



## **Noah's Ark Nursery Schools Settling-in Policy**

### **Rationale:**

For most children, starting nursery school is their first separation from their main carer, and we recognise that 'parents are children'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. At Noah's Ark we seek to ensure a smooth transition by working in close partnership with home and school, so that both child and parent feel supported as they work towards feeling comfortable and at ease in the new setting. We believe that it is important for staff to take time to get to know the children and their home environment.

Noah's Ark Nursery Schools endeavours to be accessible to children and families from all sections of the local community. We recognise that 'children approach school with a diversity of individual experiences, attitudes, expectations and developmental differences'. (Children Starting School: A Guide to Successful transition and transfers for teachers and assistants - Hilary Fabian, chapter 1 page 1) and take account of this in our initial and ongoing planning.

### **At Noah's Ark we aim to:**

- Make the children feel happy and secure in their new environment in the absence of their parent/carer.
- Make the children feel confident to explore and experiment in the physical environment.
- Help the children to develop independence in the new environment and freely access all the resources.
- Support the children to develop positive relationships with both adults and other children in the setting.
- 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 children's learning.
- Support and build upon the children's prior experiences and knowledge gained in their home environment.
- Encourage and welcome open and honest communication between staff and parents.

### **As a staff we aim to:**

- Show empathy and sensitivity towards new parents and children.
- Be responsive and flexible by taking into account the individual needs of the children and parents.
- Take time and space to get to know new children and their parents/carers whilst they are settling in.

- Organise and manage the environment in such a way that the children can operate independently, safely and imaginatively.

### **Guidelines and Procedures:**

- The children and parents are always welcomed warmly and invitingly into the nursery.
- All children and their parents/carers are made very aware of their individual teacher/key person before they start at Noah's Ark.
- Each teacher is responsible for helping her group of children (a maximum of 8 children) to become familiar with the nursery and to feel safe and confident within it.
- Each teacher develops a genuine bond with each child in their group, and their parents/carers, and offers a settled, close relationship.
- Each teacher responds sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of each of the children in their group and endeavours to meet each child's particular needs, and those of their parents.
- We have a 'New Children's Tea' the term before the children begin, to familiarise the children and parents with the new environment and meet the teachers.
- Information is provided to the parents to familiarize them with daily routines and an overview of the termly and yearly events.
- Parents are asked to complete an 'All About Me', 'The Parents' Turn' and a food questionnaire before their child starts at nursery in order to give us additional information about each child.
- When the children first start at Noah's Ark, for the first week or two they have the option of arriving at 09:30, after the other children have settled in. This flexible and staggered starting time helps each child in the period of transition as the teacher can spend more time with each child and parent.
- We encourage the parents to leave the 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.
- If the child continues to be upset we would contact the parent/carer asking them to return to school.
- For the initial half term at nursery school, parents/carers are able to choose to send their child/children for a specific number of days e.g. 3 out of 5, if they feel their child is not ready for 5 full mornings.
- During the 'settling in' period, starting times in the mornings and number of days attended are very much an individual decision for the parent/child/teacher to make in consultation together, as they seek to make the best choice for each child.
- We offer ongoing, regular, informal discussion with the parent/carer, to enable us to build up a picture of their child and the previous experiences they arrive at nursery school with, and 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 interviews. This is used in planning appropriate activities for the children.
- During the settling in period, activities and experiences provided in the nursery are geared towards helping the children settle into the new environment and routines, 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 and their experiences.

- We hold a 'Settling-in Review' four to six weeks after the child initially starts to discuss with the parent/carer how their child has settled in and how they are making progress, and how they can support their child at home.
- The majority of children have 'settled in' to Noah's Ark by the end of their first half term. If a child still needs support to help them to feel secure, safe and happy in the nursery, we would continue to work closely with the parents/carers to help enable their child to feel confident within the setting.
- A 'Settling In' questionnaire is given to all new parents after six weeks to gather feedback and to ensure we are doing all we can to make the process as smooth and happy as possible.

Our Policy and Procedures for 'Settling-in' are always open and responsive to feedback from parents/carers and staff if it is felt worthwhile and helpful additions and changes can be made to the process. In all we do in settling children into the nursery, we very much see it as a close collaboration between home and school, to enable the very smoothest and happiest transition into Noah's Ark for all concerned – parents, child and staff.

### **Links to Every Child Matters Outcomes**

- Helping Children to be Healthy
- Protecting Children from Harm or Neglect and Helping to keep them safe
- Helping Children Enjoy and Achieve
- Helping Children make a positive contribution to the Provision and the wider community
- Organisation

### **Links to EYFS General Welfare Requirements**

- Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

Annette Miller  
 November 2008  
 Reviewed November 2009  
 Reviewed June 2010  
 Reviewed and Updated January 2011

### **CONCLUSION**

**The Governors and Staff of the School are committed to keeping this policy under regular review and the Governor responsible will ensure that the matters contained herein are regularly discussed and further developed to the benefit of all users.**

**Signed :**

Mr Charlie Colchester  
**Chairman of the Board of Governors**