

The Federation of St Bede's and St Bernadette Catholic Schools



WE LEARN, WE PLAY, WE CARE, WE PRAY

Early Years Settling In Policy

Last review: October 2016

Next review: November 2020

FEDERATION VISION

Our vision is to provide all children with the best possible education, guided by the foundations of the Catholic faith, which develops their potential, prepares them for the future and inspires lifelong learning.



Introduction

For most children, starting in our Nursery or Reception is their first separation from their main carer. We, therefore, recognise that 'parents are a child's first and most enduring educators' (Early Years Foundation Stage– Positive Relationships/Parents as Partners).

Starting in a new setting is a major event in a child's life and this time of transition can be stressful for both children and parents. To ensure that both children and parents feel supported as their child settles in, we seek to ensure a smooth transition by working in close partnership with parents and previous early years setting if appropriate. We believe that it is important for staff to take time to get to know the children, their parents and their home environment. Therefore, home visits and transition visits are key in establishing that first bond between home, school and other setting.

We recognise that each child will start school with a diversity of individual experiences, attitudes, expectations and developmental differences. These need to be taken into account when settling each child into their new learning environment.

Aims

We aim to:

- Make the children feel happy and secure in their new environment in the absence of their parent/carers.
- 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 of 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 in their child's learning and settling in process
- Support children to build upon the prior experiences and knowledge they have gained in their home environment or other setting
- Encourage and welcome open and honest communication between staff and parents.

Our staff aim to:

- Show empathy and sensitivity towards new parents and children.
- Be responsive and flexible by taking into account the individual needs and experiences of the children and parents.
- Take time to get to know new children and their parents/carers whilst they are settling in.
- Give guidance and support to parents/carers regarding their child's varying needs.
- Organise and manage the environment in such a way that the children can operate independently, safely and imaginatively within it.

Guidelines and Procedures:

- The children and parents are always warmly welcomed into the school.
- All children and their parents /carers are made aware of their teacher and support staff/key worker before they start in our Nursery or Reception classes, through home visits and/or or transition visits
- Each teacher / key person is responsible for helping their key children to become independent learners within the EYFS and to feel safe and confident within it.
- Each practitioner develops a genuine warm and caring professional relationship with each child in their class, as well as the child's parents/carers.
- Each practitioner responds sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of each child in their class and endeavours to meet each child's particular needs and those of their parents.
- Information is provided to the parents to familiarise them with daily routines and an overview of the termly events



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- Parental workshops are held termly to advise parents/carers as to the methods and strategies used in the EYFS, so that their children can be further supported at home.
- Parents are asked to complete an 'All About Me', questionnaire before their child starts in the EYFS in order to give us additional information about each child, which we use to inform our planning.
- In the first weeks, we encourage the parents to leave their child after a short period of time, 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. Parents may wait in the reception area to ensure their child is well settled.
- If the child continues to be upset staff will contact the parent/carer asking them to return to the class and stay with their child or take them home, depending on the circumstances.
- For the initial first half term at Nursery (and sometimes longer depending on the child's needs), the school will suggest a reduced period of time, if they feel the child is not ready for the full session. (This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure the agreed plan continues to best meet the needs of the child)
- For some children in Nursery and Reception settling in may be, for various reasons, an upsetting or traumatic experience. In these cases the Nursery/Reception teacher and parents will discuss and agree an individual settling in plan which may include a parent supporting in sessions or the child having shorter session times for a period of time. These plans will be reviewed regularly, based on the child's progress and development.
- 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 Nursery/Reception and share how each day is progressing and how their child is settling in.
- Parents are given opportunities to share what they know about their child either in written form or through informal discussion. This is used to help plan appropriate activities for the children.
- During the settling in period, activities and experiences provided in the EYFS are planned with the view to 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 half 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 in the EYFS 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.

In all the things that we do to settle children into Nursery and Reception, 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 into St Bede's for parents, children and staff.

Signed:

Headteachers: _____

Chairs of Governors: _____
