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| School settling in policy |
| When a child starts school, we work with the child's parents/carers and previous provision to decide on the best way to help the child to **settle.** A Key Person helps the child to become familiar with the class and to feel confident and safe within it. |
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**Introduction:**

August 2023

For some children, starting school is their first separation from their main carer, as a result we recognise that ‘parents are a child’s first and most enduring educators’ *(*[*Early Years Foundation Stage – Positive Relationships/Parents as Partners*](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2)*)*. It is a major event in a child’s life and this time of transition can be stressful for both children and parents/carers.

To ensure that both children and parents/carers feel supported as they work towards feeling at ease in their new setting, we seek to ensure a smooth transition by working in close partnership with parents and the previous setting the child attended. We believe that it is important for staff to take time to get to know the children, their parents and their home environment.

We aim to be fully accessible to children and families and we recognise that each child will start school with a diversity of individual experiences, attitudes, expectations and developmental differences. These need to be considered when settling each child into their new learning environment.

 **Our school aims to:**

* Make the children feel happy and secure in their new environment in the absence of their parent/carer.
* Make the children feel confident to explore and experiment in their new physical surroundings.
* Help the children to develop the independence required to freely access all the resources available in their new environment.
* Support the children to develop positive relationships with both adults and other children.
* Help children to communicate their needs to others in an appropriate way.
* Promote appropriate behaviour, with clear expectations and positive reinforcements.
* Work in partnership with parents/carers in their child’s learning.
* Have a good transition period, the school and setting to have good dialogue and share records and information (see [Oxfordshire Early Years Foundation Stage Transition Pack](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/transition-pack))
* Support children to build upon the prior experiences and knowledge they have gained in their home environment.
* Encourage and welcome open and honest communication between staff and parents/carers

**As a staff we aim to:**

* Allocate a Key Person to each child/family prior to starting
* Show empathy and sensitivity towards new parents/carers and children.
* Be responsive and flexible by considering the individual needs and experiences of the children and parents/carers.
* Support children’s individual needs who are in receipt of education and childcare funding entitlements.
* Take time and provide the space to get to know new children and their parents/carers whilst they are settling in.
* Organise and manage the environment in such a way that the children can operate independently, safely and imaginatively.

**Guidelines and Procedures:**

* The children and parents/carers are always warmly welcomed into the classroom.
* All children and their parents/carers are made very aware of their individual teacher/key person before they start in the nursery.
* Each teacher/key person is responsible for helping their group of children to become familiar with the nursery and to feel safe and confident within it.
* Each teacher/key person develops a genuine warm and caring professional relationship with each child in their group as well as the child’s parents/carers.
* Each teacher/key person responds sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of each child in their group and endeavours to meet each child’s needs and those of their parents.
* Information is provided to the parents/carers to familiarise them with daily routines and an overview of the termly and yearly events.
* Parents/carers are asked to complete an ‘All About Me’ form before their child starts at school to give us additional information about each child.
* We encourage the parents/carers to leave their child after a brief period, with the understanding that if the child has been upset at the separation, we will contact them soon after to reassure them that their child has settled.
* If the child continues to be upset staff will contact the parent/carer asking them to return to school.
* Headteachers/teachers/transition manager will have discussions with parents to meet child’s needs as they move into school. The settling in process will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to plan children’s transitions into school.
* We offer and undertake ongoing, regular, informal discussions with parents/carers to enable us to build up a picture of their child and the previous experiences they have on arrival to school and share how each day is progressing and how their child is settling in.
* Parents/carers are given opportunities to share what they know about their child either in written form or through informal chats. This is used to help plan appropriate activities for the children.
* We focus on a child’s social and emotional needs to help children make friends from the beginning of term.
* During the settling in period, activities and experiences provided in the classroom will help the children settle into their new environment and learn their new daily routines. (These are planned in response to how each child is progressing.)
* An emphasis is made in the first term on looking at the children and their families and sharing photographs and home experiences. Displays are centred on the children, their families, experiences and interests.
* We hold a ‘Settling-in Review’ four to six weeks after the child initially starts to discuss with the parent/carer how their child has settled in, how they are making progress, and how they can support their child at home.
* If a staggered entry is required it will be discussed fully with parents; we are aware that parents have the right to start their child in a full-time place from the beginning of term; however, this may not suit all children.
* A ‘Settling In’ questionnaire is given to all new parents after six weeks to gather feedback and to ensure we are doing all we can to make the process as smooth and happy as possible.

**Ongoing policy review**

* Our Policy and Procedures for ‘Settling-in’ are always open and responsive to feedback from parents/carers and staff. If it is felt worthwhile and helpful additions and changes will be made to the process. In all the things that we do to settle children, we very much see it as a close collaboration between home and school as this is the best way to enable the very smoothest and happiest transition for all concerned – parents, child and staff.

**Policy Review:**

Date reviewed: Review date:

**Useful documents**

* [Early Years Foundation Stage Transition Pack | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/transition-pack)
* [Early years toolkit | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/early-years-toolkit) (see attendance section)
* [Health and development two year old reviews](https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/2-year-old-reviews)
* [Early Years Pupil Premium | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/business-and-funding-childcare-providers/early-education-fund/early-years-pupil-premium)
* [Extra funding for your early years provider | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/information-parents/find-childcare/help-paying-childcare/extra-funding-providers)
* [Early Years SEN toolkit | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/sen-support-providers/early-years-sen-toolkit)