

## Sports pitch usage - Policy – Final Draft

### About us

Coram's Fields is a Children's Charity that has, since 1936, provided a range of facilities and services to support children and young people living in central London. Our seven acre park and playground, provides essential access to safe, open, green space in the heart of the city. Alongside this, our services deliver a variety of support to young people from birth through to early adulthood. You can find more information on our work at [www.coramsfields.org](http://www.coramsfields.org)

### Policy context

Open 363 days a year, our three state of the art 3G football pitches provide young people with access to some of the best sports facilities in London, acting as a social hub where they can come together, socialise with friends and get involved in a number of structured activities. Through a diverse offer of community programmes for young people and free/subsidised hire of our facilities for schools and community groups, we play a vital role in enabling young people, irrespective of their age, ability or background, to become and stay active, and in supporting both their physical and mental well-being.

In addition to this, our pitches provide a critical source of income for the Charity. Income from pitch hire currently covers around a quarter of the total cost of keeping the park and playground open and funding all our services. As a result, our pitches are hired out on a commercial basis at certain times of day, when not all three pitches are needed by children and young people, taking great care to ensure the minimum disruption to their availability.

The complexity of managing our pitches, as a result of their popularity and the demand for them, means that our greatest challenge is striking a balance to ensure that young people of all ages have equal access, and that this is managed alongside their use by multiple schools and community groups, and the necessary hiring of them to generate income for the Charity.

### Scope

This policy outlines the approach that we take to the hire of our pitches. It details the key principles that inform our decisions regarding the use of them and our commitments to children and young people.

### Key principles and commitments

The use and hire of our pitches is underpinned by the following key principles and commitments;

- **Prioritising Young people:** We are committed to ensuring that as much as possible, our pitches are prioritised for use by young people – this includes ensuring that one pitch is always reserved for this purpose, alongside a commitment that overall no less than 65% of the total pitch availability is for young people.
- **Safeguarding:** That our pitches provide a safe space for young people to come and play sport through the provision of well-maintained and fully staffed facilities, a zero tolerance approach to bullying and antisocial behaviour and a strict code of conduct for all users.
- **Affordability:** That our pitches are fully accessible for all young people, through the provision of free access for those 19 years and under and subsidised access for 20-25 year olds.
- **Partnerships and collaboration:** That through proactive collaboration with local partners, and the provision of subsidised access for charities and local not for profit organisations, we are able to offer a diverse programme of sport for young people across the age spectrum.
- **Re-Investment:** The income generated from our pitches is invested in the upkeep of the pitches, park and playground and the services that we deliver to the local community.

## Use of our Pitches

### Structured Sports Programme

Through our free community sports programme, we ensure that local young people aged 5-19 years have access to a diverse range of sporting opportunities throughout the term time and holidays. These include the delivery of a number of targeted programmes for those at risk of social exclusion and young females. Our programmes are delivered by our team of qualified sports tutors and through a number of formal programme partners.

### Free Play

The provision of free play, whereby young people have the opportunity to turn up and play without booking is vitally important in removing barriers to young people's participation in sport.

Through the provision of specific timeslots, we ensure that young people of all ages get the benefit of 'free play' without the disappointment of not being able to get on a pitch when they arrive. The following time slots are available for young people to turn up and play.

Age Range	Weekdays (Term time)	Weekends	School Holidays
5-11 years	4pm-5pm	9am-1pm	9am-12pm
11-16 years	5pm-6pm	1pm-3pm (extended to 4pm in peak season)	9am-4pm

### Schools

Our pitches are available to hire for local schools and can be booked for PE lessons and school sports days. Schools can book pitches anytime between 9am-4pm during term time with the exception of 12-2pm.

Bookings for Camden, Islington and Westminster state schools are **free of charge**. Those outside of these boroughs and private schools can also book our pitches at a subsidised rate. Please see 'charges' section below for details of these.

### Pitch Bookings 16-19 years

Young people aged 16-19 years are free to turn up and play whenever there are free pitches available during the week (availability can be viewed online). We also reserve a number of slots for these young people to book pitches in advance. There is **no cost** to booking and slots are available at the times below. All bookings need to be made through our main office and can be block booked for a period of up to one month.

Dates	Times
Weekdays Term time (Mon-Fri)	7-9pm
Weekends	3pm-8pm (5pm in Winter)
School Holidays	9am-1pm and 4pm-7pm

### Booking and subsidised rates – 20-25 years

Whilst our pitches are free to all those aged 19 and under, we appreciate that many young people will want to continue using our pitches beyond this age, yet might not be in a position to afford the full hire rates. To ensure that our pitches remain accessible, we have a number of slots available at subsidised rates for young people aged 20-25 years – these are available at the following times and are normally limited to one pitch.

Dates	Times
Weekdays Term time (Mon-Fri)	8pm-10pm
Weekends	2pm-8pm (5pm in Winter)
School Holidays	1pm-8pm

Bookings can be made through the main office and can be either block booked or booked on an ad-hoc basis. To qualify for the subsidised rate, all players must be under the age of 25 and be residents of Camden, Westminster or Islington. Please be aware that we may ask for ID and proof of address to confirm the age and addresses of those booking. See 'charges' section below for details of these.

### Charities and voluntary sector organisations

We offer subsidised rates for all charities and registered not for profit organisations working with children and young people and to all local voluntary sector organisations (irrespective of their target beneficiaries) - defined as being those predominantly serving Camden, Islington and Westminster. Please see 'charges' section below for further details.

### Adult hires

Our pitches are available for hire to adults at certain times during the week and at weekends. All pitch bookings are for a full size 8-a-side pitch and hires are made on an hourly basis, with no half pitch bookings available. Should hirers wish to split their pitch into two smaller five-a side pitches, please ask a member of staff on booking – where possible, we will always try to accommodate this.

### Exclusive use of Pitches

Our pitches provide an essential source of income for the Charity. Whilst this is the case, we aim to use our pitches in a way that brings limited disruption to use by young people, with the highest possible financial returns. We do this by using the facilities to deliver a small handful of fundraising initiatives each year that deliver high value returns, through single day events.

Whilst the closure of our pitches for this purpose is essential, we commit to closing the pitches on **no more than four occasions per year**. On these days, we will ensure that we communicate the closure of our pitches no less than two weeks before any planned event.

### Charging policy and booking

Please see below a list of charges for the hire of our pitches

Facilities	Cost (off-peak) 9am-4pm	Cost (peak) 4pm onwards and weekends
<b>Football Pitches</b>		
Adults	£110	£130
State School Booking – Camden, Islington, Westminster	Free	Free
Private and non-Camden, Islington, Westminster schools	£55	£65
Charities and not for profit	£55	£65
0-19 year olds	Free	Free
20-25 year olds – subsidised	£55	£65

## Booking a pitch

You can view pitch availability on our website at [www.coramsfields.org](http://www.coramsfields.org) however, all pitch bookings need to be made through the main office, this can be done on the phone or in person between the hours of 9.30am-5pm or you can e-mail booking requests to [football@coramsfields.org.uk](mailto:football@coramsfields.org.uk).

## Access to pitches and accessibility

In order to ensure the safety of our young park users, adults playing on our pitches **must access and exit** Coram's Fields from the rear of the site, via the gate at the back of our pitches and **not through the main park entrance** on Guilford Street.

Our pitches are fully wheelchair accessible. On arriving at the entrance at the rear of the site, users should call the number displayed and a member of our grounds team will come and erect a ramp for you – should you wish to call ahead, you can do so on 07568 370 016.

## Changing Rooms

Our pitches are equipped with 8 changing rooms, male and female toilets and an accessible toilet. At certain times of day, our changing rooms may be used by children, young people and adults concurrently. Wherever possible, during the delivery of structured programmes, access to changing facilities and toilets may be limited to use by children to ensure the safety of our young users.

It is the responsibility of hirers to ensure that their changing room is locked when not in use. Please be aware that Coram's Fields accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage of personal belongings.

## Rules of pitches

First and foremost, Coram's Fields is a place for children and young people. Whilst the hire of our pitches is necessary to generate essential income for the charity, safeguarding those that use our park and pitches is our greatest priority, and we ask that all users of our pitches make every effort to respect the space, the young people using it and our staff.

The following rules apply to all those using our pitches:

1. **Language and conduct:** Whilst we appreciate that football is competitive by nature, we ask that all players respect the space and the children using it by refraining from using foul language and ensuring appropriate conduct at all times
2. **Smoking and Vaping:** Coram's Fields is a non-smoking site, this includes the use of vaping
3. **Bikes:** Adults bikes are not permitted at Coram's Fields – a number of racks are available close by for those wishing to bring their bikes
4. **Footwear:** Metal studs are not permitted
5. **Drinks:** Fizzy drinks are not permitted anywhere on or around the pitches

## Saving lives

Our pitches are fitted out with a lifesaving public defibrillator device – this is located on the wall near the changing rooms, instructions for its use are on the outside of the box.