**Settling-in Policy**

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| EYFS: 3.27, 3.73 |

At Queensway Chapel Nursery we aim to support parents and other carers to help their children settle quickly and easily by giving consideration to the individual needs and circumstances of every child and their families. Our aim is for children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the nursery and to feel secure and comfortable with all staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's continued well-being and their role as active partners, with the child being able to benefit from what the nursery has to offer.

All our staff know about the importance of building strong attachments with children. They are trained to recognise the different stages of attachment and use this knowledge to support children and families settling in to the nursery.

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

* Allocating a key person to each child and his/her family, before he/she starts to attend. The key person welcomes and looks after the child, ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs. He/she offers a settled relationship for the child and builds a relationship with his/her parents during the settling in period and throughout his/her time at the nursery, to ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process
* Reviewing the nominated key person if the child is bonding with another member of staff to ensure the child’s needs are supported
* Providing parents with relevant information about the policies and procedures of the nursery
* Encouraging parents and children to visit the nursery during the weeks before an admission is planned for a showaround
* Planning settling in visits and introductory sessions (lasting approximately 1-2 hours). These will be provided free of charge over a one or two-week period, dependent on individual needs, age and stage of development
* 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. Settling in visits and introductory sessions are key to a smooth transition and to ensure good communication and information sharing between staff and parents
* Reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling in to the nursery and developing a plan with them
* Encouraging parents, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences
* Ensuring that other members of staff within the room also bond with each child in case the key person is not available.
* 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
* Not taking a child on an outing from the nursery until he/she is completely settled.

Settling Visits

1. We ask parents/carers to stay with the child on their first visit and spend an hour together in the nursery setting or garden. This will normally be enough for your child's first day.
2. On the second visit we ask parents/carers to stay with the child for an hour. Whilst children are playing and exploring, parents/carers will fill an “All about me” with their child’s Key Person or Room Leader.
3. The third visit we ask parent to leave their child for an hour if the child is settled and happy. Giving the child a chance to explore on their own, and better familiarise themselves with nursery staff.

If the first three visits have gone well, your child can start their sessions. However younger children can take longer to settle in, as can children who have not previously spent time away from home. Therefore, during the first few sessions if your child becomes distressed then in the best interest of your child, we reserve the right to reduce their sessions until we feel that they are settled.

*(Children who have had a long period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.)*

We consider a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example, the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.

When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.

We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay if needed even when a child may appear to be settled but not ready to be left.

We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.

Where possible we will record via Tapestry children’s visits and the first few days at nursery to help provide a dialogue between nursery and home. We recognise that it is reassuring for parents to call the nursery, and we encourage this in the first few days of your child starting with us.

COVID-19 Variation

During the COVID-19 Pandemic the nursery takes the wellbeing and health of children, families and staff very seriously. We follow all national and local guidance to prevent the transmission of Coronavirus at our setting. To enable children to settle at nursery, Queensway Chapel Nursery and all of its staff team are dedicated to ensuring that partnerships with parents continue to be a priority.

Current guidance indicates that where possible, parents and carers should not enter Early Years or School Premises. Therefore, settling sessions will temporarily take place in the nursery garden only, with a maximum of six other children/adults in the space at any one time.

Where possible, parents are encouraged to complete an “All about me” before the child’s second visit.

Where the child is happy to be left without a parent/carer present, this will be preferable.

Photographs of the Nursery Team, Room and Outside areas are shared with parents via Tapestry to help parents prepare their children for nursery. As always we will work with individual families and children to find solutions, should children need additional help to settle into the nursery.

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| **This policy was adopted on** | **Signed on behalf of the nursery** | **Date for review** |
| *08.09.2020* | *R.Erwin* | *August 2021* |