



Transitions

Policy statement

Our Nursery recognises that right from the start, babies and young children manage changes in their lives. We understand that when small changes are supported by responsive, knowledgeable adults, children gradually discover that the world is a safe and predictable place. As strong and competent learners, this will stand them in good stead when faced with the challenge of experiencing the bigger changes that will inevitably come their way.

Young children are faced with several transitional changes before they start school. These can include transferring from home to childminder, nursery or pre-school for the first time or moving groups within a setting every child is unique and will respond in different ways. Children's confidence will be enhanced when changes happen gradually and when time is prioritised to support these transitions with sensitive planning, preparation and a special 'key person' to support the child and their family's individual needs.

Our aim is that the children will feel secure, confident and happy and that every child will settle in at a pace that is suitable to their own age/stage of development and that parents have confidence in their role as active partners, playing a key role in supporting their child to feel comfortable with the transition process.

Our Nursery has a commitment to the key person approach. This is centered around enabling close attachments being made between individual children, their families and individual staff. The nursery places the child's needs at the centre of the approach and recognises that effective communication is crucial in ensuring a smooth transition. A key person is allocated to each child before they start to attend the nursery to nurture and care for a child's individual needs. We believe that by developing strong bonds and building good relationships with practitioner's children feel comfortable, cared for and confident.

Procedure for transitions

The nursery will support children in the nursery with any transitions they may be encountering, whether it be they're initially settling into the setting, transitioning between groups or starting school, supporting through family breakdowns, birth of siblings, moving house or death of a family member or family pet.

When parents separate it is a difficult situation for all concerned and our nursery understands that emotions can run high. Please refer to the separated family's policy which shows how the nursery will act in the best interest of the child.

Moving home and the arrival of new siblings are normally two events that parents will have advance notice of, and we ask that parents let us know about these events so we can support the child to be ready for this. We will spend time talking to the child and providing activities that may help the child to act out any worries they have, e.g. through role play, stories and discussions.

Parents may also consider placing their child into nursery for additional sessions during these events to provide them with consistency and time away from the changes occurring. We have produced a separate policy on bereavement as this can be a difficult time for children and their families and we will offer support to all concerned should this be required.

If parents feel that their child requires additional support because of any changes in their life, we ask that you speak to the nursery manager and the key person to enable this support to be put into place.

Settling in

Visiting the nursery for the first time plays an important part in dispelling fears of the unknown for parents and children. We believe parents and carers are their child's first, and foremost educators. We find that a "Settling In" period works best for children to be introduced to the nursery gradually.

The nursery staff will work in partnership with parents to settle their child into the nursery environment by:

- Offering a choice of settling packages, prior to the child's start date. Settling in visits and settling in sessions are key to a smooth transition and help to ensure good communication and information sharing between staff and parents. For those taking longer to settle we put into place 'Individual Settling in Plans' with strategies to help the transition.
- Child's keyperson will telephone parents to introduce themselves prior to first visit and to check visits and settling in session dates.
- Offering two planned visits as part of the booking fee.
 - Beginning the settling in period with a 'Welcome Session' where the family are requested to stay with their child and spend time with their key person to complete an 'All about me' booklet, admissions and permission forms whilst their child explores the nursery environment.
- On second visit encourage parents to separate themselves from their children for a brief period with their key person.
- Assigning a buddy/back-up key person to each child in case the key person is not available. Parents will be made aware of this to support the settling process and attachment.
- Welcoming parents to stay with their child during the first few weeks until the child feels settled and the parents feel comfortable about leaving their child whilst encouraging them, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
- Reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into the nursery.
- Allocating a key person to new children who will welcome and look after the child, ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs, offer a settled relationship for the child. They aim to build a relationship with his/her parents during the settling in period to ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process.
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the nursery and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in.

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- Not taking children on outings from the nursery until he/she is completely settled.

Key Person's role

A key person:

- Works with the parents/carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- Is responsible for observing the child's play, keeping developmental records, tracking the child's progress, completing any relevant checks and paperwork and is available for parental meetings by prior arrangement.
- Is available during settling-in visits and as much as possible during ongoing sessions.
- Builds a special reciprocal bond with the child and fosters a child's sense of belonging within the key group and the nursery as a whole and that supports their security, independence and overall well-being.
- Gets to know the child and their family and celebrates and facilitates their individual needs, interests and development.

Room transitions

If the transition is due to occur in the nursery, e.g. room changes, the nursery will fully support the child through this process in the following ways:

- We will work with the parents to ensure this is a seamless process in which the child is fully supported at all stages.
- The child will spend short play dates in their new room prior to the scheduled visits and permanent move to enable them to feel comfortable in their new surroundings.
- The child's key person will go with the child on these initial playdates and visits to enable a familiar person to be present at all times.
- Wherever possible groups of friends will be moved together to enable these friendships to be kept intact and support the children with the peers they know.
- Parents will be offered a meeting with their child's new key person before they move
- Parents will be kept informed of all visits and the outcomes of these sessions.
- Only when the child has settled in through these play dates and visits will the permanent room move take place. If a child requires more support this will be discussed between the key person, parent, manager and room leader of the new room to enable this to occur. This may include moving their key person with them on a temporary basis.

School transitions

Starting school is an exciting, but daunting time for young children and their parents. It is important that teachers, childcare professionals and families are working effectively together to support transitions to school.

It is important that parents are informed, prepared and therefore less anxious when their child starts school.

We endeavour to work effectively with teachers, childcare professionals and families to facilitate a smooth and seamless transition. We have a variety of methods that support this:

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- Promoting and supporting parents to make application for school admissions by the date set by the local authority.
- Provide a Starting school leaflet at the start of the summer term.
- We welcome school representatives into the nursery to introduce them to the children.
- Some of the schools our children will be going to provide a book with photographs of the school for the practitioners to use as a visual aid and we have other resources e.g. school uniform dressing up clothes, to help the children to become familiar with this new setting.
- Practitioners will initiate conversations with the children, who are due to move to school, about the school and discuss what they think may be different and what may be the same. They will talk through any concerns the child may have and initiate activities or group discussions relating to any issues enabling these to be overcome.
- The nursery will ensure a comprehensive report is produced on each child starting school to enable teachers to have a good understanding of each child received. This will include their interests, strengths and level of understanding and development in key areas. This will support continuity of care and early learning.

Manager's signature:

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