

## **Transition Policy**

We recognise that starting school can be a worrying time for children and their parents, and the more that can be done to ease this transition, the more positive an experience it will be for all involved.

Starting school can be unsettling, causing uncertainty and, for some children, confusion and distress. This can affect their self-esteem and so it is essential that changes are as positive and stress-free as possible for all children and their parents. Children who have good communication skills and are active learners are likely to settle more quickly into the new learning environment.

The main change for children is physical - a change of environment, including, for some children, a change to full day provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum will be broadly the same in both settings.

### ***Preschool Preparation***

We believe that children settle more quickly at school if they have acquired basic self-help skills and experience of working co-operatively with others. Much of this will be covered in Preschool through Personal, Social and Emotional Development. Basic self-help skills will include toileting including handwashing, dressing (such as changing shoes and putting on coats) and blowing their own nose. For some children these will need to be targets on an IEP in the terms leading up to starting school, along with social skills such as turn-taking and sharing.

To help children become more familiar with the school environment we will provide as much information as we feel that children need, through stories, discussion and first-hand experiences by arrangement with the local schools. During discussions we highlight the similarities with our own routine, checking with the schools first that these routines remain unchanged. Providing children with the correct information will help them to feel more secure in their new environment.

We invite the class teachers to visit us at any time during the year, but especially during the summer term. This gives them the opportunity to see children in a sociable environment and gives us the opportunity to share information on children's needs and interests, favourite activities etc. This also provides children with an opportunity to build some familiarity with their new teacher and possibly classroom assistant. We also visit the nursery setting as a group in the summer term to allow children an opportunity to become familiar with their new surroundings.

### ***Working with Parents***

It is understandable for all parents, particularly for those of children with SEN to feel anxious at this time, but we endeavour to support them with reassurance and advice. We encourage parents to ask questions and find out information so that they, and their child, are well prepared. We encourage parents to take up the offer of a home visit by school staff, as this is a time when they can share information and when staff can learn more about the child, their interests, favourite toys as well as their difficulties and fears.

### ***Liaison between settings***

Every child is individual and our approach and settling-in process reflects this. All children benefit from visits to their future school as they help to reassure. They help children to become familiar with the setting and learn important details such as what their new classroom looks like and where the toilets are.

For children with social, emotional or communication difficulties, or those with learning difficulties, it is better to arrange a number of short, well spaced visits rather than one or two longer sessions. Introducing them gradually will build their confidence and after a while it may be possible to take a step back to help them understand that when they come to school, these are the people they will be with.

For children with SEN this will be enhanced by the use of a book of photographs showing the classroom, playground, toilets, cloakroom, as well as the teacher and any other adults who will be involved in their care and education. Where appropriate extra visits to their new school environment and meetings with their new teachers and other adults involved in their education and care will be organised. This approach will ensure that children are more mentally prepared to handle new unfamiliar situations that may cause distress. We find that children who struggle with their cognitive processes will benefit greatly to this approach.

### ***Sharing information***

Sharing information about a child's special needs will start well before the child is at school. Where practicable, the early years teacher and support assistant will be invited to attend the child's final Pre-school IEP review. This ensures that school staff know what to expect and we can share our knowledge of managing the child. This information will include details of strategies that work as well as details of times and triggers of difficult behaviour which will help staff to plan more effectively for the child. Information on partnerships with other professionals or support services involved with the child will be useful, especially if relevant names and contact numbers are provided, as well as a copy of the child's final IEP at the Pre-school stage.

All records held by the Pre-school about individual children are offered to the early years teachers when we have completed the end-of-year assessments.

We believe that strong partnerships between all involved will aid a smooth transition as will a flexible approach to introducing and settling each child, dependent on their individual needs.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).**