



Saint Michael Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Settling into Nursery

Mission Statement:

Excellence • Enrichment • Enjoyment

Date policy accepted by the Governing Body: February 2016

Updated: July 2024

Date for review: July 2026

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 St. Michael we seek to ensure a smooth transition by working in close partnership with home and Nursery, 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 and address this through our home visits which take place before each child begins Nursery at St. Michaels.

At St. Michael 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 the Class Teacher, and their individual key person once they have started St. Michael Nursery
- ✓ The Class Teacher and TAs, are responsible for helping the children to become familiar with the Nursery and to feel safe and confident within it.
- ✓ Each Key Person is supported to develop a genuine bond with each child under their care along with each child's parents/carers too.
- ✓ The Class Teacher and TAs respond sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of each of the children in the class and endeavour to meet each child's particular needs and those of their parents/carers.

- ✓ Information is provided to the parents to familiarize them with daily routines and an overview of the termly and yearly events through regular newsletters from the Class Teacher.
- ✓ Parents are asked to complete forms before their child starts at the Nursery in order to give us additional information about each child such as food allergies, medical needs, siblings within the school, first language etc. Such topics are also addressed during the home visits too.
- ✓ When the children first start at St. Michael Nursery, for the first week or two they have the option of flexible and staggered entry times supported by their parent or carer remaining in the setting to help them settle happily. This is to help each child in the period of transition as the Class Teacher and TAs can spend more time with each child and parent. There is no expectancy of a parent or carer to leave a distressed child.
- ✓ We encourage the parents to leave the child after a short period of time, with the understanding that if the child is continuously upset for the full duration of the separation after a parent or carer has departed and the child is failing to be soothed by their Key Person we will contact them and ask them to return to the Nursery.
- ✓ 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 with, and how each day is progressing and how their child is settling in.
- ✓ A home visit is carried out for each child before they begin at St. Michael Nursery.
- ✓ Each child is invited to attend a settling in stay and play session with their parent or carer too before they begin Nursery. This session allows the child to explore the Nursery with the support of their parent or carer and to meet the Class Teacher and TAs again.
- ✓ Parents are given opportunities to share what they know about their child's abilities and development to date at the home visits and also through annotating a copy of the EYFS regarding their child's developmental achievements to contribute towards a baseline assessment. This information will inform Key Person's future planning and provision for each child.
- ✓ 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 will hold a 'Settling-in Review' four to six weeks after the child initially starts in the form of a parents evening to assess how they are progressing and how their child has settled at St. Michael Nursery.

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 St. Michael Nursery for all concerned – parents, child and staff.