



Vita et Pax Preparatory School
Established 1936

Settling-In Policy (Nursery)

Policy Originator	Nursery Manager
Approved by	Governing Body
Governor Responsible	Chair
Date Approved	29 July 2026
Status	Non-statutory (supports EYFS key person requirement, para 3.42)
Review Period	Annually (next: July 2027)

This policy applies to Little Vitas Nursery and to all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision at Vita et Pax Preparatory School. It applies to all staff, students and volunteers. It is available on the nursery website and in hard copy from the school office, and is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

1. Our Approach

Starting nursery is a significant moment for a child and for their family. Some children walk in and never look back; others need several weeks. Both are normal. We settle children at the child's pace, not to a timetable, and we do not regard a child who takes longer as a child who is doing it wrong.

A child who feels secure is a child who can learn. Everything in this policy exists to build that security first.

2. The Key Person

As required by the EYFS statutory framework, every child is assigned a key person before they start. Parents are told who this is, and why it matters.

- The key person helps the child become familiar with the nursery and feel confident and safe within it.
- They build a genuine relationship with the child's parents and carers, and are the family's first point of contact for day-to-day matters.
- They tailor the child's learning and care to their individual needs, observe their development, and keep their learning records.
- They work with parents to ensure that, where relevant, a child's needs are met in partnership with any other professional involved, and help families engage with more specialist support where that would help.
- A named second practitioner also knows the child well, so there is continuity when the key person is absent. Where a key person leaves or a child changes room, a careful handover takes place and parents are informed.

3. Before Your Child Starts

- A visit. We warmly encourage families to visit before applying, so children can see the rooms and meet the team.
- An 'all about me' conversation. Before the start date, the key person talks with parents about the child's routines, comfort objects, likes and dislikes, how they show they are tired or upset, what soothes them, their language(s) at home, dietary needs, medical needs, toileting and any additional needs.
- Two free settling-in sessions. These are offered to every child before they officially start, and are not charged for. Typically the first is a shorter session with a parent or carer staying, and the second is a little longer without them. The pattern can be adjusted for any child who needs something different.
- Practical information. Parents receive our welcome information, including session times, what to bring, food arrangements and how we will keep in touch.

4. The First Days and Weeks

- Where possible we stagger new starters so that each child has the attention they need.
- The key person greets the child at the door and stays close during the first sessions.
- We encourage a short, warm and clear goodbye. Slipping away without saying goodbye is unsettling and undermines a child's trust, so we ask parents always to say goodbye and to tell the child when they will return, using a marker the child understands, such as 'after lunch'.
- Comfort objects — a dummy, a blanket, a favourite toy — are welcome for as long as a child needs them.
- Parents are welcome to telephone at any time to check how their child is. Many children stop crying within a few minutes of a parent leaving, and we would much rather ring you or take your call than have you worry.
- If a child is genuinely distressed and cannot be comforted, we will contact the parents and agree together what to do. We will never leave a child to cry it out.
- We keep in touch daily during settling, sharing how the child has eaten, slept, played and felt.
- Rest and sleep. Children settling in often need to rest, and some sleep who have grown out of it at home. We ask about your child's usual sleep routine as part of the 'all about me' conversation and follow it as closely as we can. Children are placed down to sleep safely, are frequently checked

while they are asleep, and are always within the sight and hearing of a member of staff.

5. Children Who Need Longer

Where a child is finding settling difficult, the key person and the Nursery Manager meet the parents to agree a plan. This may include shorter sessions built up gradually, a consistent arrival routine, additional visits, or a change of key person where a child has formed a stronger bond elsewhere. We review the plan with parents regularly. Settling is a partnership; no family is left to work it out alone.

Any member of staff, including students and volunteers, who is concerned that a child's distress is not being responded to properly, or who has any other concern about poor or unsafe practice, must raise it with the Nursery Manager or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Where they feel unable to do so, or feel their concern is not being addressed, they should use the school's Whistleblowing Policy. Concerns raised in good faith are taken seriously by the senior leadership team, and no one is disadvantaged for raising one.

6. Children with Additional Needs, and Children Learning English

- Where a child has special educational needs or a disability, the SENDCo is involved from the outset, and settling arrangements are planned with parents and any external professionals already supporting the family.
- Where a child is learning English as an additional language, we ask parents for key words and phrases in the child's home language — for toilet, drink, hungry, tired, comfort — and use them with the child. We value and encourage continued use of the home language, which supports rather than hinders learning English.
- Where a child is looked after, or is joining us in the middle of a difficult period for the family, settling arrangements are planned with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

7. Moving On

The same care applies to transitions within and beyond the nursery. Children moving to a new room visit it with their key person beforehand. Children moving to Reception — at our parent school or elsewhere — take part in transition visits, and we share their learning records with the receiving setting with parental consent.

8. Sharing Progress with Parents

- Parents receive daily informal feedback from the key person.
- The key person completes the statutory progress check at age two for eligible children, and provides parents with a short written summary of the child's development in the three prime areas of learning.
- Parents are offered a meeting with their child's key person at least once each term to discuss progress, and receive a written summary of their child's learning and development at least annually.
- Parents may ask to see their child's learning records at any time. Parents and carers are given access to all the records we hold about their child, unless an exemption under the Data Protection Act 2018 applies.
- Records about a child are kept confidential and secure, and are accessible only to those who have a right or a professional need to see them.

Related Policies and Documents

- EYFS Statement
- Inclusion and SEND Policy
- Attendance Policy (Nursery)
- Uncollected Child and Missing Child Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice
- Whistleblowing Policy

Key Contacts

- Nursery Manager: Mrs K. Newton
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Mr D. May, Headmaster
- School Office: 020 8449 8336

Approved by: Governing Body of Vita et Pax Preparatory School

Date: 29 July 2026