



## Little Swans Day Nursery Home Visits Policy

**Policy reviewed by:** Elaine Boulton

**Date of Review:** June 2014

At Little Swans Day Nursery we understand that starting in nursery can be daunting for everyone involved so with this in mind we want to do all we can to make the process as stress free and enjoyable as possible for families and their children.

Our nursery will work in partnership with parents. As parents are a child's first educator, this will ensure the best outcomes for the children. The first step of this partnership is a home visit for every family, preferably before the child starts at the nursery. We believe that this enables parents and children to meet members of the nursery staff in the place where they feel most at ease, at home.

Two members of staff from Little Swans, one being the allocated key person will carry out the visits. Parents and staff will arrange the visit at a convenient day/ time to suite both parties, as the nursery still has to maintain child/staff ratios when members of the team are off the premises. Little Swans staff will wear their nursery uniform with the emblem on show and take a mobile phone. This number will be left in the nursery office and has key contacts pre-stored including that of the local police.

The date and time of the visit is recorded in the nursery diary and kept in the office/staffroom.

Little Swans has a Code of Conduct Extract to support safe, professional home visits that all staff read and sign with a copy held on file.

**Aim:** to provide an opportunity for a new child and family to meet the key person in their own home prior to the child starting at the setting.

The purpose of the visit is to help the child, family and key person get to know more about each other in the home environment where the child usually feels most relaxed. We hope to establish a partnership between parent/carers and staff where both parties share their knowledge and understanding of the child to plan stimulating and challenging learning opportunities as well as planning to meet each child's individual needs.

At Little Swans Day Nursery we recognise that parent/carers are their children's first and most enduring educators. Forming relationships with parent/carers and working closely is beneficial for each child's learning and development.

It is our policy to visit the children at home before they enter Nursery, where possible. However this is an optional service that the setting provides and as such not all parents will request an appointment. It is additional to our settling in policy provided for all children. During the visit, time is taken to find out about the child's likes, dislikes and interests, visits are not to judge parent/carers parenting skills, but to offer parent/carers the opportunity to ask questions and gather any information needed from staff to support the transition.

Only one home visit per family is usual.

### **Benefits:**

Home Visits have many benefits for both parent/carers and staff. For parents and children, a visit gives them the opportunity to meet the key person in a safe environment where they feel confident and at ease. The visit provides the opportunity to:

- Establish early, positive contact
- See children in their own familiar setting
- Meet other family members people and pets who are important to the children
- Understand the anxieties children may feel when starting nursery, and also understand the wealth of learning that goes on at home.

This all helps staff providing care for children to get a fuller picture. Staff can gain lots of information to inform their planning from observing a child where he or she feels settled and in control.

### **Rationale:**

- To share information between parent/carers, staff and children. Providing a starting point for staff to understand family background, including cultural background.
- Ensure children feel that they are valued and have a familiar face when starting at nursery.
- To provide an opportunity for parent/carers to talk about their child and the nursery, to voice concerns, clear up any misunderstandings and to lessen worries and fears.
- To establish effective procedures to ensure the safety of parent/carers, staff and children during the visits.
- To ensure parent/carers understand the purpose and procedure before the visit.

- Before their home visit parent/carers complete questionnaires during registration, asking parent/carers to comment on their views and feelings about the transition into nursery. This is used to support parent/carers and inform staff of what additional information will be required at each visit. Tailoring our home visits to the individual needs of the family.

**Procedure:**

A key person is allocated before the child starts at the setting. Home visits are offered in the induction letter.

**During registration parents will be informed of the following:**

- Who will be attending and when
- How long the visit is expected to last
- What will happen
- What kind of questions will be asked
- What information staff will bring
- Any information the key person would like from the parent/carer during the visit
- A leaflet for Parents and Carers will be given during this time asking parents to consider the needs of our staff and provide them with a smoke free zone and where it is safe for them to provide our services.
- Appointments should be confirmed in writing to parent/carers on a welcome email and recorded in the nursery diary and home visits diary; which are both kept in the office.
- Home visits will take place any morning or afternoon, at a time convenient to parent/ carers; this will be established during registration.
- To explain the child's 'Learning Journey' and complete any background information with the key person, in their absence another member of staff from the child's area will conduct the home visit along with an additional member of staff.
- Staff carrying out the home visits will be in nursery uniform, and will identify themselves before entering the family home.
- Staff will be briefed about the area they are visiting and location.
- Parents are informed about the nursery website and its content as well as provided with hard copies of nursery policies if requested.
- If parent/carers are not at home when staffs visit then a card will be posted to let them know we called.
- Staff will leave the following at nursery before the visit, in the nursery diary:
  - Their mobile telephone number
  - The name, address, and telephone number of the child's home
  - The approximate arrival time and estimated length of the visit
- If there is a change to plan after leaving nursery or the child's home then the nursery must be informed.

- Staff is expected to have their mobile phones switched on at all times and must make parent/carers aware of this during the home visit.
- If staffs feel uncomfortable in the child's home then they should leave immediately, reporting back to management at the nursery.
- An evaluation of each visit must be recorded by staff when they return back to nursery and settling in records must be completed along with a thank you letter sent to the parent/carers.
- Any incidents that may occur during a home visit must recorded in writing
- Any actions agreed during the home visit should be recorded and confirmed with parent/ carers
- Visits will be carried out in pairs, allowing one staff member to speak with the parent/carers and the other to interact with the child. This enables parent/carers to talk without worrying about the child as well as providing opportunity to observe the child at play in a familiar environment.
- The staff will stay together during the home visit and would not expect to be left alone with the child during the visit.
- Visits will last a maximum of one hour.
- Staff will be conscious of the fact that they are guests in the family home and will treat all families with a high level of respect and regard during the visit.
- At any time during the visit parents/carers may ask both staff members to leave and do not have to give a reason why.

### **What staff may wish to take on a home visit?**

- Take a home visit pack; this is kept in the office in the Red Folder labelled 'home visits'.
- Take a selection of toys from the nursery. As this enables the child to choose whether to play with a familiar or unfamiliar toy, providing a source for interaction.
- Take information from nursery to discuss with parent/ carers
- Take the child's entry records to check details and ensure that all evidence has been seen prior to the child starting at nursery.
- Take photographs of children exploring and learning in the setting e.g. photo book
- Take an evaluation form for parent/carers to complete
- Take a learning journey to show parents and explain, as well gathering photos etc... From parent/carers to include in the journey for when the child starts at nursery.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

It is the responsibility of all EYFS staff at the nursery to follow this policy. The Senior Leadership Team, Miss Tranter Nursery Manager and Mrs Boulton Nursery Owner

will carry out monitoring on the EYFS as part of the whole nursery monitoring system.

The Policy will be reviewed each year and will evolve to incorporate the views of all staff parents and children concerned.