

DROMORE NURSERY SCHOOL SETTLING IN POLICY THE FIRST FIVE WEEKS

The first five weeks of term are spent in introducing and settling new children, getting to know them and establishing rules, routines and awareness of what is appropriate behaviour in school.

Children are admitted gradually over the month of September. At this stage it is important to spend time establishing routines, rules and behaviour in order to provide a sound basis, which will enable the year's work to be carried out in an atmosphere, which is settled, secure and purposeful.

Children will receive their starting date at the time of induction, prior to the induction meeting parents will have been asked to complete a series of information sheets. These will be about their children's experience both in the home and outside the home, based on this information a child will be given a starting date. Parents will have the opportunity to highlight on these forms any difficulties or significant circumstances which might impact their child's starting date and time. On the first day children will be invited to stay for ONE hour during which a significant adult is encouraged to stay with them. This allows the child the opportunity to become familiar with the environment and the staff members. The aim behind this hour is that the children will not want to go home and there will be lots of unexplored toys and activities for them to be enthusiastic about returning the next day. On the second day most children will be expected to stay for the full session (for children in the full time class this will be to 12noon until dinners start). The Principal will have the final say over the induction period in keeping with best practice and individual children's needs.



While it is necessary to use a degree of discretion in the application of rules and routines when working with children who are difficult to settle or particularly sensitive it is also important to apply rules routines and standards of behaviour as consistently as possible to avoid confusion in the minds of the children. Children who are feeling insecure may become distressed if they are pressurised into conforming or carrying out a particular task. In such cases a rule or routine need not be rigidly enforced at this early stage unless enforcement is necessary for reasons of safety.

Routines that are established at the beginning of the Nursery Year

Registration Routine

Toilet/ and Hand Washing Routines

Wearing Aprons Routine

Snack Routine

Dinner Routine

Art table Routine

Group Activity Routine



Registration Routine (8.45-9.15/11.45-12noon)

- Children and parents will wait outside the front door until Mrs Beattie or Mrs Chambers come to the door to greet them (8.45am and 11.45am).
- The door will be opened and children and parents greeted and welcomed in.

- Parents can accompany their child to their peg, from the beginning encourage your child to take off their coat and hang both their coat and bag on their own peg (their first day photograph will be displayed at their peg for recognition).
- Parents may then walk children to the classroom door where a teaching member of staff will greet them and invite them to find and take down their photograph.
- They will then post the photograph into the box provided and say goodbye to their parent.
- Children will then select an area to play in.

Toileting/ Hand Washing

- Children may use the toilet whenever necessary- no need to ask unless they need help, then they should be encouraged to ask for help.
- Children will use the soap dispenser to squirt anti-bacterial soap onto their hands.
- Washing their hands by rubbing together and between their fingers for 20 seconds (a song will be used to establish 20 seconds in time).
- They will then rinse their hands under running water.
- They will take a paper towel to dry their hands.
- Place the used paper towel in the bin provided.
- Children should be encouraged to wash hands regularly and in particular before snack and dinner routines.



Snack Routine

- The snack is set out every morning with the help of some children and parent helpers.
- There will be milk and water in jugs and the selected food for that day.
- Children will initially be invited to snack but as the routine is established the snack will be free flow.
- Children will go into the bathroom and wash their hands.
- Take down their photograph and post it in the pocket provided.
- Select a seat.
- Children may select what they want to eat using tongs and place it on their plate. They can pour as much milk or water as they want (within reason) from the jug.
- After finishing, each child must clear their place by putting their cup and plate in the box provided and putting any uneaten food in the recycling bin.
- Staff will encourage children to eat and drink all the food and drink they have selected but not pressurise them.
- There will be a snack rota for parents to help prepare snack with the children.
- Snack will to be cleared away by 11am or as soon as possible afterwards and a fresh snack reset for 11.45 and the afternoon children arriving.
- Milk and water will be available at all times for the children.



Dinner Routine (Dinners will start the first week in October in a phased manner over 4 to 4 weeks)

(Children are involved in story/music time immediately before dinner.)

- While children in the group are singing, involved in discussion etc. with the teacher they are sent in twos and threes to the toilet and to wash their hands before dinner, this will be assisted by a classroom assistant.
- Children then go and collect their cutlery and cup and go to the table and set their place (initially with the aid of a setting template).
- Children sit round tables or 10-12 (smaller numbers initially) with one member of staff.
- Each child is served with what he or she wants individually.
- Children should be encouraged to eat what they have asked for but not pressurised.
- Children will always be encouraged and supported to try new foods.
- Children will be expected to use a knife and fork. Spoons are only used for soup.
- Children have a fruit buffet available after dinner everyday.
- On finishing each child takes his/her plate to the trolley with their knife and fork or spoon to be put in the bowl of water, uneaten food is scraped into a waste bowl for recycling: dinner plate or desert bowl is placed at the bottom of the trolley.
- Children may not leave the table until the whole meal is over, social chat and engagement is encouraged.
- After dinner children will select to play outside or inside or at a topic activity or may take part in a whole group activity with their teacher.



During dinner children are actively encouraged to talk to each other and to staff who are at their table. However, it is important that the noise is kept to a minimum so that the meal is a pleasant social experience for everyone. With this in mind,

- Children will not be encouraged to talk to children at other tables.
- Children (and Staff!) should talk loudly enough to be heard but not shout. When plates and cutlery are clattering children are inclined to raise their voices to compete with the sound. This should be discouraged.

As the year progresses different routines will be introduced.



Dinner will be introduced in a 'phased in' process over a two to three week window in October, children will be invited to stay for dinner based on how settled they are during the session. All children will be expected to stay for dinner by the third week in October. During the month of October when children are staying for dinner their finish time will be 1pm. After half term all children will be participating in the full dinner routine and the finish time will be 1.30pm. Dinner money can be paid weekly, monthly or termly using the yellow envelopes provided. It is important to keep your payment regular. If you think you might be entitled to free school meals please talk to Mrs Gray the school secretary to organise this in advance of your child starting as the Education Authority DO NOT back pay school meals.

Light Lunch Routine for the children in the PM session (11.45-2.15pm)

The children in the afternoon session are offered a 'light lunch' which is more substantial than a snack in an effort to reduce the habit of 'snacking' and to support parents. The food provided will be nutritionally equivalent to a packed lunch a child would take in P1. The children will be actively engaged in the preparation of the food as part of their daily learning and play. For example they will bake breads and make soups and stews using produce from the school gardens. These activities will take place the day before and will involve many aspects of the curriculum such as following instructions, pre language and early mathematics. These will name and identify food types and observe change as foods are prepared and cooked. Children will be invited to the light lunch in small groups of 6 to 8 (the remainder of the class will continue with the free play choices). These arrangements have been in place for the last 5 years and parents have reported that they value the option.



Art Table Routine

Routines associated with artwork should be designed to support and not spoil the creative element of the children's work.

The following routines should be observed:

- Aprons to be worn and sleeves rolled up before the child starts
- Children will find their own picture (provided in small boxes) and stick it to their page as a means of identifying their work.
- The children will be encouraged to wipe their area with a cloth after use.
- Completed work to be placed on the drying rack.
- No art work to be started once tidy up music has begun.



Aprons Routines

Aprons are placed at all the following areas and must be put on before play starts, independence is encouraged.

- Art table
- Water play
- Clay activities
- Baking activities
- Other incidental messy activities e.g. planting, bathing baby etc.

Aprons are also used at the sand tray and role play areas to help the children to identify how many people are allowed to play at the activity at the same time (usually between 4 and 6). This also facilitates turn taking.

Group Activity Routines

Cue music indicate the start of group time. The music is loud enough to be readily audible but not so loud or "pacey" as to excite children into a frenzied activity. When the music comes on children should continue with what they are doing but be aware that group activities are starting. On some occasions they will be free choice and sometimes a member of staff will invite key children to join the activity in line with planning.

Tidy Up Routine

Tidy up music is played to initiate the tidy up routine. The music is again loud enough to be readily heard but not so 'loud' or 'pacey' as to excite the children into a frenzied activity. When the music comes on the children should continue with what they are doing but be aware that the music is on and that play is coming to an end. With daily repetition children will begin to learn would this 10 minute time span feels like and will naturally play on for a few minutes and then begin to tidy up.

Children will be told not to start a new activity when the music starts to play. By the end of the music the children should be moving in the direction of the story room in preparation for community time which is led by the teacher.

The rationale behind this approach to finishing play and tidying up is, theoretically, each child will have ownership of their own finish and tidy up within a set time frame. Some children can be ready to stop what they are doing almost immediately and tidy up while other children like to have the opportunity to finish what they have started. This approach allows children to work at their own pace and does not give way to a frantic rush to tidy up which can distress some children.



Rules

These contribute to the smooth running of the classroom but which are kept to a minimum so that children develop a sense of self-discipline.

Initial rules, which are important:

- Always walk inside the building
- Only 4 children at a time in the house corner
- Equipment used should be left tidy after use as far as possible
- Only reading or looking at books in the quiet room. No toys in the quiet room.
- Use kind hands, feet and word.

Behaviour

When children start Nursery, we aim to encourage appropriate social behaviours, which will enable:

- Satisfying relationships to develop between children
- Satisfying relationships to develop between adults and children
- Support group play to take place
- Children to play alone undisturbed if they wish
- The work of the day to go ahead without an undue number of interruptions caused by inappropriate behaviour

The following apply at all times:

1. No biting, kicking, nipping or hitting.
2. Toys being used by another child must not be snatched
3. An activity with enough equipment to share must be shared if more than one child wants to play.



Our Living Environment

The children will be introduced to the different animals that live in the nursery. They will be taught to handle them and care for them appropriately. They will also be taught to wash their hands after any contact with living things both indoors and in the outdoor classroom. Children will also have the opportunity to explore the school gardens and learn to care for and respect their environment, including harvesting the fruit and vegetables. These skills will be lifelong knowledge and understanding that children will never forget. It is also in keeping with the ECO code which operates throughout the school which is a Green Flag School.



Conclusion

It is our aim to establish good routines from the earliest stage with the children; this will lead to a settled learning environment where children can meet their full potential. Our most recent inspection report 24th April 2017 states:

'The behaviour of the children was found to be 'exemplary' and the expectations of the staff are exceedingly high'

We will stride to provide this environment for learning for every child.