



UNICORN SCHOOL

Funding Policy

This policy is available on the Unicorn School website

RESPONSIBILITY

Staff Member: Bursar

Last Reviewed:	January 2026
Next Review:	January 2027

Introduction and Purpose

This policy is written, and Early Education Funding (EEF) delivered, within statutory and local authority guidelines, which may be updated from time to time. The funding is delivered by Unicorn School to best support parental access while ensuring the School's future sustainability.

EEF Eligibility

For each eligible child (i.e. those aged 3 or 4 years old), Unicorn School will assist families to apply for the EEF available from the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (Richmond Borough). This funding becomes available from the term after a child turns 3 and will be available for the full term in which they turn 5.

The funding for 3 and 4 year olds is termed "Universal Funding". It provides up to 570 hours of free childcare a year, normally delivered for 15 hours a week over 34 weeks a year (term time). Funding is claimed by and paid directly to the School from the local authority in which the School is based – Richmond Borough.

Delivery and Cost

The 15 funded hours each week are delivered free; no charges or fees are attached.

The funded hours are provided during term time – namely the Autumn term (12 weeks), Spring term (11 weeks) and Summer term (11 weeks), over a total of 34 weeks.

The 15 funded hours each week can be applied to the school day by selecting funded sessions from the tables below. Please note that the second funded session in a day can only be accessed if the first is also accessed. Funded hours will appear on invoices with a nil cost.

Mornings Only	Hrs	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08:20 to 11:20	3	Funded or fee				
11:20 to 12:20	1	Fee only				
Full Days	Hrs					
08:20 to 11:20	3	Funded or fee				
11:20 to 14:20	3	Funded or fee				
14:20 to 15:20	1	Fee only				

Additional Charges, Deposits and Registration Payments

Additional hours can enhance your child's school experience. Examples of this enhancement are French language sessions, Forest School, specialist music & PE, computing and swimming. Additional hours are, however, entirely voluntary. Additional hours are charged at a rate of £38.90 per hour.

Chargeable extras such as outings and lunches/snacks are also seen as an important part of the School's offering, however they are also optional. Should you wish to elect not to participate, please notify the Bursar.

Your child will still receive childcare which meets EYFS criteria should they not take part in an event. You will be required to provide your child with a nut-free packed lunch if opting out of lunches and snacks.

In support of the School's planning and budgeting, once opted in, the agreed provision will run for a full term with no changes possible mid-term. Any change requests must be submitted to the Bursar in writing before the start of each term.

For families choosing an attendance pattern with more hours than mornings-only, a discount will be applied to our published rate. We will always charge the *lower* of the charge calculated using the published rate and the termly charge set out on our website.

The School offers bursaries giving financial assistance to pupils who might not otherwise be able to benefit from an education at Unicorn School. For those in receipt of bursaries there are no deposit payments.

The payment of a registration fee is not a requirement to access EEF.

Applying for EEF

The School will provide families with Richmond Borough's EEF authorisation form and can help with completing it and meeting the Borough's deadlines. A copy of the child's identity document is required to support an application for EEF. Receipt of funding is dependent on this application process being completed and deadlines met.

The funding process is based on the attendance of a child and not dependent on a headcount date. In order to receive funding the child must not be accessing their EEF at another setting.

In addition, the funding is calculated weekly. Where the School term begins mid-week, it is important that a child is not accessing EEF for the days of the week before the start of term at another setting. Similarly if term ends mid-week it is important that a child is not accessing EEF elsewhere for the remaining days of that week.

Queries and complaints

If parents have any queries regarding the delivery of the funded hours please speak to or email the Bursar (kevin.guy@unicornschool.org.uk, telephone number 020 8948 3926). If any issues are not resolved by contacting the Bursar then please see the School's complaints policy. If, having regard to that policy, the issue remains unresolved then parents should contact Achieving for Children early years team at:

early.years@achievingforchildren.org.uk

Other Schemes

Tax-free childcare is a government scheme that allows eligible parents of children under 12 to open an online account to pay for childcare and early education. For every £80 you pay in, the government will pay £20.

Unicorn School can accept payments from this scheme. Please contact the Bursar's Office for assistance.

Childcare vouchers, usually distributed through workplace payrolls, can also be accepted