

# Tullygally Nursery Unit



## Settling In Policy

**May 2020**

For the majority of children in our care, starting Tullygally Nursery Unit will be the first time they have left the care of their Parent / Guardian to attend a pre-school setting. As a nurturing school, we recognize the importance of transitions in children's lives. Our aim is to make sure the vital period of settling in is carefully organised to ensure the transition process is a happy and stress-free one for parents / guardians, children and staff.

### Vision

We want all pupils to be happy and secure in our nursery. Firm foundations will allow learning potential to be realised during the nursery year.

### Mission statement

We believe that in order for every child to realise their full potential during the Nursery year it is vital that they are given the time necessary to settle into school life at their **own** pace. We are sensitive to the fact that not all children have the same needs and readiness for the Nursery experience. When supporting children through the settling in process we respect each child as an individual.

In order to achieve this we aim to:

- Encourage the child and their family to view the Nursery as a caring, secure and stimulating place.
- Encourage the development of trusting and positive relationships between the child, their Parents/Guardians and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents/ guardians to settle their child into the Nursery environment.
- Ensure that every child feels safe and secure in the Nursery when their parent/guardian leaves the classroom.
- Build up each child's confidence in the Nursery routine.

**When good foundations are laid, the child is free to develop and grow unhindered in all aspects of their development. It is important to remember that not all children are at the same stage of readiness for the Nursery experience**

### **Procedures**

#### **How classes are decided**

The children are usually divided between the two classes on the basis of their birthdate. We also take into consideration the balance of girls / boys, needs of individual children and the overall class dynamic.

#### **The Settling in Process**

We operate a staggered intake over a period of four weeks, with children's time extended as they show they are confident and ready to progress. Starting groups are kept small, allowing staff, children and parents / guardians to develop strong relationships and communication. There are many routines in the nursery which each child will learn to follow, e.g. the morning registration routine, snack routine etc. Through building up the length of time they stay gradually and according to their needs, children will be able to cope with and follow them. Each child is treated as an individual, and parents / guardians are kept informed of each stage of the settling in process. At anytime, a parent / guardian may approach the nursery staff to arrange an appointment to discuss any concerns, worries they may have. parents/ guardians will be informed of their child's starting date in June.

### **Procedure for Deciding Starting Dates**

The children will be given a starting date based on the following criteria and based on the judgement of the Staff:

- Children who have a statement for Special Educational Needs
- Children who are retainers, i.e. who have attended Tullygally Nursery Unit the previous year
- Children who have previous Nursery / Pre-School experience, e.g. Playgroup, Sure Start
- Children who have brothers / sisters in the main primary school
- Oldest to youngest.

Reminder to parents- any child who is not toilet trained and does not have a Statement of Educational Needs will have their starting date deferred until such a time as they are independent at the toilet. This is particularly important due to the current COVID-19 situation.

### **Possible Timetable for new intake August / September 2020 (Dependent on government advice on social distancing**

Nursery 1		
Date- Week Beginning	Morning Session- Number of Children	Afternoon Session- Number of Children
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> September	9 (returning children)	6(new group)
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September	15	5 (new group)
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	20	6 (new group)
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	26	

Nursery 2		
Date- Week Beginning	Morning Session- Number of Children	Afternoon Session- Number of Children
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> September	7 (new group)	5 (new group)
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> September	12	5 (new group)
Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> September	17	5 (new group)
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> September	22	4 (new group)
Tuesday 29 <sup>th</sup> September	26	

Children will initially stay for 1 hour on the first day with/without a parent or guardian. If they settle and are able to cope, their time will be extended at the discretion of the teacher. Children who have completed a full year in nursery and are returning to the nursery for a second year will stay until 11.30a.m The second group will join the morning group after 1 week. Each group of children start Nursery on the Tuesday of each week. Mondays are often very busy in the nursery, with snack money being paid. Also sometimes children can be a little unsettled after the weekend break, and need extra support from staff, thus starting new groups on a Tuesday means staff have adequate time to give them the attention they need.

The class teacher will then discuss each child's progress with the parent/ guardian and their time will be extended accordingly. It is important that we allow time for children to settle and staff to build up secure relationships with them. All children settle at their own pace, and we would encourage any parent / guardian to speak to the teacher if they have any concerns. The class teacher will keep parents / guardians informed of their child's progress.

## June

- Staff will initially meet with parents / guardians in June (possibly via Zoom). All parents / guardians will be emailed an information booklet which includes the types of activities provided for the children and the daily routines, as well as any relevant policies such as Child Protection, Intimate Care etc.
- Parents / guardians will be asked to provide any information which they feel will have an impact on their child's starting date- e.g. birth of a new child, previous nursery experiences, holidays etc. Where possible staff will work with the parent / guardian to accommodate any reasonable preferences.
- Parent / guardian will be asked to come to an open afternoon with their child at a later date in August (Government advice pending) to familiarise them with both the setting and the staff. Children will have the opportunity to play in the Nursery environment with their parent / guardian and some of the other children who will be in their class. This is also an additional opportunity for staff to get to know each child and their interests.
- The parent / guardian will be asked to complete a detailed assessment of their child's development which is relevant to school life before they start Nursery. We value open communication between Parents/Guardians and teacher for the benefit of the child. All information shared will be treated in the strictest confidence unless of a child protection nature, in which case the Child Protection Policy will be adhered to and the relevant procedures adhered to.

## August / September

- On their start date, both parent / guardian and child will be welcomed into the Nursery and the child will be shown their symbol and their coat peg and shown the relevant registration routine.
- Parents / guardians and their children will be made aware of the toileting area.
- Parents / guardians may stay with their child until he/she is confident without them. Parents / guardians may use the Parent room in the Nursery to wait for their child whilst encouraging short periods of separation.
- It is important to enable the child to build up a positive relationship with adults and peers as early as possible.
- When children start Nursery they will stay initially for 1 hour on the first day. This will be child led, so Parents should be prepared to stay for this hour if the child feels anxious about the Parent / Guardian leaving. The rest of the week the child will stay for 2hours if they have settled.
- As children become more confident and are able to follow Nursery rules and routines, their time will gradually be extended until they are staying in the Nursery for the full day which is 8.50am to 1.30pm
- Children's time will be extended as soon as possible, depending on the needs of the child.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the nursery and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want Parents / guardians to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners in the nursery.

We aim to make Tullygally Nursery a welcome place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Parents will be informed of start and finish times individually. This may be impacted by the current COVID-19 situation and the need to stagger drop off and pick up times to ensure social distancing. This will also be impacted by the drop off and pick up times of the main school.

During October we will meet / arrange a phone conversation with Parents/Guardians and discuss how each child has settled.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious or unhappy. If children are experiencing difficulties during or after the settling-in period their time may need to be reduced in order for strategies to be put in place and worked through, therefore enabling them to cope and make progress.

N. Redpath May 2020

To be reviewed and amended by Nursery staff , Principal and Vice Principal.