St Francis' Nursery Unit

Admissions & Settling-In Policy

Introduction

We in St Francis Nursery Unit, recognise that the transition from home to Nursery for most children probably represents the first significant step from total parental care and education, to being cared for and educated in a pre-school setting. As such, in our Nursery classes we aim to build on the child’s experiences of love and care in a warm, secure and happy learning environment. We recognise that each child is unique, with his/her own personality, experiences and needs. We find that each individual child copes with the transition from home to Nursery differently.

As a consequence of this, the children who gain a place in our setting are taken into Nursery in small groups over a settling-in period of approximately three weeks. This gives each child and his/her parent(s) time to settle into Nursery, form a bond with staff, other children and parents and so integrate into the Nursery social community. This time gives staff the opportunity to get to know each child individually and so cater for each child’s settling-in needs. This period also allows the staff and parents time to build the foundations of a partnership and so work together for the benefit of each child. We believe that if parental involvement and staff/parental relationships are not developed at the onset of the educative process, a valuable resource and learning opportunities will have been lost.

The length of time the children stay each day in Nursery will be increased over a period of three weeks. We find this is necessary to help each to settle well into Nursery and so reduce the inevitable separation anxiety that the majority of young children experience when starting any pre-school setting. As each child has unique settling-in needs and anxieties, staff will work with each individual child and parents, to ensure that each child will settle happily. Consequently, if a child is experiencing problems settling into Nursery particularly relating to separation anxiety, the time he/she will stay in Nursery will be shortened to accommodate the child’s needs.

We believe that the needs of the child are paramount during the Settling-In period and this is reflected in our procedures and practice.

Procedures

Intake

Of those children who apply to our Nursery, 78 children are selected by the Board of Governors (plus a possible 6 extra if there are children with Statements of Special Educational Needs) using the criteria set out in the Nursery Admissions Handbook.

January 2019
Parent & Child Information Meeting
Parents and children are invited to a meeting in May/June in the Nursery. This provides parents and children with an opportunity to meet staff and view the setting. A short talk will be given by your child’s class teacher and parents will receive a “Welcome” Booklet which provides important information on our setting, policies and routines, the Nursery Curriculum and general information concerning dinner money, uniform etc.

Class Division
The children will be divided randomly between the three teachers, as far as possible ensuring an even mix of age, gender, Special Needs and Needs such as those attending Speech Therapy in each class.

Starting Order
Children of staff and children with a Statement of Special Needs will be given the earliest Visit and Start Dates. The remaining children will be divided randomly (picking names from a hat) into groups of about 6-8 children and will be allocated a Visit and Start date. However, if a child has a new baby in the family during the Settling-in Period or there is a bereavement in the immediate family, these children may be given earlier start dates, as such occurrences may affect the Personal, Social and Emotional Development of the children and create problems with settling into Nursery.

Each group of children start Nursery on the Tuesday of each week and it is hoped that all children will be admitted to the Nursery by the end of September. The children start on a Tuesday morning as we often find that those children who start Nursery the previous week can often become unsettled over the first weekend and experience a little difficulty settling back into Nursery on the Monday morning. This gives the staff more time to work with each child on resettling them into the setting and leaves the staff free to work with the new children who start on the Tuesday morning.

Visits
In June the children and parents are invited to visit the Nursery for half an hour on their allocated dates. The children will receive their own picture “Welcome Booklet”, with photographs of their teacher, assistant, classroom, routine etc. on this visit.

This time gives the children, parents and staff time to meet, allowing the children to become familiar with their new surroundings and Nursery staff. During their visit the children will be introduced to the staff and will be shown round their Nursery class. They will be shown the different play areas, both indoors and out, the toilet and cloakroom areas. The children will be allocated a symbol, which will be on their coat hanger and postbox. The children will then be encouraged to play with some activities to give staff an opportunity to interact with them, and so gain an insight
into the child’s personality and needs, so that these can be catered for when the child starts Nursery.

This visit also gives the parents and staff time to discuss each child. Parents hold valuable information about their child, such as information on their child’s personality, needs, likes, dislikes, fears and their personal, social and emotional skills and development. Such information is invaluable to staff, who use it to try to make the Settling-In process as easy as possible for each child. Parents will be asked to complete Information Forms on their children during the visit, which will give the staff a baseline from which to start working with each child.

Settling-In Period Timetable

Start Date/ Week One

On their first day at Nursery the children will stay from 9am to 11.15am. The needs of the children are paramount at this time and the strategy used to help the children to settle will be individual to each child. Parents will be encouraged to stay with their child if necessary, but parents of children who appear to be settling happily will be encouraged to leave their child, if both child and parents are comfortable with this. The children will be encouraged to play/work with activities, interact with staff and their peers, have snack and begin to become familiar with rules and routines. The small number of children in each group enables the staff to cater for the needs of each individual child, providing them with support, guidance and encouragement.

Children will stay from 9am to 11:15am for one week. However, if a child is having difficulty settling-in, the teachers will use their professional discretion in extending this timetable for however long is necessary. Times will be shortened or extended depending on the needs of each individual child.

Week Two

The children will stay from 9am to 12.30pm. The children will experience having dinner this week. They will be introduced to the toilet and table setting routines. The children will be encouraged to eat dinner with their peers and staff in a family type setting. They will be encouraged to use their knife and fork, sit appropriately and use simple table manners.

As stated above, these times will vary to suit the individual Settling-in needs of each child. Times will be discussed with parents to ensure that each child receives the happiest possible start to their education in St Francis, and so ensure positive Personal, Social & Emotional Development and consequently learning in all other areas of the Nursery Curriculum.
Week Three
The children will stay for a full day from 9am to 1.30-1.45pm and will experience the full Nursery day.

As stated above, these times may vary to suit the individual Settling-In needs of each child. Times will be discussed with parents to ensure that each child receives the happiest possible start to their education in St Francis, and so ensure positive Personal, Social and Emotional Development and consequently learning in all other areas of the Nursery curriculum.

Staggered Intake 9am-9.10am
We in St Francis’ Nursery Unit, see the need to provide a settling-in period each morning. We operate a staggered Welcome Period each morning from 9-9.05am. This provides an opportunity for staff to greet children and parents individually and enables them to settle each child each morning. Parents at this time are very welcome to speak to staff about their child and any worries and concerns that may have, which they feel may be affecting their child’s ability to settle and flourish in the Nursery.

Staggered Home-time 1.30pm-1.45pm
A staggered home-time operates each afternoon from 1.30pm-1.45pm. This time enables staff to talk to the parents about how their child is settling and progressing and what they have done throughout the day. Both morning and afternoon staggered sessions enable parents to visit our library with their child and chose a book for reading at home if they wish.
Rules & Routines to be taught during Settling in Period

**Greeting Time**

The children will be encouraged to:
- Come into Nursery happily each morning.
- Recognise their symbol on their coat hook
- Take off & hang up coat
- Go to the mat area with their parent/caregiver if required

**Snack Time**

The children will be encouraged to:
- Come to snack area
- Recognise, select & place symbol in container to register for snack
- Collect a cup & plate/bowl/spoon & go to snack table
- Make a decision on what they want to drink & eat. (Toast etc. prepared)
- Pour own drink with help if required & eat & drink appropriately
- When finished wash & dry their cup/bowl/plate etc. & return it to the appropriate area
- Clean up own spillages and clean the table at the end of snack
- Brush the floor

**Toileting & Handwashing**

The Children will be encouraged to:
- Go into a free cubicle
- Close door
- Pull down clothes
- Use the toilet accordingly
- Flush the toilet
- Pull up clothes
- Wash hands
- Dry hands with dryer or towel
- Inform staff of accidents, spillages etc.

Wash hands: -
- After Messy play- sand/paint
- Before Dinner

**Dinner / Lunch Routine**

- The children will be encouraged to:
- Go to the toilet from the mat in small groups before table setting
- Collect cup, knife & fork/lunchbox.
- Go to tables and find symbol on place mats
- Set table appropriately using place mat
• Go back to the mat for group time and to say Grace Before Meals
• Go in small groups to sit on their chair at their symbol, with their hands on their knees when dinner arrives
Dinner is served by the staff from two tables
A dinner helper from each table helps the staff to serve the dinner to the others
All children are expected to use their fork to eat the dinner, to try new things & remain seated during dinner time
After dessert is finished two children collect all rubbish in a bucket
Children then go to afternoon activities
Lunch Children will be encouraged to be as independent as possible at opening lunchboxes, sandwiches & containers. (Adult assistance when required.)

**Home Time**
The Children will be encouraged to:

• Come together on the mat at 1.25pm for songs & rhymes / music activities
• Remain seated on the mat until their name is called to go to their parent/ care giver
• Collect their work from their post box independently & go to their parent/caregiver
• Collect and put on their own coat
• Borrow a book from the library

**Nursery Rules**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mat Rules</th>
<th>Implicit Rules</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eyes Looking</td>
<td>Wipe table after art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ears Listening</td>
<td>Put lids on glue sticks and markers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lips Closed</td>
<td>Push chairs in</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brain Boxes on</td>
<td>Walk inside</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hands Still</td>
<td>Use quiet voices</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Rules</td>
<td>Pick up toys and books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoors Rules</td>
<td>Mop water</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Brush sand</td>
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<td>Apron for water and painting</td>
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<td>Januay 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speak Quietly</td>
<td>Follow arrows</td>
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<td>Share &amp; Take Turns</td>
<td>Line up at the bell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use Kind Hands &amp; Words</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play Safely</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tidy Up</td>
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