SETTLING IN POLICY

Setting: Vishenka Nursery

Date reviewed: 13 October 2026

Date to be reviewed: 13 October 2028

Going to nursery can be a big step for both the child and their parent/carer; we therefore wish to support the family by offering a settling in period.

Legal and statutory basis

This policy supports our compliance with the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, in particular the requirement that each child is assigned a key person who helps to ensure that every child's care is tailored to their individual needs, and that children are helped to become familiar with the setting, its staff and its routines.

Where a child attends for funded early education hours, the settling in period is planned and recorded as part of the child's early education, and is shared with parents and carers in writing.

1. Initial Visits with Parents

Begin with short visits where the child attends the nursery with their parents. These visits allow the child to explore the environment while feeling secure with their parent nearby.
Use this time to build trust and familiarity between the child, parents, and key staff members.
Before the first visit, we tell the parent or carer the name of their child's key person, so that they know who will be caring for their child from the very first day.

2. Gradual Separation

On subsequent visits, encourage the parent to step away for short periods, staying nearby or in a designated area. Gradually increase the separation time as the child becomes more comfortable.

Reassure the child that their parent will return and provide a consistent goodbye routine to create predictability.

3. Flexible Schedule Based on the Child's Needs

Start with half-day sessions or shorter periods if the child shows signs of distress or strong attachment to their parents.
Gradually extend the time spent in the nursery as the child adapts to the environment and routine.

4. Assign a Key Person

Ensure the child has a dedicated key person who builds a strong, trusting relationship with them. The key person should offer comfort, engage the child in activities, and provide emotional support during transitions.
The key person is named to the parent or carer before the first visit and is the main point of contact for updates and feedback throughout the settling in period.

5. Parent Communication and Feedback

Maintain open communication with the parents throughout the settling process. Share updates on how the child is doing and ask for feedback about their behaviour at home.
Encourage parents to share comforting items $e\.g\., a favourite toy or blanket$ that can help the child feel secure.

6. Monitor and Adjust

Observe the child's behaviour and emotional well-being during their time in the nursery. Adjust the settling plan if the child shows signs of anxiety or struggles with the routine.
Be flexible and patient, recognising that every child adapts at their own pace.

7. Celebrate Progress

Acknowledge small milestones, such as the child staying without their parent for a longer time or engaging in group activities. Share these achievements with the parents to build confidence in the process.

How long settling in takes

Settling in typically takes one to two weeks, depending on the child. Some children are comfortable within a few days; others need longer, and we will

take as long as the individual child needs. We agree the pattern of visits with the parent or carer in advance and review it together as we go.

Our managers recommend

When your child begins at the nursery, please tell us any routines and habits your child has, from waking up early to going to bed. This will help us familiarise ourselves with your child better from the start and help make the drop off easier for both the parent/carer and the child.
Vishenka Nursery operates under an open-door policy, which means that as a parent or carer, if you have any queries, please always ask! This will allow you to be confident of the care we will provide for your child.

Useful links

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers
NHS: Best Start in Life