



Thornhill Primary School Nursery

Settling In Policy 3-4 Year Olds

We want children to feel safe and stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

Parents and Carers will play a key part in the staff assessing their child's development and will be asked to share and celebrate their achievements and developmental milestones through a special 'Learning Journey', All About Me and 'At home I can...' stars shared by parents, staff and the child.

Helping your child settle in

We would like to welcome parents and their child to Thornhill Primary School Nursery. We hope that they get to know us and have a happy and successful time with the Nursery School. We look forward to getting to know the parents/carers too. Children settle into nursery in lots of different ways. Some children will confidently come into Nursery as soon as they start. Other children may be nervous and anxious about leaving their beloved parent. Most children will be somewhere in between.

Parents/carers should be reassured and try not to worry if their child experiences difficulties, it is a very normal part of a child's development to be anxious, nervous or angry about starting nursery.

The welfare and emotional stability of the child is essential to settling in. We recognise and understand that many parents will find this a difficult and sometimes upsetting process. We hope that we can use our experience to support you and your child in whatever way suits you. We require all parents and carers to help their children settle in. No matter how confident a parent/carer feels their child is, we will insist that you follow our settling in procedures. In our experience, all children benefit greatly when the nursery works closely with the family on settling in.

Children can be helped to settle in by their parents, and other important people who they know well and can be comforted by – aunts, uncles and grandparents for example.

Key Person

Every child attending the nursery will have a key person. This member of staff will have special responsibilities for working with a small number children and for developing a genuine bond with the child, their parents and has links with other carers for the child such as a child-minder. They will share appropriate information about the child's development as children may do different things at home than they do in the setting, so we need to build a full picture. They will also support transitions to school.

The key person helps the child to become familiar with the setting and to feel confident and safe within it. We believe that when children feel happy and secure in this way they are confident to explore and try out new things, and so get the most out of the nursery session. The Key Person is the key contact for the parent/guardian

The key person will work with the parent to complete the entry profile during the Home visit.

The settling-in period

Different children need different amounts of time to settle in. Thornhill Nursery recommends that parents/carers plan for two weeks to support your child. It is different for every child, but we have given a rough outline of what to expect.

The settling in period is the time when parents/carers are here with their child in the Nursery School. It is a time for the child to get to know his or her key person - with the reassurance of having their parent/carer there too.

As the relationship develops, the child will be able to trust that:

- The key person and the other staff in the nursery are able to meet her or his needs and build an attachment to them
- They will be helpful, comforting and deal positively with any problems
- They can provide interesting and stimulating experiences at nursery

The settling in process gives the parent/carer a chance to explore:

- What type of nursery this is
- How the staff work
- What kinds of experiences we offer to the children

You will be able to see how we:

- Play and interact with children
- Communicate with children
- Have fun experiences together
- Set boundaries for children
- Deal with difficult behaviour

Parents/carers are always welcome to ask about how we work and how we deal with particular situations.

In our experience, settling in takes about two weeks (although it will vary greatly from one child to another) Our aim is to settle children in 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 six stage process for 3 year old often goes like this:

Stage 1 The home visit

This can be very special for a child – often children remember for a long time who came to visit them and what they did. The home visit gives us helpful information about the child and it enables the child to begin an attachment with the key person on “home territory”. Parents/carers can expect the Nursery teacher and Nursery Nurse to come and visit the child in their home environment to gain a better understanding of the child, likes and interests. Home visits have many benefits for both parent/carers and staff. For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet the key person in a safe environment where they feel confident and at ease.

The visit provides the opportunity to:

- Establish early, positive contact
- See children in their own familiar setting
- Meet other family members, people and pets who are important to the children
- Understand the anxieties children may feel when starting nursery, and also understand the wealth of learning that goes on at home.

Once the home visit has been completed, parents will be given a start date to start the transition process if this has not already been done.

Stage 2 The child spending time in the Nursery room with parent/carer

During this time, parents/carers are available to support your child, easing the transition for the child from home to Nursery as well as helping staff get to know the child. At this stage it might be best for parents/carers to be available to the child but not too interesting! In other words, it might be best to avoid getting deeply involved in the child's play at this time. This allows members of staff to make a judgement about engaging your child in experiences.

However, we will support the parent/carer in judging how to handle this for the best. We are aware that both parent/carer and child may be feeling stress at some points, and the child may not appear to be on "best behaviour". Parents should not worry about this; it is all part of the process. As adults, if we try to relax as much as possible and remain confident, this will help the children.

Stage 3 and 4 The child spending time in the Nursery room whilst the parent/carer is in another part of the building.

It will be up to the parent/carer and the key person to discuss when the child is ready for this step. This means that the child has 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 the parent/carer says clearly to their child that they will be leaving the nursery classroom. It's tempting for parents/carers to nip out when the child is busy, but if the child turns round a few minutes later to find they have unexpectedly gone, she or he may be really distraught. It is essential that parents/carers do not leave the building without talking with your key person first.

Stage 5 and 6 Finally, it is for parents and carers to judge – with the support of the key person – when the child is ready to be left in the School with the staff.

The child may be 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 their parents/carers have gone, we would contact them and would not put the child through an ordeal. It is still important for parents/carers to say goodbye to the child clearly, so that the child knows what is going on and can express how he or she feels about it. 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 the parent/carer how you manage this, but they are free to ask for support or advice if it will be helpful. 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 or help to parents/carers if they would like it.

At any stage of the process

If a parent/carer would like to talk to someone, or need ideas, or support, or help, then they should talk to their child's key person, or the Nursery teacher. It is best to arrange to do this in a private space, not in front of the child. As staff, we are committed to working closely and supportively with parents and carers. We look forward to developing a relationship with them.

What will happen in the settling-in period?

All children are different. We have given a rough guide below to the stages most children go through when settling-in.

Morning or afternoon sessions

- Stage 1
Parent/carers will be given a start date and nearer the time a Home visit date and time.

- Stage 2
Parent/carer and child spend an hour together in the nursery.
- Stage 3
Parent/carer and child spend an hour and a half in the nursery. If appropriate, the child will spend 20 minutes in the nursery without the parent/carer. Parent/carer needs to stay in the building (e.g. the cloakroom).
- Stage 4
Child builds up to 1 ½ hours in the nursery without the parent/carer. Parent/carer needs to stay in the building.
- Stage 5
Child spends 2 hours in the nursery without parent/carer.
- Stage 6
Child spends full 3 hours in the nursery.

It is only when the child is happy and secure in the Nursery routine and also in the knowledge that their parent/carer will leave and return that their stay in Nursery can be lengthened.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious or unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents and children feel comfortable in the nursery, and so ensure that children can benefit from what the group has to offer and feel confident that their parents will return at the end of the session.

Morning or Afternoon sessions

If a child will be 4 in the current academic year in either autumn or spring term they will attend **morning** nursery sessions

If a child will be 4 in the current academic year in the spring term and they have not attended our nursery before they will spend autumn term in **afternoon** and then transition to **morning** sessions after Christmas break. These children will have a short settling plan at the beginning of the spring term as above.

If a child will be 3 in the current academic year they will attend **afternoon** nursery sessions

Settling In Plan for Spring birthdays who are transitioning from afternoon to morning

- Children are invited to a morning session where they stay from 9.30-11.30am, so they can be introduced to the children already in the setting.
- The child's key worker will greet them when they arrive.
- Parents or carers are encouraged to stay to settle their child and then tell them they are leaving and will be back later

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