



## Transition Policy

At Ballybrack Killiney Montessori we organise transitions around the needs of the individual child. We understand that we have a statutory duty to ensure continuity for children during periods of transition. We believe that smooth transitions support the personal, social and emotional development, learning and future success of every child.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting. We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

- We allocate a key person before the child starts. The key person is responsible for settling the child into our setting. We allocate a key person to each child before he/she starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child at the child's first sessions and during the settling-in process. If the child displays a stronger attachment to another member of staff then we will transfer him/her to a new key person. All staff offers unconditional regard for the child and are non-judgemental.
- We value the parent as the first educator of their child. We invite parents to supply photographs of their child and family to display in the setting on family trees, these also feed into individual 'learning journeys'. These help the child to keep home in mind and show families that we value them in our setting. Parents are welcome to come and visit our setting at any time.
- We have a clear welcome procedure. We use a pre-start visit to tour the preschool and the open day at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records. We collect essential information through a registration form as well as information from the parents about the child's needs, likes, dislikes, routines and development, in the form of a 'Getting to know me' form. It assists the key person in understanding the emotional needs of the child and enables them to match the home routine of the child within our setting, wherever possible.

- We create an environment in our setting that reflects the needs and interests of the child. We use boards to display information about what happens in the setting in and we use photographs of children at play to effectively engage with parents on displays. We also have a series of learning journal books documenting special occasions, trips, visits, celebrations and everyday life at available for families to look through in library areas. We allocate all children with a coat peg identified by their name alongside a photograph.
- We support children who have identified additional needs as they enter our setting. We collect information at point of entry about any other professional who are involved with the child and family and seek parental permission to work with other professionals before entry to ensure the setting is ready to meet the child's physical, emotional, social and learning needs. We carry out a settling in observation on the child in the first two weeks. This allows time for the child to settle and for the staff member to get to know them. These checks will be shared with parents and with parental permission they will be asked to share the information with their public health nurse this will support the 3yr check that they carry out and give an all-round picture of the child.

### **Transitions between settings, rooms and keyworkers:**

While we regularly visit other rooms with various children during the course of the year for Wednesday song time, a visit, job etc. we start the transition period between rooms formally in May each year.

- Children visit the other classrooms in groups of 11 or smaller on a weekly or bi-weekly basis with their teacher. They have an opportunity to explore, meet the other teachers and play. We have found this eases the transition in September should the child be moving classroom.
- Learning journals move with children between key workers and/or rooms. Learning journals are easily available for children and parents to look through or borrow and are displayed prominently underneath the coats area. Parents are positively encouraged to add information to the Learning journal when it is sent home at half terms, which keyworkers subsequently respond to within the setting.
- Transition forms are completed by the keyworker and passed on to the new keyworker. Parents are introduced to the new keyworker and given a guided tour of their child's new room and given an opportunity to chat and discuss any anxieties they may have. Transition books are given to new parents to look through before their child transitions, these show the room and some of the activities that will be available to their child.

- Keyworkers take responsibility for telling the parent or carer about events in the day that have been important for the child, which is an additional and highly valuable way of communicating information with parents.
- Eve values smooth transitions by giving time for staff to support children and families. Staff are organised to enable Keyworkers to be available at handover times to talk to parents. She monitors the effectiveness of daily or weekly communication between parents and child (And on a less frequent basis with different settings the child may be attending or additional support agencies for a child or families). We endeavour to share as much information as possible with other settings or carers, in the case when a child attends more than one setting. Parents are invited to be involved in this important process in order to achieve the best understanding of the child that we can.

### **Transition from pre-school setting into school:**

- We will complete the Aistear Siolta practice guide – self-evaluation tool about Transitions.
- We will provide information with our parents about local schools in the area.
- Ballybrack Killiney Montessori aims to maintain good relationships, built on professional respect, with all local feeder schools. Staff from feeder schools are invited to visit our setting during the Summer Term prior to transition, to make the teacher in the receiving school aware of the likely needs of the child. At present staff from St. John’s and Scoil Colmcille visit us each year.
- Written information is shared with school via the “Mo Sceal” with the permission of the parents and carers who have an opportunity to add in their own comments.
- We will share information with parents regarding starting school and how to support their child. We will share information about tips for school readiness and things to do at home to foster independence and books to read about starting school. We also have a lending library in the lobby that parents can borrow from.
- We organise (if necessary) and attend a ‘transition meeting’ for those children with identified additional needs, with the support of our SENCO. Parents and carers, staff from feeder school and keyworkers are invited, alongside any other relevant professionals, in order to ensure the child’s needs can be met in school.
- We will organise class visits to a local feeder school if possible.

- We have a transition box in the classrooms which contains photos of local schools, uniforms, bags, books, pencil case, etc. the children are encouraged to look through these boxes and talk about the transition to primary school.
- We will ensure that the children are informed about moving onto school through regular discussion in the form of stories, pictures and circle time. We will also use small group time to introduce children from other classes to each other if they will attend the same primary school.
- An annual 'Leavers Show' is organised in June, where staff and their key children prepare a show in the church with songs and dancing and a ceremony. Parents and carers, as well as younger siblings, are warmly invited to join the celebration, where children are congratulated, presented with the class fingerprint tree. There is then a party in the church hall afterwards. We find this experience a hugely successful way of encouraging the children to embrace the changes ahead, whilst giving children, staff and families a chance to say 'thanks' and 'goodbyes'.