context of a purposeful and meaningful topic that inspires, excites, and enthuses learners, offering them transferable skills for life-long learning. The progressive curriculum builds upon prior knowledge, challenges thinking and enables a higher level of understanding for long term memory acquisition, storage and retention.

Curriculum Overviews

For information on curriculum please visit our website:

www.thelondonacornschoo.co.uk/curriculum

Assessment



At The London Acorn School we believe in developing creative thinkers and curious learners. Assessment is very much part of the cycle of learning at our school and not the 'end' of a journey.

In the Kindergarten years the teachers are guided by the 'Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) criteria for assessment from Birth to 5 years. It sets out both learning and developmental requirements, as well as safeguarding and welfare requirements. This information is shared with our parents at parents evenings and in annual reports.

In our Junior School classes we use the PUMA and PIRA Maths and Literacy termly assessments. All of our teachers are skilled at working with children individually to plan their next steps in learning. Emphasis is given to providing written and verbal feedback regularly to the children and this is a part of the daily classroom experience. Small class sizes and a nurturing atmosphere ensure that assessment in this context really helps children to progress academically.

The curriculum breadth ensures that children experience time and space within a school day to discover a talent, explore, and learn through nurture not pressure. Assessments administered in the Junior School:

<p>SWRT – this is a single word reading test</p>	<p>The pupils read a list of words. This is useful at the beginning of an academic year and at the end of the year, so that value added can be observed. All pupils at the school read the same list. This assessment is useful in terms of looking at the children’s abilities to decode words and can also be an analysis tool in terms of identifying where more work on phonics may need to be deployed, or booster literacy sessions offered. It also help us to pinpoint pupils who may need screening for dyslexia.</p>
<p>PUMA and PIRA Maths and Reading Comprehension assessment booklets</p>	<p>These are termly child friendly assessments. Easy to administer with progress tracked termly, these assessments provide the school with prior attainment data every year. They provide Reading comprehension and Maths ‘ages’ and also standardised scores. These assessments provide a diagnostic capability allowing teachers to focus on concepts and skills which the pupils need.</p>
<p>Spelling test</p>	<p>All children take the same test. This test is often taken at the beginning of an academic year and the end of an academic year.</p>
<p>Writing Assessment</p>	<p>The whole Junior School receives the same stimulus and completes a similar task based on age-related success criteria. This is assessed using the schools internally developed ‘Learning Steps’.</p> <p>While we cannot compare this with peers nationally at the same age, it does provide the teaching team the ability to see the progression in writing throughout the school.</p>

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



If Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) have been identified or become apparent to the Class Teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo), then a meeting will be held to address what additional support can be made available for the individual child. Please make us aware of any previous assessments your child may have had so that we can work together to provide appropriate support. Relevant external professionals will also be consulted if required.

For further information, please consult our SEND Policy:

<https://thelondonacornschool.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SEND-Policy-June-2023.pdf>

Little Acorns (Age 1-3.5)



The London Acorn School is hosting Little Acorns Parent and Child groups with Jo Pearce during school terms, designed to help support the connection in your formative relationship with your child. Heart held space offers Waldorf craft and songs, with inspiring weekly puppet shows, snacktime and role modelling of the adults role in child led play. Supporting material provided. Holistic Baby Childcare practices stem from Steiner/Waldorf and are inspired by Emmi Pikler and the EYFS.

Outdoor play is encouraged all year round – come dressed for outdoors. We also have a wonderful indoor environment in our beautiful Morden Cottage in the Rose Garden in Morden Hall Park.

For further information, please see our website: [Little Acorns \(ages 1- 3.5\) - The London Acorn School](#)



Kindergarten (Nursery, Reception and Year 1)

“Nothing is rushed.

The children sense that there is plenty of time to do things well.

Nothing to fear.

Each child has come to trust the certainty of the morning rhythm.

Nothing to fail.

In place of failure is the satisfaction which children experience when they are allowed to play. No instructions.

Instead, self-direction and the willingness to imitate.”

Lynne Oldfield, *Free to Learn*



The London Acorn School Kindergarten forms a bridge between home and school, creating a secure and unhurried environment for children aged 3 to 6 years that is safe, warm and loving. Our Kindergartens are mixed age groups, which provide

a traditional large family atmosphere, helping children to acquire social and emotional skills through experience, imitation and learning through play.

The Kindergarten curriculum is based on Waldorf Steiner Kindergarten practice. Children of this age learn through imitating the world around them. We aim to provide examples worthy of imitation and nourishing opportunities for children to learn experientially and feel the joy of discovery. We create a space for the child to unfold: to reveal themselves, develop their imaginations, and encourage natural creativity and curiosity.

The strong rhythm, repetition and reverence of the Kindergarten day, week and seasons support these aims. Sensitively structured and regular activities include, drawing, painting, baking, sewing, weaving, woodwork, outside expeditions, ring games, fairy tales, singing and poetry.

Our Kindergarten is a community of 'doers' and through 'work' children learn not only social and domestic skills, but are able to develop good motor and practical skills, too. Young children learn for life from life, that is why in Kindergarten, we aim to prioritise meaningful work, such as food preparation and looking after our environment. To look after our environment, we encourage activities like cleaning and tidying up, laying the snack table, washing up after we have eaten, etc.

Furthermore, throughout the year, the children experience the natural world during outdoor play or nature walks. In these walks the children are free to balance on logs and branches, explore the bushes, climb trees, run, hop, skip, roll and crawl. They encounter the world with all their senses, playing with stones, rocks, shells, leaves, earth, mud, snow, sand and water, or feeling the wind, rain or sun on their cheeks.

As the last year of Kindergarten unfolds, older children are gently introduced to following a teacher as they build a portfolio of craft projects through 'daily work' sessions, develop their mathematical practice and vocabulary, and begin to spend some time learning with their friends in the Junior School.

In the Kindergarten years the teachers are guided by the 'Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage' (EYFS) criteria for assessment from Birth to 5 years. It sets out both learning and developmental requirements, as well as safeguarding and welfare requirements. This information is shared with our parents at parents evenings and in annual reports.

Kindergarten 2024-25

8.30am	Arrival
8.50am	Circle Time
9.10am	Mini Snack and Indoor Play/Activities
11.00a m	Tidy up/Story time/ Hand wash
11.30a m	Lunch
12.00p m	Getting ready for Outdoor Time
12.15p m	Outdoor Time (Kinde Tree/Garden/Adventure Playground)
2.00pm	Pick up or After School Clubs until 3pm

Arrival and Collection

Monday - Thursday from 8.30am to 2pm

Friday from 8.30am to 1.00pm

Afterschool Clubs and Wraparound Care:

Morning Room (Kindergarten and Juniors)

Monday – Friday 8am -8:30am

Kindergarten Afterschool clubs

Monday – Thursday from 2pm to 3pm

Friday from 1.00pm to 2.00pm

Home Room (Kindergarten and Juniors)

Monday – Friday until 5pm

What this means at Home

- It is worth researching how you can bring rhythm and repetition into your home to support your Kindergarten child.
- Think about how you would like to model meaningful work to your Kindergarten child at home or set up things to encourage imaginative play. It will help them academically long term.

What this means at School

- The school undertakes to assess your child in a continuous manner and to contact you should any issues arise.
- Parents are invited to two formal meetings each year, and receive an annual written report.
- In Kindergarten, children unfold in a safe, homely, rhythmic and creative environment.

Junior School (Year 2 - Year 4)



The Junior School starts with children aged 6 (Year 2) and continues until the child reaches the age of 9 (Year 4). The curriculum for these younger students is designed to help them form an understanding of the world and their relation to it through lessons and activities that encourage the development of their inner senses, such as intuition and imagination, along with important skills such as literacy, numeracy, arts and crafts.

These years are the heart of childhood: when the children are actively discovering the world around them through their senses and growing faculties. Lesson subjects are therefore shaped to support this aspect of pupils' growth and incorporate an abundance of physical and practical activities, which support this stage of development.

A Typical Day in the Junior School

The London Acorn School prides itself on offering a balanced and diverse curriculum; therefore, to an extent, no two days are the same. Despite this, rhythm and routine are regarded as highly important teaching tools in the Junior School.

The day begins with greeting the Class Teacher at the threshold of the school building, marking that transition from home life to school life. The children put

their belongings away and swap into slippers to wear indoors, which further marks that readiness for learning. As the children move throughout the building, the sound of song fills the corridors.

For each year group, the day begins with a Morning Rhythmic Time: songs, poems, movement, reading, and mental maths take place within this time. It is an opportunity for children to settle into the school day through familiar exercises.

Throughout the morning, academic subjects are taught in the context of a purposeful and meaningful topic that inspires, excites, and enthuses learners, offering them transferable skills for life-long learning.

English and Maths are taught daily, combining this thematic approach with the National Curriculum. After a busy, creative morning, the children eat their lunch together and then play outside.

The afternoon is an assortment of different Arts and Craft activities: from engaging with the natural world and practising bushcraft skills in Woodland Craft, to developing wet-on-wet painting techniques in Art, to learning to play new instruments in Music, to trying new sports such as swimming, football and sailing.

Finally, at the end of the school day, children sing farewell to each other and their teacher, closing the school day with rhythm. Children can then stay on at school to engage in one of the many extra-curricular clubs on offer.

Junior School Day 2023-24	
8.30am	Arrival, Registration and Rhythmic Time/Maths Practice
9.00am	Literacy
10.15am	Break time
10.45am	Maths
11.30am	Humanities, Languages, PSHE, RE etc.
12.15pm	Lunch time
1.15pm	Creative Lessons (Woodland Craft, Art, Music, PE, Science etc.)
3.15pm	Pick up or After School Clubs until 5pm

What this means at Home

- Please support literacy by modelling your joy in reading books and listening to your child read on a regular basis.
- Don't hesitate to ask your Class Teacher any questions on pedagogical approach, curriculum or assessment.

What this means at School

- The school delivers a broad curriculum, tailored to the needs of each class, the plans for which are shared with you at the start of each year.
- Twice a year, parent-teacher conferences are held and an annual report is arranged to discuss your child's progress.

Arrival and Collection :

Monday - Thursday from 8.30am to 3.15pm

Friday from 8.30am to 1.00pm

Afterschool Clubs and Wraparound Care:

Morning Room (Kindergarten and Juniors)

Monday – Friday 8am -8:30am

Junior Afterschool clubs

Monday – Thursday from 3:15pm to 5pm

Home Room (Kindergarten and Juniors)

Monday – Friday until 5pm

Collection in Kindergarten and Juniors:

Children must be collected by a parent or by a named person with parental consent. If your child is going home with someone other than you, please let your teacher and the office know by email.

It is very disruptive to the children and to the rhythm of the morning if there are late arrivals. It can be distressing for the children to miss some of the morning activities and for their morning routine to be broken. It can also be distressing for them if they are waiting for you after all the other children have been collected. Children should never be left unattended in the school buildings or garden, either prior or after **school**.

Extra-curricular Clubs

The London Acorn School provides a broad range of exciting extra-curricular clubs for all ages, from Kindergarten to Year 4. Each half term, clubs rotate, offering students a chance to try something new. Here is a typical club timetable (this may vary):

Clubs Autumn Term 2023 (first half term)	Schedule	Fees (£)
Chill Club (Kindergarten)	Monday 2pm-3pm	Complimentary
Retro Bounce Trampettes (Kindergarten)	Tuesday 2pm-3pm	£10 per session
Multisports (Kindergarten)	Wednesday 2pm-3pm	£10 per session
Yoga (Kindergarten)	Thursday 2pm-3pm	£10 per session
Music Club (Kindergarten)	Friday 1pm-2pm	£10 per session
Art Club (Juniors)	Monday 3.15pm-4.15pm	Complimentary
Retro Bounce Trampettes (Juniors)	Tuesday 3.15pm-4.15pm	£10 per session
Multisports (Juniors)	Wednesday 3.15pm-4.15pm	£10 per session
Yoga (Juniors)	Thursday 3.15pm-4.15pm	£10 per session
Lego Club (Juniors)	Friday 1pm-2pm	Complimentary

Club timetables are published at the end of each half term for children to sign up for the following half term. Clubs are booked and paid for half termly in advance. Any sessions missed are non-refundable.



Healthy Snack and Lunch

Please ensure that your child comes to school having eaten a substantial breakfast, it is important that they start the day with enough energy for our active mornings. Children will further require a healthy mid-morning snack and packed lunch. The school provides fresh spring water, but your child will need their own water bottle, with their name on it. With busy, creative learning, children use up a lot of energy and therefore need plenty of sustenance to keep them going until the end of the school day. It is much better that they return home with food uneaten than they do not have enough to eat throughout the day.

They need protein and carbohydrates. Fresh fruit and vegetables are good choices. Many bring flasks of warm food (from last night's supper perhaps). We do not allow sweets, crisps, biscuits or chocolate.

Please update us on any changes to your child's dietary needs.

At mealtimes we aim to establish sound social habits: preparing the table, waiting until everybody is ready, saying grace before eating and thank you at the end.



Settling-in Process

First Day

The children say goodbye to their parents, and we start our day. Sometimes a child might find it difficult to separate from his/her parents. In few situations a child may become distressed, but this soon subsides as they join the group on their wonderful morning adventures. We have found that the children often imitate their parents' mood, and that the children whose parents are reassuring and confident about letting their child go, find the transition process easier.

The first day will act as an Orientation Day. The Class Teacher will show the children where to put their belongings (shoes, spare clothes, wellington boots, waterproof clothing, etc.); where they will learn, eat and play; and introduce them to other members of staff. By the end of the first day, the children will be familiar with the environment and have a sense of belonging; it will start to become "their school".

What to wear/ Dress code

We ask for the children to come to school in clothes that are weather appropriate, comfortable, allow movement and are not too precious. Children will get dirty so please keep the "Sunday best" for home.

Footwear

Indoors, children will wear slippers that need to be labelled and remain at school. We recommend a style with a knitted cuff which fits snugly around the child's ankle and has a non-slip rubber sole (Haflinger, Living Kitzbutrel, Flossie and Giesswen provide good quality slippers). Plimsolls are also acceptable.

Woodwork is the only indoor lesson when children require alternative footwear: closed-toe preferably leather sturdy shoes. These can also remain at school, labelled.

Outdoors, children will require appropriate footwear for the season, weather and activity: labelled Wellington Boots for Woodland Craft, labelled Trainers for outdoor games, sensible closed-toe shoes for playtime.



Waterproofs and warm-weather gear

Please make sure your child has a full set of labelled waterproofs (waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers or dungarees). At The London Acorn School, we are not deterred by wet weather, so it is important that your child is appropriately dressed.

Likewise, please make sure your child is prepared for the winter months with adequate warm clothing (hat, scarf, gloves, warm jacket, thick socks – all labelled - are suitable). In summer months, sun hats are also suitable.

Please do not bring your child to school in:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Faded, torn or dirty denim jeans ● Ragged, un-ironed or scruffy clothes ● Oversize/undersize clothing ● Any clothing with slogans, even for games ● Brands or letters on clothing ● Low cut or strappy tops ● Short skirts/shorts ● Hats inside school buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Flat ballet-style shoes ● Trainers, except for outdoor games ● Bare feet ● Jewellery, except pierced ears (with retaining studs only) or faith items (out of sight) ● Make up/nail varnish of any kind ● Dyed hair ● Piercings other than ears
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Hair

Hair must be neatly combed/brushed at all times. Hair that is longer than shoulder length must be tidy and kept off the face at all times.

Spare clothes bag

All children should have a complete set of labelled spare clothes, including underwear, which is to be left in a labelled bag at school.

Summary of items to leave at school:

- Slippers
- Woodwork shoes (can be brought in on specific day)
- Wellington boots
- Full set of waterproofs
- Spare clothes bag

- Trainers for games (can be brought in on specific day)

Parent Meetings and Reports

National Curriculum Assessments take place each term in Reading, Writing, Spelling and Maths, with ongoing teacher assessments a regular part of learning at The London Acorn School. While we emphasise the importance of an unhurried approach to academic learning, relieving children of unnecessary stress and anxiety caused by over-testing, it is equally important to mark the progress of our students against national benchmarks. These assessments will be shared with you in Parent Evenings and in the End of School Year Report.

Parent Evenings are held twice a year, during which teachers aim to share information about your child's progress across our broad curriculum, covering academic and creative subjects, as well as their social and emotional development.

Junior Curriculum Evening is held at the start of the academic year, an opportunity for parents to come together to hear about the class, learn more about the curriculum and developmental stage, and share experiences and support for one another as the wider community.

End of School Year Report

Summative reports for each child are sent to the parents giving a picture of the child's progress across all subjects and social and emotional development that year. Targets will also be set to focus on for the subsequent year.

Pathway to Hall School Wimbledon (9-18 years)



The London Acorn School supports students through the heart of childhood. By the end of our Junior School (Year 4), students leave us to go onto our sister school, Hall School Wimbledon (HSW), which offers a gentle transition to secondary school by continuing a holistic educational pathway from Year 5 to Year 13.

Like The London Acorn School, Hall School Wimbledon is non-selective. As part of their admission process, a child that begins their educational journey at TLAS will be guaranteed of a place at HSW. Therefore, between the two partnering schools, we offer a bespoke, high-quality educational pathway for families in Southwest London.

For more information about our sister school, please take a look at their website: <https://hsw.co.uk/>

Technology

The London Acorn School has a low-technology approach to education for the Kindergarten and Junior School. This is supported by our community approach to technology at home through limiting screen time as a family.

With recent research urging caution as extensive use of smartphones has been linked to decreased levels of happiness and increased incidences of mental

illness, our aim is to produce young people who are at home in today's world of electronic communication, but not overwhelmed or ruled by it.

A high ability to discern the right data and edit and create intelligently will be a valued asset of the future. The key is not to bring on too much, too soon. Many tech company founders have famously restricted access to technology for their own children for these reasons.

Behaviour

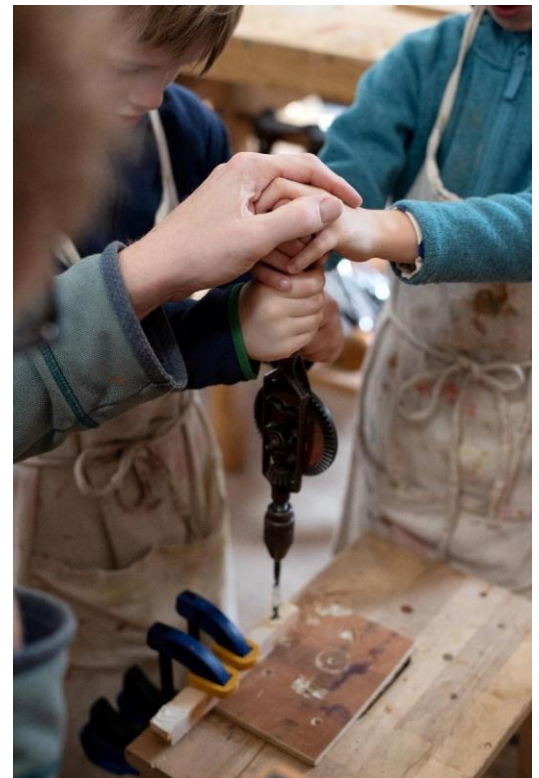
At our school we recognise that the most fundamental requirement for all children is that they feel safe and secure physically, emotionally and socially. Students need to feel safe in order to thrive and learn. They need to feel secure in order to want to participate.

We take our responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all the pupils in our care very seriously. Please read our [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#) which sets out the policies and procedures we have in place. We will take appropriate action if we have concerns about a child's physical, emotional or social well-being. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns.

Bullying is not tolerated at The London Acorn School and is taken very seriously. We would urge any parent or child to inform us if they are concerned. Any other behaviour that encroaches on child safety in any way will also be addressed with care. We will contact the parents of any child if we feel that a pattern of behaviour of their child encroaches on safe boundaries.

A secure daily rhythm with regular patterns of sharing food, creating quiet space, and sleeping is essential for your child's health and well-being and will help them to work positively with social groups at school.

A quiet regular bedtime routine is important for the quality of every child's sleep. Please keep 'sleepovers' with friends to weekends or holidays, so your child can fully benefit from school each weekday morning.



What this means at Home

- Parents and school partner up in maintaining strong consistent boundaries. This may involve being asked to a school meeting.
- Good communication is essential.
- Children should be listened to if they talk about events at school, but be aware that there may be many sides to one story, and do not hesitate to talk with a member of staff at an appropriate time if you have any concerns.
- Parents are responsible for maintaining children's boundaries appropriately out of school hours and when attending school events with their child.

What this means at School

- The school maintains a commitment to keeping all children safe and secure.
- We maintain a high standard of behaviour at school and have a School Code in the Junior School which we expect pupils to follow, according to their age ability.
- The school undertakes to contact parents in the event of a child repeatedly forgetting basic boundaries.
- Staff always speak respectfully to children and they expect children to respond in this way in return.
- The school is responsible for maintaining children's boundaries within school hours.

Festivals



A variety of festivals are celebrated at The London Acorn School primarily drawn from the traditional calendar of the British Isles, and they are treated as communal days rather than religious occasions, following the inclusiveness and tolerance innate in British values that we promote with students. Festivals help to mark the pace of the school year and offer students the chance to reflect on how far they have come in the past year and what they would like to aim for as they move forward.

Seasonal festivals, such as Harvest Festival and May Day Festival, serve to connect us with the cyclical rhythms of the year, fostering a natural reverence for the wonder and beauty of life and nature.

Children of any ethnic or religious background are welcome at our school, and we respect the individual beliefs of families. We celebrate a range of religious festivals, connected to our studies in RE and Humanities. From Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, to Jewish, Hindu, Islamic, Sikh and Buddhist festivals throughout the year, we strive to celebrate what is universal.

The children are actively involved in the preparation for each celebration through activities, songs and stories. Furthermore, festivals are times when the entire community can come together and enjoy creating a shared experience of joy and celebration. Whether it is coming together to illuminate the darkening days of the winter months or to delight in the refreshing signs of spring and summer sunshine, these annual celebrations are central to sustaining the community's sense of vitality and togetherness.

Upcoming festivals will be published in the weekly digital newsletter, '*In a Nutshell*'.

Regarding private occasions such as birthday celebrations and outings, we ask that parents are mindful of the need to be respectful and considerate of other pupils in their child's class. Birthday cakes, for classes to share are always welcome in school.

What this means at Home

- Festivals are special community occasions and attendance is encouraged.
- Your generosity in taking part is appreciated at our school and volunteers offering help, including fundraising, are welcomed.
- The school requests that you work with social events involving children responsibly and with thought to any impact on class groups and individuals.

What this means at School

- The school appreciates that some festivals are not possible for working parents to attend and endeavors to hold at least some festivals at times when everyone is more likely to be able to make it.
- Birthdays are festivals too. Parents are invited to celebrations in Kindergarten and cakes are welcomed for snack time in the Junior School.
- We do our best to welcome and cater for everyone and their needs at school.

Policies and Procedures

Copies of The London Acorn School's policies and procedures are available at the School Office by request and can be downloaded from our school website: <https://thelondonacornschool.co.uk/our-school/school-policies/>

Updates

Updates from your family

Please notify the school office about changes in address and contact details (immediately with any change of contact number).

Importantly, keep open communication with regards to child illness, family illness, bereavement or new births (including in the lifetimes of all pets), change of behaviour, and any situation which may be of value to those entrusted with the care of your child.

Updates from the Junior School

The Junior School team will keep parents informed through daily encounters, our weekly newsletter, emails, and parent evenings.

Travel to school

At Morden Hall Park we are blessed with a range of sustainable options for travel to school, from tram to bus to tube to green cycle routes, and of course, if these cannot work for your family, there is always the car.

All full member families of the school will be asked to discuss their planned sustainable travel arrangements with us so that we can keep track of how families are coming to our school and thus comply with our school planning permission and enable us to work well with The National Trust. The school has a travel plan which will be shared with you at full registration.

Please note:

Parking for school families is in the main carpark next to the garden centre (free for 90 minutes upon obtaining a ticket). There is no parking in front of the school.

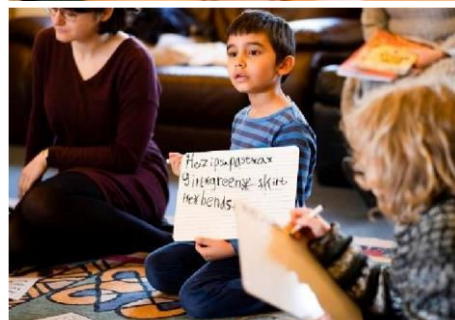
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