

Oyster Bay Nursery

Transition Policy

Date written: October 2026

Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we recognise that children experience many transitions throughout their early years. These changes may be planned or unexpected and can have a significant impact on a child's emotions, behaviour, confidence and sense of security.

We are committed to supporting children and their families through transitions in a sensitive, positive and individualised way. We understand that every child responds differently to change and will work in partnership with parents and carers to ensure children feel safe, valued and supported.

Our approach is child-centred and aims to promote emotional wellbeing, build resilience, maintain continuity of care and help children develop confidence when adapting to new experiences.

2. Types of Transitions

Transitions that children may experience include:

- Starting nursery for the first time.
- Moving between rooms or age groups within the nursery.
- Moving to another nursery, childminder or childcare provider.
- Starting school.
- Changes in family circumstances, including parental separation.
- The arrival of a new sibling.
- Moving house or relocating.
- The death of a family member, close friend or family pet.
- Changes to routines, familiar carers or living arrangements.
- Other significant or unexpected changes in a child's life.

We recognise that even changes that appear small to adults can feel significant to young children.

3. The Role of the Key Person

Each child will have a key person who develops a secure, supportive relationship with the child and their family. The key person plays an important role in identifying and supporting the child's needs during transitions.

Staff will:

- Observe children's behaviour, emotional wellbeing and responses to change.
- Look for changes in confidence, sleepiness, appetite, play, communication or interactions with others.
- Provide reassurance, encouragement and predictable routines.
- Offer opportunities for children to express feelings through conversation, play, stories, drawing and creative activities.
- Work with parents and carers to understand the child's experiences and agree appropriate support.
- Share relevant information with colleagues to promote consistency of care.
- Seek guidance from the Nursery Manager or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo) if additional support may be beneficial.

Staff will respond sensitively and will not assume that every change in behaviour is caused by a particular event.

4. Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We encourage parents and carers to inform the Nursery Manager or their child's key person about significant changes at home that may affect their child's wellbeing or behaviour.

This may include changes to family circumstances, a house move, the arrival of a new baby, bereavement or other events that may cause uncertainty or anxiety.

Information will be treated sensitively and confidentially, in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

By working together, parents and staff can help children feel understood and provide consistent reassurance during periods of change.

If parents believe their child needs additional emotional or practical support, they should speak to the Nursery Manager and key person so that suitable arrangements can be considered.

5. Starting Nursery

We understand that starting nursery is a significant transition for both children and their families. Some children settle quickly, while others need more time and reassurance to become comfortable in a new environment.

Oyster Bay Nursery will use settling in sessions to help children develop positive relationships with staff, become familiar with the setting and feel secure in their new surroundings.

Where appropriate, support may include:

- Opportunities for the child and family to visit the nursery before the start date.
- Gathering information about the child's routines, interests, comforters and individual needs.
- Introducing the child gradually to their key person, other staff and the nursery environment.
- Agreeing an individual settling-in approach with parents or carers.
- Maintaining familiar routines and offering comfort and reassurance.
- Reviewing the child's progress and adapting arrangements when needed.

We recognise that settling in is an individual process and will work with families to support each child at their own pace.

6. Moving Between Nursery Rooms

Moving to a different room or age group is an important transition. Children may be excited about new opportunities but can also feel unsettled when familiar surroundings, routines or staff change.

Where possible, room transitions will be planned in advance and introduced gradually.

Staff will:

- Consider the child's developmental stage, confidence, friendships and individual needs.
- Arrange visits to the new room before the move, where practicable.
- Introduce the child to the staff and key person in the new room.
- Familiarise the child with the new environment, resources and routines.
- Share relevant information about the child's interests, development, care needs and successful support strategies with the receiving team.
- Communicate with parents about the planned transition.
- Monitor the child's adjustment and provide additional reassurance if required.

The timing of a room move will be based on the child's individual needs and nursery arrangements rather than age alone, wherever practicable.

7. Starting School or Moving to Another Childcare Provider

Starting school or moving to another childcare provider is a major milestone. Children may experience excitement, uncertainty or anxiety about leaving familiar people and routines.

Oyster Bay Nursery will take reasonable steps to make this transition positive and to promote continuity of care and learning.

Where appropriate and practicable, we will:

- Provide books, stories, role-play activities and resources about starting school.
- Use school-related role play, such as a classroom or uniform activities, to help children become familiar with the idea of school.
- Talk with children about what may be similar or different in their new setting.
- Encourage children to express questions, worries and expectations.
- Invite school representatives or other relevant professionals to visit the nursery, where arrangements allow.
- Arrange visits to the receiving school or childcare setting where possible.
- Share relevant information with the receiving setting, with appropriate parental involvement and in accordance with data protection requirements.
- Prepare a transition summary or developmental information for the receiving setting where appropriate and required.
- Work with parents, schools and other providers to support continuity of care.

Information shared may include the child's interests, strengths, developmental progress, communication needs, relevant care arrangements and strategies that help them feel secure.

Information will be shared lawfully and securely, with appropriate consent where required. Where information must be shared to safeguard a child, the nursery will follow its safeguarding procedures.

We recognise that not all children will move to school at the same time or follow the same transition pathway. Support will be adapted to each child's circumstances.

8. Family Changes and Parental Separation

Changes in family circumstances, including parental separation, can affect a child's sense of security and emotional wellbeing.

Staff will respond sensitively and provide a safe, supportive environment where children can express their feelings in an age-appropriate way.

Support may include:

- Maintaining familiar routines wherever possible.
- Offering reassurance and opportunities for children to talk or play through their feelings.
- Working with parents and carers in the child's best interests.
- Sharing relevant information with appropriate staff on a need-to-know basis.
- Following the nursery's Separated Parents Policy where parental separation affects communication, collection or the sharing of information.
- Seeking advice from the Nursery Manager or relevant professionals if additional support is needed.

Staff will remain professional and neutral in parental disputes and will not involve children in adult disagreements.

Any concerns about a child's safety or welfare will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

9. Moving Home and the Arrival of a New Sibling

Moving home or welcoming a new sibling can be exciting but may also cause uncertainty, changes in routine or feelings of jealousy.

Where parents inform us of an upcoming change, the key person will consider how best to prepare and support the child.

This may include:

- Talking about the change using simple, reassuring language.
- Reading relevant stories and using role play or creative activities.
- Encouraging the child to share feelings, questions or worries.
- Supporting the child to identify positive aspects of the change without dismissing difficult feelings.
- Maintaining familiar routines and relationships at nursery.
- Observing how the child responds and discussing any concerns with parents.

Staff will recognise that children may need additional reassurance before, during or after the change.

10. Bereavement and Loss

We understand that the death of a family member, close friend or family pet can be deeply upsetting for children and their families.

Children may respond in different ways depending on their age, understanding and relationship with the person or animal who has died. They may express feelings through play, questions, changes in behaviour or a need for additional reassurance.

Where the nursery is informed of a bereavement, staff will respond with compassion and sensitivity. We will:

- Work with the family to understand what the child has been told and how they wish the nursery to approach the subject.
- Use clear, simple and age-appropriate language.
- Provide reassurance, familiar routines and opportunities for the child to express feelings.
- Respect the family's cultural, religious and personal wishes where possible.
- Monitor the child's wellbeing and discuss additional support with the family if needed.

Staff will not make assumptions about how a child should grieve. If a child's distress or behaviour causes ongoing concern, the Nursery Manager will discuss appropriate support with the family.

11. Unexpected Transitions

Some transitions happen suddenly and cannot be planned in advance. These may include an unexpected change in living arrangements, a sudden change in a familiar caregiver or an emergency affecting the family.

In these circumstances, staff will prioritise the child's immediate safety and emotional wellbeing. The Nursery Manager and key person will work with the family, where appropriate, to identify what support can be provided.

Staff will aim to maintain predictable routines, offer reassurance and respond flexibly to the child's changing needs. Any safeguarding concerns will be managed in line with nursery procedures.

12. Children Requiring Additional Support

Some children may need additional preparation, communication support or a more gradual approach to transitions. This may include children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), children experiencing anxiety or children affected by significant changes in their circumstances.

The nursery will consider each child's individual needs and, where appropriate:

- Develop an individual transition plan with the family.
- Seek advice from the SENDCo.
- Use visual supports, photographs, social stories or other suitable resources.
- Arrange additional visits or familiarisation sessions where possible.
- Work with relevant professionals, with appropriate consent or where information sharing is otherwise lawful.
- Review the support plan and make reasonable adjustments where needed.

Our aim is to ensure that every child is included, supported and given opportunities to participate in transitions at a pace appropriate to their needs.

13. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

Information relating to family circumstances and transitions will be treated sensitively and stored securely.

Staff will record relevant observations, agreed support arrangements and significant discussions where appropriate. Information will only be shared with colleagues or external professionals who need it for their role or where sharing is otherwise lawful and necessary to protect the child's welfare.

Parents can speak to the Nursery Manager if they have questions about how information is recorded or shared.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently.
- Support staff in planning and managing transitions.
- Ensure appropriate information-sharing and record-keeping arrangements are followed.
- Help families access additional support where necessary.
- Review concerns and oversee individual transition plans where appropriate.

The key person will:

- Build a secure relationship with the child and family.
- Observe the child's responses to change.
- Provide appropriate reassurance and activities.

- Communicate with parents and relevant colleagues.
- Contribute to transition planning and information sharing.

The SENDCo will:

- Advise staff on transitions involving additional developmental, communication or inclusion needs.
- Help identify suitable resources, strategies and professional support where appropriate.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Share relevant information about significant changes.
- Work with nursery staff to identify helpful support strategies.
- Inform the nursery of concerns about their child's response to change.
- Participate in transition planning where appropriate.

15. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and whenever changes to legislation, statutory guidance or nursery practice make a review necessary.