



Settling-In Policy

Bijou Day Nursery & Crèche, Cowbridge

Policy owner: Nursery Manager / Rheolwr y Feithrinfa

Version: 2.0

Last reviewed: June 2026 / Mehefin 2026

Next review: June 2027 / Mehefin 2027

Approved by: Samantha Rennison, Responsible Individual / Unigolyn Cyfrifol

1. Policy Statement

Bijou Day Nursery & Crèche is committed to ensuring that every child experiences a warm, gentle and positive transition into nursery life. We understand that starting nursery is a significant milestone for both children and parents, and we take great care to make this process as comfortable as possible.

This policy is informed by the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare (Wales) 2016; Curriculum for Wales 2022 (Well-being Area of Learning); Wales Safeguarding Procedures 2019; and CIW guidance.

2. Our Approach

Our Montessori-inspired approach recognises that every child is unique and will settle at their own pace. We never rush a child through the settling-in process and adapt our approach to meet individual needs.

3. Before Starting

- **Home visit (optional):** The key person may offer a home visit to meet the child in their familiar environment
- **Pre-start visit:** Parents and child visit the nursery to explore the environment, meet staff and other children
- **Information gathering:** Parents complete the "All About Me" form detailing the child's routines, likes, dislikes, comforters and developmental stage
- **Key person allocation:** Each child is allocated a key person who will be their primary carer and point of contact (see Key Person Policy)

4. Settling-In Sessions

We offer a flexible settling-in programme tailored to each child. A typical programme may include:

1. **Session 1 (1 hour):** Child and parent stay together to explore the environment
2. **Session 2 (1–2 hours):** Parent stays briefly then leaves for a short period; child begins building a relationship with the key person

3. **Session 3 (2–3 hours):** Parent drops off and collects; child stays for a longer period including a snack or mealtime
4. **Session 4 (half-day):** Child stays for a half-day session, including a sleep time if appropriate
5. **Full sessions:** Child transitions to their full booked sessions

These stages are flexible and may be extended or compressed depending on the child's needs. There is no additional charge for settling-in sessions.

5. During the Settling-In Period

- The key person provides focused attention and consistent care
- Parents are welcome to call at any time to check on their child
- Photos and updates may be sent to parents during the day
- Comforters, favourite toys or family photos from home are welcome
- Goodbye routines are encouraged — a consistent, positive farewell helps children feel secure
- Staff will never force a child to separate from a parent

6. Children with Additional Needs

Where a child has additional learning needs (ALN) or other specific requirements, the settling-in programme will be adapted in partnership with parents, the ALN Coordinator (ALNCo) and any external professionals involved in the child's care.

7. When a Child is Struggling to Settle

- The key person and parent will meet to discuss strategies and adjust the programme
- Additional settling sessions may be offered
- Advice may be sought from the health visitor or other professionals if appropriate
- In rare cases, a temporary break may be recommended before trying again

8. Transitions Within Nursery

When children move between rooms (e.g. from baby room to toddler room), a similar gradual transition process is followed. Refer to our Transition Policy for full details.

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