

# Bedford Nursery Schools Federation



## Settling-In Policy

Reviewed by: AB  
Adopted by Governors: Jan 26  
To be reviewed: Jan-28

## **Aim of the settling-in process**

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation we believe that the settling-in process is crucial to the successful start of a child's educational journey. The process is individual to children and families and should be undertaken in consultation between the parent/carer and the child's key person in the nursery.

Where possible all families will be visited at home before starting nursery. The aim of the home visit is to start building a strong, strong relationships between home and school, supporting children to feel secure and confident as they start nursery and develop as lifelong learners.

The settling-in process enables the child, parent/carer and the nursery team to:

- Develop a sense of belonging in the nursery for the child and their parent/carer, in an environment where they feel welcomed, secure and comfortable.
- Form the foundation for a positive and trusting relationship between the parent/carer, their child and the staff team, particularly the child's key person.
- Help a child and their parent/carer develop an understanding of the nursery school curriculum as well as the routines, boundaries and expectations.

## **We believe the settling-in process is important because:**

- The child is entering a new environment where there are unfamiliar people., routines and experiences.
- It may be the first time the child has been away from home or separated from their parents/carers.
- All children need to feel confident, emotionally secure and supported in order to grow and to learn.
- Parents/carers are able to work in partnership with the key person and share information about their unique child to help support them as they settle.

We recognise that secure attachments are fundamental to children's emotional well-being. Through the settling-in process, the child's key person will begin to build a warm, responsive and trusting relationship with the child, ensuring their emotional needs are met and that they feel safe, valued and understood.

## **Supporting Children Before They Start Nursery**

To support a smooth transition into nursery, School provides parents/carers with a photo booklet prior to the child starting. The booklet includes photographs of:

- Nursery rooms and outdoor areas
- Key areas such as the entrance, cloakroom and toilets

- Members of the nursery team, including the child's key person

Parents/carers are encouraged to share the photo booklet with their child at home, talking positively about the nursery and the people who will care for them. This helps children become familiar with the environment and staff, supporting emotional security and easing the transition from home to nursery. Where appropriate, children may bring their photo booklet into nursery during the settling-in period as a source of reassurance and comfort.

### **Procedures for settling-in at nursery school:**

**The process outlined below is not exhaustive or prescriptive and each child will be settled in a manner appropriate to them, the family and the nursery.**

- The child's first session will be approximately 1 – 1.5 hours and a parent/carer will be asked to stay with them in the nursery during this time to help them to feel safe and secure.
- The child's key person will spend some time with the parent/carer and complete the 'All About Me' form, enabling staff to get to know the child's routines, interests, preferences and individual needs.
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- The key person will talk to the parent/carer about how their child is settling and may suggest that on subsequent sessions the parent withdraw from the classroom and wait in the entrance area for a short period of time, to see how the child manages with separation. Your child's key person will care for and comfort them.
- When a child is settling well, the parent will be advised to leave them at school for a certain period of time. The key person will discuss with parents/carers when the child may be ready for the parent/carer to leave for a longer period of time. This may be for part of a session or a full session, depending on the child's needs.
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- Children gradually build up to their full sessions over time. All children settle at different rates and there is no right or wrong way for a child to separate from their parent/carer.
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The settling-in process is very individual and can be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the child and parent.

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation we recognise that this may be the first time that a parent has been separated from their child and the anxiety that this can cause. We aim

to work sympathetically and supportively with all parents to ensure they feel confident and secure when leaving their child with us.

If a child is very distressed, we will ask parents/carers to return to their child as we do not want the child to feel so anxious that they do not want to come to nursery. It is important for parent/carers to be contactable at all times.

Throughout the settling-in process, staff will observe the child's emotional well-being, levels of involvement and developing relationships. The process will be reviewed regularly with parents/carers and adjusted as needed to ensure the child feels secure and confident in the nursery environment.

### **Inclusion and Individual Needs**

At the nursery schools we are committed to inclusive practice. For children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), or those who require additional emotional support, the settling-in process may be adapted further in consultation with parents/carers and, where appropriate, other professionals. This ensures that each child's individual needs are fully supported.

### **Ways Parents/ carers can help:**

Talk to and work closely with your child's key person during the settling phase.

Stay calm and positive, as children can pick up on adult emotions

Accept and acknowledge your child's emotions and reassure them that it is ok to feel unsure

Bring your child into the room and find their name card together.

Say 'goodbye' to your child when you leave so that your child knows what is happening and that you will be coming back to collect them.

