

Bedford Nursery Schools Federation



Settling-In Policy

Reviewed by: SH and JS
Adopted by Governors: March 2023
To be reviewed: July 2025

Aim of the settling-in process

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation we believe that the settling-in process is a crucial to the successful start of a child's educational journey. The process is individual to children and families and should be undertaken in consultation between the parent/carer and the child's key person in the nursery.

Where possible all families will be visited at home before starting nursery. The aim of the home visit is to start building a strong relationship between home and school, and so to support a child to become a lifelong learner.

The settling-in process enables the child, parent/carer and the nursery team to:

- Develop a sense of belonging in the nursery for the child and their parent/carer, in an environment where they feel secure and comfortable.
- Form the foundation for a positive relationship between the parent/carer, their child and the staff team, in particular the child's key person.
- Help a child and their parent/carer develop an understanding of the nursery school curriculum as well as the routines, boundaries and expectations.

We believe the settling-in process is important because:

- The child is entering a new environment where there are unfamiliar people.
- It may be the first time the child has been away from home or separated from their parents/carers.
- All children need to feel confident and secure in order to grow and to learn.
- Parents/carers have the opportunity to work in partnership with the key person, and share information about their unique child to help support them as they settle.

Procedures for settling-in at nursery school:

The process outlined below is not exhaustive or prescriptive and each child will be settled in a manner appropriate to both them, the family and the nursery.

- The child's first session will be approximately 1 – 1.5 hours and a parent/carer will be asked to stay with them in the nursery during this time to help your child to feel safe and secure.
- The child's key person will spend some time with the parent/carer and complete the 'All About Me' form. This helps the nursery to get to know the child.
- The key person will talk to the parent/carer about how their child is settling and may suggest that on subsequent sessions the parent withdraw from the classroom and wait in the entrance area for a short period of time, to see how the child manages with separation. Your child's key person will care for and comfort them.

- If a child is settling well, the parent will be advised to leave them at school for a period of time that the key person feels is appropriate. This may be for an hour or the whole session.
- Children gradually build up to their full sessions over time.

It is important to recognise that all children settle at different rates and there is no right or wrong way for a child to separate from their parent/carer.

The settling-in process is very individual and can be adjusted to accommodate the needs of the child and parent.

At Bedford Nursery Schools Federation we recognise that this may be the first time that a parent has been separated from their child and the anxiety that this can cause. We aim to work sympathetically and supportively with all parents to ensure they feel confident and secure when leaving their child with us.

If a child is very distressed we will ask parents/carers to return to their child as we do not want the child to feel so anxious that they do not want to come to nursery. It is important for parent/carers to be contactable at all times.

Ways to help:

Talk to and work with your child's key person during the settling phase.

Stay calm and positive.

Accept and acknowledge your child's emotions.

Bring your child into the room and find their name card together.

Say 'goodbye' to your child when you leave so that your child knows what is happening and that you will be coming back to collect them.

