

School Transitions

Starting school is a big step for both your child and family. Creating a smooth transition into school is vital to ensuring your child gets the best possible start in their new setting.

We are very proud of our school transitions and work in partnership with you and the different schools, to fully prepare your child for their new challenge ahead, strong partnerships are key to a smooth transition.

We place great emphasis on preparing your children for school and use a range of very effective ways to help children cope successfully with the transition.

Our Assistant Manager Kim Foxall is also our transition lead and is a first contact for any questions relating to school transitions.

But what do we do to support transitions? We do a lot.....

Routines

We have a well embedded routine within nursery which closely mirrors a school day with self-registration, together time, focussed activities and rolling snacks which all help your child to feel comfortable, confident and know what will happen next.

Together Time

Your child will take part in together times with children who are also ready to take that next step in their education. Together time allows us to support children to engage and listen to each other whilst developing positive relationships.

Together time encourages respect, turn taking and working together – we use these together times to work on key skills children will need for school such as thinking, listening, looking, speaking and concentrating. Together times in nursery are carried out twice a day for around 20-30 minutes depending on children's age and ability to concentrate – they have a specific structure with the older children's being the "hello song" and talking about how we feel followed by the daily calendar then a focus on phonics, letter/number recognition, pencil control, cutting skills, co-operative games as well as talking and listening activities and it ends with our superstars and lunchtime songs.

The benefits of our together time on the school transition are that children go on to school with:

- Improved problem-solving skills.
- Improved speaking and listening skills.
- A sense of community.
- Increased self-esteem.
- Improved emotional intelligence.

- A sense of responsibility.
- Improved relationships between children and key adults.

We have close relationships with feeder schools

We have close relationships with all feeder schools and understand each individual school's transition procedure, we feel that the investment of time in making these links is invaluable in supporting your child's transition to school. We feel it is important to have good links with schools throughout the year, not just at times of transitions and we regularly check how our school leavers have settled into school life. Something we find very useful is hand delivering transition paperwork.

We read stories about starting school

Reading stories about going to a new school provides a great basis to start talking about moving to somewhere new and the associated feelings that may occur. One of our favourites to read with your children is 'I am too absolutely small for school' and it was actually introduced to us by Miss Ball at Sherburn Hungate Primary School when she visited the children and read a story.

We always focus on change as a positive

As a setting we always focus on the change as a good thing and talk about the exciting things that will happen at school – making new friends, a new exciting classroom, we talk about who will be going to school with your child, where they will each lunch and all the new activities, they will be able to do.

We focus on and develop children's independence

We focus on small tasks that will make a big difference to your child starting reception class: being able to put on their own shoes; to get dressed/undressed without help – ready for those PE lessons; to independently go to the toilet and wash their hands; to open wrappers and peel fruit in their lunchboxes and crucially having the confidence to ask an adult for help when needed.

We encourage all children to 'have a go' and provide challenging activities. We also have a big focus on recognising and writing our names.

Role play school

We create a school in our role play area this allows your child to explore school life in a creative and imaginative way – Our home corner is transformed into a reception class with school book bags, uniforms to dress up in, transition photo books and school logos on the walls. This allows children to partake in activities associated with school such as daily registration, assemblies and wearing a school uniform. This exposes your child to some of the elements of their first day at school.

Photo transition books

We ask individual schools for photos of key adults and key areas of provision to create transition photo books to be used in nursery and help your child to become familiar with their new learning environments – these can also be taken home to share and talk about with parents and carers. We also talk about resources we have in nursery that are similar to school such as the wooden blocks, sand and numicon.

Help children to maintain their attention and focus

You may have heard about Geoff the giraffe – we use Geoff at together time.

Geoff has a “good listening” symbol on his ears, a “good sitting” symbol on his tummy and a “good looking” symbol beside his eyes to help your child to maintain attention and focus. If Geoff can do it so can you.

Teacher Visits

We contact all the schools that children will be attending and invite the teacher into our setting to meet your child/ren. This helps your child to feel more settled when they start school as there will be a familiar face. Teachers are given sufficient time to spend with your child and key person to discuss and share information about the transition.

Transfer of information

We complete a detailed summative report for children leaving us to go to school which includes comments from parents – this is hand delivered to your child’s school ahead of them starting along with a copy of their assessments which gives your child’s new teacher a starting point for planning in the first few weeks along with any additional information that we feel will help the transition such as particular interests, worries or achievements. We always contact schools following the transfer of information to request feedback on the transition paperwork.

We support parents and carers

Some parents need a lot of support during the transitional time and that is fine – if you’re feeling anxious come and speak to us. For some of you this transitional period will be all new. We will inform you about what you might expect in the months before starting school and how you can help your child through the transition. We will also discuss starting school in our summer term parent consultations and how you can help the transition. We want you to feel as comfortable as possible about your child starting school as children can pick up on parent’s anxieties. As a parent you can support children to become independent in dressing and toileting at home.

The final step

As your child’s last day approaches, we prepare your child for the separation from us and the close relationships we have formed with them. We mark their last day with a special celebration – a teddy bears picnic, we feel this is meaningful and celebrates your child’s time with

us in an informal relaxed way. As part of our Kirkgate Childcare family we would always be happy to see you and your child for a visit.