



## Settling-in and Managing Transitions Policy

### Policy statement

We recognise that starting nursery, moving to a new room in the nursery and significant events (such as the arrival of a new baby in the family, separation, bereavement etc) can be an anxious time for both children and their parents. Our Settling-in and Managing Transition Policy is to ensure that we provide appropriate support for the children in our care during these times.

### Home Visit

We believe that home visits offer an important opportunity for children and parents to meet nursery practitioners. The child can meet the new adults in their familiar home environment where they are more likely to feel secure, confident and relaxed. Home visits, therefore, form part of our settling in process for parents who would like this and are offered during the initial show round and on registering at the nursery. Occasionally home visits may also be useful in special circumstances such as after a child has been in hospital or on a long holiday. These are completely optional and up to the family to choose if this is something they would like to explore.

### Managing settling-in sessions – for children

We recognise that parents are the most important people in their child's life which is why parents are encouraged to stay with their child in the room for the first settling-in session. This allows children to explore the environment around them, meet new friends and the room staff whilst still feeling secure and supported by a familiar adult.

When the parent leaves the baby/ child initially they are likely to need a lot of reassurance from their key person. Young children have no concept of time and may not be able to comprehend the concept that 'mummy is coming back soon'. Children may cry initially when they are left – separation anxiety - and what they need is a sensitive, caring key person attending to their needs, giving them a cuddle or holding a familiar comforter and helping them to get to know their new environment, other adults and children.

Depending on the age of the child explaining what will happen next will help the child to understand the usual routines of the nursery.

Children may not be used to having access to all the resources that are available in nursery and need help and permission to access materials, resources and equipment. They need the key person to play with them, show them around the room and introduce them to children and adults.

## Managing settling-in sessions – for parents

We aim to develop strong relationships with parents and encourage them to share with us anything which may impact on their child's wellbeing or sense of security.

When settling young children, we encourage parents to engage with their child as they would at home. This could be playing, reading stories, changing their nappy, giving them a feed or putting them down for a sleep.

Feedback to the parents is handled sensitively, allow as much time as the parent needs at the end of the session, confirm the next session with the parent before they leave.

## Managing settling-in sessions – for the Key Person

The Key Person will get to know about the child's usual routine for example how a baby likes to be held for its bottle, what comforters s/he likes when going to sleep so that they can follow it as closely as possible to provide continuity of care.

The Key Person needs to be available during settling-in sessions, so it is important to make sure that the Key Person is not on holiday. Lunch breaks should be planned to avoid settling-in periods. If the Key Person is unable to attend work due to sickness, then the Buddy-Key Person should settle the child. This should be communicated to the parent on arrival.

Where possible only one child should be settling-into each room at any one time. Staff should be prepared for the session – make sure they know the child's and the parent's names and what time they are expected – if the child is joining an older group, tell the other children about the expected visitors.

## Settling new starters into nursery

Parents and children will usually have visited the nursery for a 'show round' before booking a place. Once a place has been booked for the child to start at the nursery the home visit and settling-in visits are arranged. The parent will be contacted approximately 4 weeks before their child is due to start nursery to arrange the home visit and first visit 'Settling-in' visit to the Nursery. The dates of the visits are recorded in the Nursery Diary and on the nursery management software to ensure that staff will be available to spend time with the child and parents.

In order to ensure that children and parents feel welcomed into the setting, the key person must ensure that the child has a personalised and allocated coat peg organised for the first day of the settling-in session and name tags for cups/bottles etc. are prepared before the child's first visit.

## Settling in – The home visit

The initial contact and arrangements for the home visits and settling in sessions are made by the Nursery Manager, Room Leader or Key Person (decided by the Nursery Manager). Wherever possible, the initial settling session should be a home visit and with full agreement with the parents (however where the family live some distance from nursery this may not always be possible).

The Nursery Manager or a senior member of staff attends together with the child's allocated Key Person where possible. Under NO circumstances must any staff member go alone to a home visit.

The aim of the visit is to build relationships with the parent and the child, share information about the nursery and to answer any questions that the parent may have about settling the child into nursery. Information to form the starting points for the child's Learning Journey together with other information needed to ensure that the nursery can meet the child's safeguarding, welfare, learning and development needs should be gathered and documented.

Home visits will usually last for around 1 hour; however, this is flexible, depending on the needs of the family.

On returning to the nursery the information gathered should be included in the child's learning journey, child's file and on the nursery management software as appropriate.

### Settling-in sessions – The first nursery visit

The first settling-in visit normally takes a week or so before the child starts at the nursery and is an opportunity to get to know the parents and child and for them to get to know the staff; especially their Key Person, and the room in which they will be based.

### On the first settling-in nursery visit

Unless information was gathered at the home visit.

The Manager, Deputy or Key Person take the opportunity to confirm the start date and booking pattern, make sure that the parent is aware of the terms and conditions and that they have set up a direct debit.

The Key Person will introduce themselves and spend time with the parent and child in the room. They will complete the Settling-in details in the Learning Journal and collect all the information that they will need to care for the child including the child's diet, medical details. Care Plans and Risk Assessments should be completed if necessary.

### Further settling-in sessions

Staff will ensure that the organisation and planning of settling-in is effective and meets the needs of both the individual child and parent. It is imperative that the Key Person is present at all settling-in sessions to ensure a continuity of care and consistency in communication during this time. Settling-in sessions should be flexible to meet the child and his /her parents' individual needs and it is the Key Person's responsibility to review the progress and adapt planned sessions accordingly.

It is also an opportunity to discuss and agree the dates and times of future settling-in visits that will best meet the needs of the child, parent and the nursery team. Settling-in sessions should usually start approximately one month prior to their start date this allows for some flexibility in case the child need additional sessions to settle in. The Key Person and the parent should decide how many sessions the child will attend and how frequently. This can be reviewed as the child attends and increased if the child is having difficulty settling.

The number of settling-in sessions will depend on the age and experiences of the child. For example, a young baby who has not been left with people other than family members would need to begin with short visits (perhaps half an hour to an hour) and gradually build up to longer visits whereas an older child who has been to nursery before may be able to cope with a slightly longer initial session.

On the rare occasions when there is insufficient time to follow the normal settling-in sessions the parent and Key Person should agree on a how to best support the child in the time available.

Children become increasingly familiar with adults and the environment over the following days and months depending on how frequently they attend. Staff are aware that children may feel vulnerable or unsure during their first few months of attendance and will make sure sufficient support is given to help them to settle. There may well be occasions when children and/or parents are upset, and staff are always available to offer reassurance, comfort and support.

Children must NEVER be left to cry.

### Record keeping during settling-in period

#### The Learning Journal

A Learning Journal is set up for the new child as per the Learning Journal Procedure.

Information is collected from the parents including an All About Me – Parent / Carer Assessment Review Form which the parents complete with additional information about the child to that found on the Registration Form.

During the settling-in period the Key person completes the settling-in pack information including My First 6 Weeks at Nursery. Together with any observations and photographs this information is used to complete an Early Assessment Review (EAR) and a Child Monitoring Tool. The Individual Progress Tracker can then be completed to show the child's starting points against future progress will be compared.

### Transition times

These include moving through rooms, key people leaving or moving rooms, going to school and external factors that impact on families such as a new sibling, deaths, separation, moving, ill health, new family members (partners, stepchildren), family visits and any time away from nursery. Sharing information with parents about these times of difficulty enable staff to respond sensitively and appropriately to both the child and parent. Please be aware that you will not always see the impact of these times of change immediately and in some cases, may not have been told about them at all, which is all the more reason to develop close, trusting, supportive relationships with parents.

### Nursery transition - moving rooms

Transitions from one room to another are handled sensitively and in partnership with parents. We recognise that room transition can be just as daunting for parents who have established relationships with their child's current Key Person and room team as they are for the children themselves.

This is why our nursery transition procedure reflects the need for us to communicate effectively and support both the parents and the child during this process.

Adults have numerous strategies to cope with transitions, whereas young children have not yet had the opportunity to develop these yet. They can experience a range of reactions to transitions, including feeling vulnerable and frightened which in turn influences their ability to integrate and learn. For this reason, it is important to support children during times of transition. It is the role of the Key Person to be sympathetic to any anxieties and to offer sensitive support.

We believe it is important for the current Key Person to introduce parents and children to the next room personally including an introduction to the new Key Person and room team. The new Key Person and current Key Person will spend time sharing information about the individual child before and during visits. We invite parents to be part of this process to ensure that all relevant information has been communicated effectively before the move.

Where possible the current Key Person will initially accompany the child on visits to the next room enabling children to engage in their new environment, meet new friends and the room staff whilst still feeling the support of a familiar adult as they explore.

During this settling-in period you should ensure that feedback to parents includes an update of the settling progress. You must decide whether the existing or new Key Person will give feedback during transition between the two rooms so that there is an organised approach.

**Record keeping during transition between rooms**

**The Learning Journal**

All observations, planning, progress summaries and the Individual Progress Tracker must be completed up to date as the child moves rooms. A settling-in pack for the new room should be added to the Learning Journal and completed. Observations should begin at once and planning should build on the learning and interests observed both in the previous room and the current one.

**Transition to school**

An important part of the transition to school is for the Key Person to have the opportunity to discuss the child with teachers prior to them starting school. Teachers should be invited to the setting and where possible visit and meet the children.

A Transition Progress Summary should be completed, or the Local Authority or School may have their own forms which they would prefer you to use. The Learning Journal, Transition Progress Summary, and the Individual Progress Tracker together with any information on SEND, EAL or ECAT should be shared with the teacher to inform them about the child and enable them to plan an appropriate curriculum and environment.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery
05/02/2025	KellieATye (Area Manager)