

Everything you need to know about Creative Kids Club

Creative Kids Club is a learning community which aims to provide a space for home-educated children aged between 6 and 12 to take control of their learning, as part of a dynamic and mutually supportive group, with adult facilitators. Children at CKC experience being part of a group of learners, working towards a common goal with their peers, co-operating on imaginative games, exploring specific mutually agreed topics, or acquiring decision-making and conflict resolution skills.

Respectful communication, conflict resolution and an empathetic approach to emotional issues are at the heart of the group's ethos. The facilitators work with the children in drawing out ideas and coming to democratic decisions about the term's content, and provide plenty of creative inspiration and energy. Parents and other adults often participate in sessions, sharing their expertise and skills, both in organized workshops and impromptu activities.

Creative Kids Club is a space for children to be without their parents, so once they are happily settled in and comfortable to be left, it makes the flow of the morning much smoother if parents are not around between 10am and midday. We do, however, suggest that parents stay with their children for the first couple of sessions while their children are getting used to how things work.

Practical information about Kids Club sessions

There are three groups, with spaces for up to 12 children in each group. Children can have places at one or two of the groups. The groups run on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, during school term-time, from 10am to 12.30pm.

Drop-off is between 9.50am and 10.00am. Parents need to be back to collect their children by 12.30 at the latest.

There is always one parent on rota duty, as well as the paid facilitator. The club runs at Tarner Playbase, which is in Tarner Park – a public park. There is always at least one adult outside whenever any of the children have chosen to play outside.

At 12.00, an extra parent comes back to help with tidying up the playbase and supervising the children. All parents and siblings are welcome to join the group for lunch at 12.00.

When you first join Kids Club: visits and trying out

Before joining Kids Club, parents and children are invited to visit one or more of the existing groups, to see if they like it.

When new children join the club, they have half a term 'trying out'. For this half term only, payment is for the sessions you actually come to. Parents are not put on the rota while their children are trying out.

Contact information and communications

Whenever children are left at Kids Club, we need parents' contact information and a signed consent form for emergency medical treatment. There are blank contact forms available at the playbase, so make sure you have signed one before you leave your child for the first time.

Communication between parents is mainly via the Yahoo email group. The group is used to share important information, such as the rota, minutes of meetings and financial reports, and to discuss issues that arise between meetings. Parents should be invited to join the Yahoo group when their children begin trying out. The parent volunteer who looks after the Yahoo group can be contacted on creativekidsclub-owner@yahoogroups.com.

There are parents' meetings every half-term, usually in the penultimate week of the half-term, at 12.00, at the playbase, rotating between the three group days. Meeting dates are agreed via the Yahoo group.

There is a contact list of email addresses and telephone numbers for all parents in the group, which is available on paper at the playbase, and via the Yahoo group.

The club has a website, at www.creativekidsclub.co.uk. The site was developed in collaboration with the kids at the club, during a series of workshops in summer 2011, and is maintained by the playworkers, kids and parents in the group. All children in the group are encouraged to contribute content to the site.

Becoming a full member

After the initial few weeks trying out, we ask for a half-termly commitment from all full members of the club. This means that we commit to:

- Bring our children to CKC sessions regularly
- Pay for all the sessions in the half-term, whether or not our children actually attend
- Attend parents' meetings whenever possible
- Arrive for sessions on time
- Pick up children promptly at the end of the sessions
- Take note of our rota sessions and make sure we are there to do them, or arrange a swap if necessary
- Take note of our tidy-up sessions and make sure we are there to do them, or arrange a swap if necessary
- Let the group know in advance if our children are not going to attend the next half-term's sessions.

All parents on the rota need to have a CRB check, or provide a copy of a CRB disclosure certificate to one of the small group of members who form our Child Protection Team. The club can pay for CRB checks for any parents who don't have them already.

Being on the rota

The rota person's role is to support the playworkers and the children. Jobs vary from session to session – they include helping the kids with what they are doing; going outside or staying inside with some of the children; helping with resources; giving individual attention to children who choose not to join in with group activities; tidying up, etc.

The rota is distributed via the email list at the beginning of every half-term, and a paper copy is at the playbase. If for any reason you cannot fill your slot on the rota, it is your responsibility to find another parent to cover.

Being on tidy-up

This means coming back to Kids Club by 12.00, to help the playworker and rota parent to:

- Clean and tidy the playbase
- Clean the toilets
- Sweep the floor (and mop if necessary)
- Wash up and put away any items used in the kitchen
- Clean kitchen surfaces
- Hoover the lobby and quiet room
- Make sure the children are supervised and safe as the session winds down

Finances

Fees are currently £6 per child per session.

The treasurer (a volunteer parent) produces a sheet showing how much each person owes at the start of each half-term. This sheet is in the cash tin at the playbase.

Each parent needs to check how much they owe at the start of the half-term.

It's fine to pay weekly, or in advance, as long as the fees for the whole half-term are paid by the end of the half-term.

Fees can be paid by cash or cheque, made out to Creative Kids Club. Put the cash or cheque in the tin and write down how much you have paid on each date, in your column on the money sheet.

The fees only just cover the weekly costs of the club. In addition, we need to fundraise, by applying for grants or organising fundraising events, to pay for things like CRB checks, insurance, resources and workshops. Parents and children often work together to raise funds for the group.

If you spend your own money on resources or admin for the group, you can claim this back. Fill in a petty cash slip from the pencilcase in the bottom half of the cash tin, attach the receipt to the slip, and take the money from the pencilcase.

Last updated: September 2011