



Transition and Settling in Policy

Introduction:

We want our children to feel safe, happy and stimulated at Pentland. We aim to make our school a welcoming place, where children settle quickly and easily, because consideration has been given to their individual needs.

To help with this, we have developed clear plans of how we help children make the transition into the Early Years Foundation Stage Unit. This unit comprises of three areas of provision: Pre-School for 2-3 year olds, Nursery Class for 3-4 years and Reception Class for 4-5 years olds. These plans help to guide the process, but we must all acknowledge that different children will need individualised support for their unique needs and therefore adaptations will be made where necessary.

The main aims of this policy are:

- To support children and their parents/ carers in the move to their new environment
- To work closely and share information with parents/ carers
- To help children feel secure and confident in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- To help children and parents/ carers form strong relationships with staff
- To work with parents/ carers to support children with any concerns that may arise

Before starting at Pentland:

- Before a child starts to attend the EYFS unit, we use a variety of ways to provide the child's parents/carers with information. These include written information (including a range of policies), an invitation to visit the school to meet with staff and engage in a tour of the areas your child will be playing and learning within and access to information on the school website.
- Families of children new to the school will be offered a home visit, wherever possible. This has many benefits. It allows the child to form a relationship with a member of staff in their known environment, it aids the staff to see how the child reacts in a place they feel secure within and gives parents the opportunity to ask questions or share personal information about their child in a confidential arena.
- Parents are provided with an 'All About Me' page, to write down information regarding their child's needs and interests, any dietary or medical needs and any special instructions to comfort the child should they become distressed.
- For those children starting in September in nursery and reception class, new starter induction meetings will be held in the Summer term prior to their admission in September.
- If a child has attended a previous setting, we will ask for transition information from them to help ensure we build on this experience and meet the child's individual needs, without duplication or gaps where possible. Where possible, we would aim to visit the child in their current setting and meet with their key worker in order to build as broad a view of the child as possible.

The Key Person Role:

All the adults within the EYFS unit take care and provide for all children; all members of staff will be happy to help all children and parents. However, in addition to this, each child in Pre-School and Nursery will be allocated a Key Person. This is the member of staff that will act as the key contact for parents and develop the closest and deepest understanding of their key children's needs and stage of development.

Gradual Admission Process:

Children take different amounts of time to settle in school. This can depend on their personality and their previous history, for example those children who have never been left away from their parents may find it more difficult to settle than those who have attended a previous setting. However, this is no guarantee as every child is different and responds uniquely to new situations.

There is a staggered entry to Pre-School and Nursery, over the first weeks of a term, to ensure a smooth transition from home to school. Parents and carers will be contacted with their child's starting date and time.

We know from experience that children find it easier to settle and are more secure in the long-run, if they are provided with support from a parent/carer or known adult for the first few sessions in Pre-School or nursery. For this reason, we ask parents/carers to:

- bring their child for a couple of 'stay and play' sessions at first, whereby they play alongside their child in school and then they leave together.
- be prepared to stay within school alongside their child for the first few sessions that they attend properly and gradually, in discussion with the Key Worker, withdraw from the child. This may mean that once the child is engaged in an activity, the parent/carer leaves the room for a short period of time at first and then returns, building to being able to leave for an hour or so and gradually building up to leaving the child for full sessions. This is worked at an individual child's pace, but we would generally ask parents to be available to commit to this pattern for the first couple of weeks.
- say a simple goodbye simply to their child when they leave and explain when they will be coming back. It helps children if parents remain calm about the separation and give the child positive messages about the time they will have playing and learning in the unit without them.
- return within the given timescale, so that trust can be maintained by the child.

It is worth noting, that children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them when they return.

In Reception Class, children will be offered a half day transition session in July before they start in September. At this point they will be able to meet their new teacher and the other children who will be in their class.

Similar to nursery and pre-school, we aim to settle children into school gradually at the beginning of the September term; however, this is done more independently rather than asking parent/carers to stay alongside them, other than for the first 15 – 30 minutes on the morning of the first couple of

days. Children will gradually build up the time they stay in school over five days; at least one of these will incorporate a school lunch.

Complex Needs:

In all areas of the school, if a child entering has complex needs, we may work alongside parents/carers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to their transition process to allow for their individual needs to be met and for the child to be happy and settled at their own pace.

Baseline Assessment:

During the first few weeks that a child is in school, whether it be in pre-school, nursery or reception, the school staff will begin to make assessments of the child's knowledge, skills and approach to learning and play. This will allow them to fully understand the child's current level of development and help inform future planning for each individual, to ensure that appropriate next steps are in place to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for all children.

Parents are vital to this process, as they already hold a wealth of knowledge about their child. School staff, and in particular the Key Person or class teacher, will want to spend time speaking to parents to gain as much information as possible about their child.

This sharing of knowledge does not stop at this point in time. Throughout the child's time at Pentland school, regular parent meetings and day-to-day conversations between staff and parents will take place to ensure that parents are fully aware of their child's learning and progress in school and that school benefit from knowledge of the child's interests and development at home.

Tips as to How Parents/Carers Can Support the Settling In process:

- Speak positively about school and the staff to help develop relationships and trust.
- Always say 'goodbye' to your child before you leave. Once you have left, do not be tempted to stay and look through the door/window etc. This helps your child learn the routine.
- Talk to your child about the school routine to familiarise them with it.
- Suggest ideas of activities your child might like to try out during the day; talk about the displays and praise any of their own work/pictures on display.
- If your child does not appear to be settling after a couple of weeks, we encourage you to persevere, but to talk to staff about your concerns and develop a plan together of how to best support your child.

School will do everything possible to support both child and parent. Here are just a few ways:

- Children often calm down once their parents/carers have left. Staff are happy to call parents/carers to let them know how their child is coping.
- Children can be guided and supported to join in an activity it is known they particularly enjoy.
- Distraction techniques can be used, such as looking at scene outdoors, reading a story etc.

- If a child speaks a heritage language that a member of staff in school can also speak, they will be conversed with in their home language in order to offer security of the familiar.

Staff are available to talk at any stage of the process. There is time for brief informal talk at the beginning and end of each session and appointments for more in depth conversations can always be made by contacting the school office.

Moving Between Year Groups in School:

Staff plan carefully and in depth to help children make secure transitions between classes when they move to a new year group. We aim to have plans in place as early as is possible, once budgets are known for the coming year and staffing is secured.

Once clear staffing plans are in place, allocation of classes will be discussed. Where possible classes will transfer from year one group to the next as a complete cohort. However, there are times when this will change, for example where budgets force the reduction of classes or from teacher's knowledge and observation, it is deemed appropriate to mix classes to allow for more productive or specialised support to be offered.

Children will be helped to become familiar with their new teacher and classroom in the Summer Term 2 by:

- Story swap sessions, with their new teacher
- Their new teacher visiting them in their current classroom
- A transition morning, where they spend a few hours in their new classroom with their new teacher

There are also carefully planned opportunities for staff within school to share information in order to smooth the transition process and allow children's learning, social and emotional needs to be immediately met as soon as they begin their new classes in September. Assessments and children's work books or learning journeys will be passed onto new teachers, as will any medical information.

Moving schools at the end of Year Two:

We have good links with local junior and primary schools. Once we have received confirmation as to where children will be moving to, plans will be put into place to share information with the receiving school. There are also some opportunities, particularly with the local junior school that the majority of our children move to, for children to visit and take part in a range of learning opportunities to help them become familiar with the environment and the staff there.

In early July, we take part in the local authority's agreed Transition Day and children from Year 2 will be invited to spend the morning in their new school and stay for lunch there.

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