

St Clare's Nursery Unit

'Settling In'
Policy

Policy for 'Settling In'

Starting school can be a stressful and uncertain time, for both children and parents. It is essential that parents and teachers work in partnership, so that the Nursery experience is a happy and rewarding one. We in St. Clare's believe that each child must feel secure before any learning can take place. Our focused and dedicated staff, ensure that a caring environment will be created, so that each child is made to feel special. All children have the right to expect enjoyment at school.

Baroness Faithful has said,

"We must put ourselves in the minds of children and see how they feel". She also stresses that Nursery staff have in their hands the "key to a child's happiness."

Bearing this in mind, we aim to make the 'settling in' period as stress free as possible for everyone concerned. It is a very important time in the Nursery for each child. We recognize that all children are unique and develop at different rates.

Parent Induction Meeting:

We endeavor to make Parents feel welcomed and valued from the outset. The whole 'settling in' process begins even before the child comes to school. Parents are invited to an 'Induction Meeting' which is held in June. At this meeting Mrs Corrigan, Teacher in Charge, outlines St. Clare's vision and its main aims. She invites each parent to share in our commitment to the values and ideals that underpin the ethos of our school. She explains the 'settling in' process and highlights the importance of children sharing their 'starting date/first day' experiences with their parents. Therefore, we ask all parents to come to Nursery and stay with their child on both their 'Enrolment Day' and 'Starting Day'.

Mrs Corrigan uses this opportunity to outline the nursery curriculum. She explains the importance of play and how it is the principal means of learning for young children. She explains that each child will experience the curriculum through a progression of broadly based play activities. Relevant materials and equipment are set out and grouped appropriately to encourage, *dramatic, imaginative, constructive, creative and functional* play. This

curriculum is both challenging and carefully structured and seeks to promote the child's spiritual, social, emotional, physical and intellectual development. Children are encouraged to experience success and not failure in all that they do.

During the '*induction meeting*', every parent receives a copy of St. Clare's 'Parent Information Booklet' and 'St Clare's Nursery Unit Child Protection Policy'.

Prices of uniforms, school meals/snack, trips, and school holidays are all included. She explains and outlines other important information such as the value of healthy eating and the staff's belief in the integral role that 'Health and Nutrition' play in child development. Mrs Corrigan outlines the Nursery's Policies and procedures, methods of assessment/record keeping, information on Health and Safety, Child Protection and the involvement of outside agencies within the Nursery setting. She also gives the Parents a flavour of some of the activities that children will participate in. She suggests ways in which Parents can become involved. There may also be some representatives from outside agencies involved with the nursery attending this meeting. For example

- Schools designated Health Visitor
- C.I.D.S Team representative
- Behaviour support representative from the E.A.
- Speech & Language Therapist.

Mrs Corrigan advises parents on how they can best help prepare their child before they start Nursery. She reminds the Parents their child will already have had many learning experiences and gained certain skills at home. Within this area, the importance of being **fully toilet trained cannot be over-emphasized**. She encourages Parents to allow children to do a variety of things for themselves over the Summer. eg. Wash/dry own hands, use a handkerchief, tidy away their toys... She reminds Parents that all of these 'self - help' skills will lead their child to greater independence in the Nursery.

Each staff member endeavors to be approachable at all times so that parents feel free to voice any particular concerns or problems which might be affecting their child at this time. It is explained that since each child is

an individual, he/she **MUST** be allowed to settle at his/her own pace; while all the children will progress through the same stages, they will not all do so at the same rate. Parents are advised that time spent at the 'settling in stage' is vitally important for it can effect the child's attitude to school for ever.

Enrolment/Settling-In:

Parents will be informed of their child's 'Starting Date' prior to 'Enrolment' in September.

The 'Enrolment Date' for your child will last for approximately one hour. This is an opportunity for you and your child to visit the Nursery again after the long summer break and become familiar with his/her new classroom, class teacher, classroom assistant...

All 'Starting Dates' will be in September. This gives the staff and children an opportunity to become familiar with each other and begin to develop positive relationships. It also helps the children to feel secure in a small group context and allows the staff to identify needs and employ strategies in settling each child before the next group joins. This date also provides an ideal time for parents to complete all necessary paperwork/consent forms:

- ✚ Skills Checklist for Starting Nursery
- ✚ Pupil Information Form
- ✚ Parental Responsibility Form
- ✚ Collection Information Form
- ✚ Parental Vetting Form (Parent Volunteers)
- ✚ Medical Information
- ✚ Parental Agreement Form
- ✚ Photographs/Video Consent Form
- ✚ Dental Health Consent Form

The children arrive in the morning into their own classrooms for 'meet/greet' with designated teacher. On this day children and parents stay for one hour. After this day each child will know when their start date is and have a settling in time table. This time table is subject to change depending on how each child is settling.

(Only children who are happy and well-settled will stay for dinners initially.)

PLEASE NOTE:

It has been our experience that some children are simply not ready for a full day in nursery. If your child experiences difficulties and requires much support, then they will only stay in nursery for one hour initially until the following happens

- **Parents meet with teacher for developmental history of child**
- **Risk assessments are carried out**
- **Strategies are discussed about how to move forward**

The school environment may prove to be very difficult for some children and it is better that they are happy and engaged in productive play for a very short time than spend a whole day where no progression is taking place.

Settling In 'Under Age' / unsettled Children:

These younger children will initially stay for one hour and the time will gradually be increased as the child becomes more able to cope with a longer Nursery day. They will continue to start later in the morning as we have found that this leads to smoother integration with the whole class. We will include lunch as soon as possible as a means of further exploring Personal/Social/Emotional Development. The starting time will gradually become earlier until all children begin school at 9.00am.

Parents are asked at their Induction Day to ensure that they will be free during September to give their child support. We request that parents speak to the class teacher if they feel their child will have difficulties separating from them. If this is the case your child will only stay for a very short period of time initially.

