



Learning to be a wonderful me

## Policy for promoting smooth transitions



September 2023



**In Dunclug Nursery School we are committed to providing a happy, safe and stimulating environment to support young children's learning and development.**

We recognise that the children in our care have individual interests, characteristics and needs and aim to enable each child to develop positive attitudes about themselves and towards their learning by –

- providing experiences that extend learning and challenge thinking
- maintaining positive relationships as a staff team, with our children, their parents, the community, the Board of Governors and other relevant agencies
- promoting the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and their families
- inspiring and developing all members of our school community



## PROMOTING SMOOTH TRANSITIONS IN DUNCLUG NURSERY SCHOOL

*“Right from the start, babies and young children manage changes in their lives on a daily basis. When small changes are supported by responsive, knowledgeable adults, children will gradually discover that the world is a safe and predictable place.”*

‘Seamless Transitions – supporting continuity for young children’s learning’ – National Strategies 2006

In Dunclug Nursery School we understand that transitioning from home to Nursery, from one pre-school setting to another, or from Nursery to Primary School, can be a stressful and challenging time for some children and parents. We recognise that children respond to transitions in different ways, some with confidence, and others with more anxiety or apprehension.

We aim, through careful planning and preparation, to support each child to accept changes in their lives by introducing these gradually and sensitively, in the hope that their sense of security and belonging will be nurtured and developed.

This policy details the practices in place in our Nursery School to promote partnership working with parents, carers and other health and education professionals, to ensure smooth transitions for all the children in our care.



## STARTING NURSERY – The Induction Process

The Early Years Foundation Stage states that transition should be seen as a ‘*process*’ and not an ‘*event*.’

The BELB Handbook elaborates on this point by stating -

*“Research and practice has identified that it is essential that everyone in this process has an understanding of their key role and how this relates to the child’s own experiences, capabilities and individual needs up to and beyond this point. This will involve helping children to build resilience to cope with change, to develop positive self-esteem, to have appropriate expectations, understand new routines and build up their independence.”*

## Before your child starts Nursery –

In order to help every child to settle into our Nursery and adapt to their new learning environment, our Induction process is made up of the following, beginning in the December of the year before the child starts Nursery –

- OPEN DAY – held for parents and children to visit Nursery, speak with staff and collect an application form for the Education Authority’s Open Enrolment process.
- You will be notified of an offer of a Pre-School place for your child in April. Parents receive an SEN questionnaire along with our letter, to be returned with their acceptance of a place. This enables staff to begin to plan and make preparations for children who have additional needs. With parents’ consent we make requests for relevant reports pertaining to individual children from other health or education professionals. Parents can also specify on this questionnaire if they would like to discuss any additional needs their child may have with the school principal.
- Where children have attended another pre-school setting, arrangements will be made, where possible, to visit the sending setting, to observe the child and speak with their key worker or teacher. Transition reports received from sending settings will be read and filed with pupils’ records.
- PLAY SESSION – Parents and children are invited to come to Nursery for a short play session in small groups. Parents receive an ‘Induction Pack’ which contains –
  - Personalised information regarding the child’s starting date and session times and details of their symbol.
  - Photographs of staff, the Nursery and activities that they will be doing when they start.
  - Information for Parents on how help to prepare their child for Nursery School and about the settling in period, including a ‘Starting Timetable’ and ‘Induction Timetable’ detailing dates and times of events in the lead up to their child starting Nursery School.
  - Pupil Information and Safeguarding forms that should be returned to Nursery before the end of June.
  - A Holiday List to enable parents to plan trips during Nursery School closures.
  - Relevant School Policies
  - Seesaw login information

During the play session staff play alongside children and speak with parents, noting any relevant observations or information received from parents on an ‘Initial Observations’ form.

- Parents are invited to bring their child to our Summer Fair in June, providing a further opportunity to visit Nursery, meet with staff and speak with parents of children who will be moving on to Primary School.
- Each parent and child is also invited to attend an Introductory Meeting with their child's teacher in August, to discuss any medical conditions or SEN the child may have, their prior opportunities for interacting with peers, the child's interests and strengths and any other concerns / relevant information.

### **During the Induction Process –**

The Induction Process will continue after the child's starting date, with a gradual build up to his or her full session time. The Class Teacher, in consultation with support staff, will consider when each child is ready to progress with the settling in period and is emotionally secure and ready to cope with the expectations and routine of the nursery day. This may mean that the child's session times do not follow the pattern as detailed in the 'Starting Timetable' given to parents as part of the Induction Pack.

When considering when to increase a child's session times, staff will always base decisions on what they consider to be in the best interests of the individual child and children in their class. Staff recognise the importance of the Induction process being a positive, quality experience for all children, as stated in the BELB Handbook -

*“The child will transition from being a very young child requiring much practical support towards greater independence and learning. Therefore there is a great deal of pressure on all pre-school provision to ensure that it is a **positive, quality experience** which meets the emotional needs of the child as it will impact on all future expectations and attitudes for the child and the parent.”*

- To help staff get to know children during their first few weeks in Nursery School, parents are asked to make a 'Wonderful Me' box with their child, which contains photographs of special people in their life, some items which reflect their interests and some mementos of special times they have had. Staff spend time talking with the children about items in their box and they also serve as transitional items, to bridge the gap between home and Nursery, for some children who are finding separating from their parents or carer challenging.
- A Parents' Information Meeting is held early in September. At this meeting parents hear more about the Induction process, Pre-School Curriculum, rules and routines in Nursery School and our Safeguarding and Positive Behaviour policies.

- Session times will be built up gradually, initially in smaller groups, building up to all of the class being in for their full session time together.
- Child-focused observations are made during the first few weeks regarding the children's learning and development and next steps are decided upon.
- Support is provided for all children as they settle into their new environment. Observations inform individual planning for children and for play and learning opportunities based on children's interests.
- Children are introduced to the rules and routines in Nursery using stories and puppets, praising all attempts to comply with these as children become more familiar with their new environment.
- We use a sand timer to help children integrate into the larger group setting. This provides a visual support to help children to manage sharing, turn-taking and having to waiting for resources.
- We will keep in touch with parents and carers via our Seesaw app, where we will send photographs, announcements and information.

#### **After the initial settling in period –**

The child's sense of belonging and security in Nursery will continue to be nurtured throughout the school year.

- How the child has settled in Nursery is discussed at the Parent/Teacher meetings in October, along with next steps for the child's learning and development and suggestions as to how parents may support this at home.
- Stay and Play days are held to give parents the opportunity to see their child at play with their peers during their Nursery session.
- Parents are kept informed of their child's achievements through displays of their work, stickers / praise notes sent home, informal chats at drop off and pick up times, Newsletters and photographs online on the Nursery School's website, Facebook page and Seesaw app.
- Parents' information is shared on the Parent and Carers' Board in the entrance hall, via Seesaw or via notes sent home.
- Each child will have the opportunity to take their class's soft toy home for an overnight stay and parents are encouraged to record some of the experiences they have together in the soft toy's diary.
- Feedback is sought from parents and sending settings regarding the Induction process and improvements are implemented, as necessary.



## STARTING PRIMARY SCHOOL – The Transition Process

- Parents are given notice, via our Facebook page and Newsletter of the closing date for applying for a Primary School place for their child.
- Information leaflets regarding Primary School Open Days are distributed, without bias, to all children when received. Nursery may also display posters publicising Primary School open days.
- The children in our Nursery School attend events in receiving schools, with their parents' consent and when invited to do so, during their pre-school year in our Nursery.
- Planning for learning and teaching in Term 3 includes stories on transitioning / starting Primary School, about making new friends and exploring feelings such as excitement, happiness, worry and fear. Role Play areas include school uniforms for dress up and additional resources are added to the Home Corner to provide opportunities to explore the impending transition. Staff and children also talk about the child's new school, how they feel about moving to their Primary School and children may be made aware of other children from our setting who will start the same school.
- Teaching staff from receiving Primary Schools will be invited to attend Nursery events, such as our Nativity Play and Summer Fair.
- After parents receive notification of which Primary School their child has been accepted into, Nursery requests that parents send us a message detailing this information, so that a list can be compiled and displayed, with parents' consent. This allows parents to see if there are other children from their child's class transitioning to the same Primary School.
- Invites are sent to all receiving schools, giving them the opportunity to visit Nursery to observe and discuss children who will be starting school with them in September.
- Transition information is compiled for each child, including their Transition Report, SEN Information, relevant multi-agency reports and a checklist for children with SEN. All relevant information is forwarded to the receiving Primary School.
- A Parents' Information Meeting is held in Nursery in June, to support parents with preparing their child for the transition to Primary School.

## **During / After the child's initial settling in period in Primary School –**

- Staff in Nursery are available for meetings or phone contact with receiving schools during the initial settling in period and throughout the school year.
- Feedback will be sought from parents and receiving schools and improvements made in practice, if deemed appropriate.



## **Supporting Children with Special / Additional Needs as they transition into Primary School -**

Children with Special / Additional Needs may require more support to transition into their new setting –

- As for all children, transition information is compiled for children with additional needs, including their Transition Report, SEN Information, observations, relevant multi-agency reports and a checklist for children with SEN. All relevant information is forwarded to the receiving Primary School.
- Personal Learning Plans and Statements of Special Educational Needs are forwarded to the receiving Primary School, with parents' consent.
- Strategies found to work well with the individual children are shared with the receiving school, such as visual schedules, home school communication methods and any other relevant information.
- A meeting may be arranged with Nursery Staff, Parents, Year 1 staff and the SENCO of the receiving school, to discuss the child's needs and learning journey to date.
- Children with certain SEN may benefit from additional visits to the Primary School in preparation for their transition. This may be arranged with the receiving Primary School via Nursery Staff.
- 'All About Me' books will be prepared for all children with communication difficulties, to provide their new setting with further information that may help the child to settle in their new setting.