



Nottingham Nursery School & Training Centre

Settling In Policy

June 2023

The school will work closely with parents / carers to help each child make a strong attachment to his or her key person, to feel secure and confident in our nursery and to work with parents with any difficulties that might arise.

Children settle into Nursery in lots of different ways. Some children will feel confident as soon as they come in. Other children may be nervous and anxious about leaving their parent/carer. Most children will be somewhere in between.

School will reassure parents and help them if their child experiences difficulties – it is a very normal part of a child's development to be anxious, nervous or even angry about starting nursery. School also recognises that many parents can find this a difficult and sometimes upsetting process. We hope that we can use our experience to support parents and children during this new and exciting time of change. In our experience, all children benefit greatly when the nursery works closely with the family from the very start.

Children can be helped to settle in by their parents or other important people who they know well – aunts, uncles and grandparents for example. We just ask that they are well-known to the child, able to offer comfort if needed and are over 16 years old.

Different children need different amounts of time to settle in. School recommends that parents plan some time to support their child when starting in the nursery – maybe by arranging a few days off work or asking someone else to care for younger brothers and sisters.

The child's key person:

- knows that each child is very special!
- is able to meet her or his needs physically and emotionally
- can be helpful, comforting and willing to deal positively with any problems that could arise
- can provide interesting experiences that excite and stimulate them while at the same time develop their learning
- is fun to be with!

The settling in process gives parents / carers a chance to check out:

- what kinds of activities and experiences we offer to the children
- how the staff work – playing and talking with children and setting boundaries for behaviour

In our experience, settling in will vary greatly from one child to another. Our aim is to enable children feel comfortable and relaxed. This will happen at their own pace – when children are ready to move away from their parents, we will encourage and support this. We have found that in the long run, this means more settled and happier children – and parents!

The process often goes like this:

- An arranged time come into school to meet with classroom staff to assess your child's

individual needs by completing a **Learning Journey** During this time, there will be an **initial tour** around the nursery with a member of staff where parents will see the nursery environment both indoors and outdoors and be introduced to their child's key person. We can answer any general questions that might arise at this stage - we can explain how children are learning through play and how they can benefit from active, hands-on learning etc.

- Prior to the first visit, parents will be made aware of the unique settling in process for their child. This will vary based on your child's individual needs. An example of settling in is below;
 - On **visit 1** parents stay in the nursery for 1 hour with their child.
 - On **visit 2** – parents stay in the building for an hour. During this time the child will be in Nursery having the opportunity to explore the nursery room and have her or his needs met by the key person and the rest of the staff. This might be for quite a short period of time at first, and then for longer stretches of time. It is very important that parents tell their child that they will be leaving the nursery room, and *will* be back. It's tempting to nip out when the child is busy, but if your child turns round a few minutes later to find parents have unexpectedly gone, she or he may become really distressed.

Staff are all aware that both parent and child may be feeling stress at some points, and the child may not appear to be on "best behaviour". Parents are encouraged not to worry about this – it is all part of the process. As adults, we try to relax as much as possible and remain confident, this will help the children.

The child might be very sad at the moment of parting, but if the settling in process has gone well she or he will be able to manage this with the support of the key person and other members of staff. If the child continues to be upset after parents have gone, parents are reassured that we would not allow any child to be distressed and will contact them.

Some parents find it easiest to set a limit on how long they will stay at dropping-off time, for example "I'll read two books with you and then it will be time for me to go". It is up to each parent how they manage this, but parents are offered support and advice. It is not uncommon for a child to settle very well into the nursery, and then unexpectedly a few weeks later to find it difficult to come in. This might be for any one of a variety of reasons, and again we will offer our support.

At any stage if parents would like to talk to someone, or need ideas, or support, or help, the key person, the Deputy or the Head will be available. We try to arrange to do this in a private space – not in front of the child.

As a staff, we are committed to working closely and supportively with parents and carers to make the time with us as enjoyable and memorable as possible.

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years – next review June 2026