

Transitions Policy

At Grantham Farm Montessori School we recognise that young children will experience many transitions in their early years; some of these planned and some unplanned. We are sensitive to the impact of such changes to children and this policy sets out the ways in which we support children going through these transitions.

Some examples of transitions that young children and babies may experience are:

- Starting nursery or school
- Moving between different classrooms
- Moving nurseries or school
- Family breakdowns
- New siblings
- Moving home
- Death of a family member or close friend
- Death of a family pet

Staff are trained to observe their key children and to be sensitive to any changes in their emotional state, behaviour and personality. We respectfully ask that parents inform us of any changes in the home environment that may impact on their child so that staff can be aware of the reasons behind any potential changes in the child's behaviour.

Starting in our nursery or primary class

We recognise that starting a new nursery or school may be difficult for some children and their families. We have a settling in policy to support the child and their family.

Moving classrooms procedure

As we are a small school with neighbouring classrooms strong relations are formed between the children and all teaching staff. Communication between the children and all adults is encouraged and facilitated through our tailored key person and family approach. A key person policy is in place.

When a child is ready to move to Grantham Farm Class, this begins with a graduated process in line with our Montessori philosophy, as set out below. We work with the parents to ensure this is a seamless process in which the child is an agent and is supported at all stages. As the transition progresses according to the child's learning interests and needs, communication is made between the child's key person and the Grantham Farm class teacher to ensure emotional support and an understanding of the child's personality and learning progression is shared. This may include a transition meeting between the existing key person and/or teacher and parents, which will take place at parent teacher meetings the term before transition. The classroom transition process is/will:

- Plan according to the individual needs of the child and when they are ready to gradually move on to work in Grantham Farm class – this will follow the child’s progression through the Montessori curriculum
- Enable the child to spend periods of time in Grantham Farm class prior to the permanent move to so that they feel comfortable in their new surroundings and have a familiar person close to them
- Ensure good relationships are fostered between children of all ages so that there is a social cohesion across the school and not only between small friendship groups
- Wherever possible facilitate friendship games and play during garden time to enable friendships to grow (many already exist as the children play together at garden time and in after school clubs)
- Keeping parents informed of transition visits and the outcomes of these visits for e.g. through photographs on My Montessori Child and face to face discussions at the door
- Only transitioning the child when they feel settled and ready to move. If a child requires more support this will be discussed between the key person, parent, head teacher and room leader of the new class to agree how and when this will happen.

Starting school or moving childcare providers

Starting school is an important transition and some children may feel unsure or anxious about the move. We will do all we can to facilitate a smooth transition and minimise any potential stresses. The following process relates to children going to a new school; however, wherever possible we will adapt this process to support children moving to another childcare provider e.g. childminder or nursery:

- The child may wish to bring in to school resources that relate to their new school, e.g. uniform, photographs of the school and of their new teachers. This helps the children to become familiar with the new concept and will aid transition
- Build relationships with local schools where possible throughout the year and invite them to key events or we will attend key events, e.g. nativity, sports day
- We invite school representatives to visit us, where possible, or invite them to talk to the child/ren via online platforms such as Zoom, so they have the opportunity to introduce themselves to the children
- Where possible we use other ways to support the transition to school, e.g. inviting previous children from Grantham Farm Montessori School who have moved on to other schools to come back and talk to the children about their own school experiences
- Where possible we plan visits to transition schools with the key person/teacher or head teacher. Each key person or teacher will talk about the school with the children who are due to move to a new school and discuss what they think may be different and what may be the same. They will talk through any concerns the children may have and initiate activities or group discussions relating to any issues to help children overcome these
- We produce a comprehensive report on every child leaving the setting and with parental permission will share this with the school to enable teachers to have a good understanding of every child received. This will include their interests, strengths and level of understanding and development in key areas. This will support continuity of care and early learning

- With parental permission around school allocation day, we may share details of the schools children are going to so parents can see which children may be going to the same school. This can offer some reassurance for the children to know that are moving with some familiar peers
- We recognise that the transition to another school may be unsettling to all children, not only those who are moving on. We are sensitive in our approach to how transitions are managed so that those who remain at the school are also supported. We discourage the use of terms such as 'big school' and instead use the name of the next school; this ensures that those moving on feel proud and become familiar with the name of their new school, and that those who remain also feel proud.

Other early years providers

Where children are attending other early years settings or are cared for by a childminder, we will work with them to share relevant information about the child's development. Where a child is brought to school or collected from school by a childminder, we will ensure that key information is being provided to the child's parent by providing the information directly to the parent via email, video call or telephone, and the child's My Montessori Child parent portal.

Family breakdowns

We recognise that when parents separate it can be a difficult situation for all concerned. We have a Separated Family Policy that shows how the school will act in the best interest of the child.

Moving home and new siblings

We recognise that both these events may have an impact on a child. Normally, parents will have advance notice of these changes and we ask parents to let us know about these events so we can support the child to be prepared. The key person or teacher will spend time talking to the child and providing activities that may help the child to act out any worries they have, e.g. through music & dramatic play, stories and discussions.

Bereavement

We recognise that this may be a very difficult time for children and their families and have a separate policy on bereavement, which we follow to help us offer support to all concerned should this be required.

If a parent feels that their child requires additional support because of any changes or transitions in their life, we ask that they speak to the head teacher and the child's key person or teacher in order to enable effective support to be put into place.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the school	Date for review
<i>April 2024</i>	<i>E. Wetherley</i>	<i>August 2025</i>