

1. Administration

1.1. Administrative Records

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery will keep all records, as is its statutory duty, supplemented by recommendations made under other legislation.

We accept our responsibilities under the Data Protection Act not to keep personal data for longer than is necessary, but accepts that it needs to adhere to statutory and recommendation legislation mentioned above.

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery will keep all records to comply with the statutory timescales; thereafter we will scan relevant documents onto an electronic storage device and continue to keep the record for the recommended period. When the record is no longer required it will be confidentially destroyed.

Each year the proprietor or a member of the management will set aside sufficient time to archive, review and destroy records as necessary.

1.2. The Procedure

Each record/file as it is archived is placed in the relevant year box and stored in the loft above the Montessori Classroom. When required the archived boxes are sorted/tidied and destroyed when necessary.

1.3. Our Website

We have a website to promote our business and to provide parents and carers using the nursery with relevant information.

The website includes photographs of the setting and children engaged in activities. However, parental permission will be sought before any photographs are uploaded to the Internet. The safeguarding of children accessing the setting is paramount and we will take every precaution to protect children's identities in line with parental wishes.

The website is regularly updated to accurately reflect the setting. You can also access our policies and procedures, enrolment form, and keep up to date with upcoming events on the website.

1.4. Policies and Procedures

1.4.1. ICT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources (hardware, software, and infrastructure) provided by Lower Covey Montessori Nursery that assist employees in performing their daily business tasks, is used effectively, efficiently, ethically and legally.

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery is registered under the Data Protection Act 1998, and adheres to the eight principles of the act, as must all employees.

1.4.1.1. The Manager's Responsibilities for ICT

The manager will:

- keep anti-virus, firewall and anti-spyware up to date at all times (and anti-spam and anti-adware if used),
- run regularly the diagnostic programs,
- back up data regularly and keep a copy off-site,
- keep up-to-date login and passwords of computer users in a secure manner,
- pay particular attention to the use of laptops and their security,
- liaise with management on the purchase and maintenance of the computer systems hardware and software,
- work with the setting's external contractors/consultants as necessary to ensure the integrity of the system,
- monitor employees' Internet and e-mail use insofar as it is necessary to ensure compliance with this policy,
- arrange suitable training.

1.4.1.2. Users' Responsibilities

Users will:

- use the ICT resources only as prescribed in this policy (ie for business use only),
- not access, nor receive (so far as is practicable) nor send obscene or offensive material,
- not divulge to anyone else at any time their login and passwords other than as directed by the manager,
- not add, delete or make changes to software or hardware,
- not upload or download any software other than that provided by the employer without the signed approval of the manager,
- ensure that copyright and licensing of programs and data is adhered to,
- not give, sell or copy software to a third party without prior agreement of the manager,
- report any warning messages, faults, problems, and queries to the manager without delay,
- attend any training that is arranged.

1.4.1.3. E-mails

E-mails are a written communication and must meet the same standards as other published documents. Employees must ensure that their communications with children and their families are professional in nature. Employees must only use official Lower Covey Montessori Nursery email addresses to communicate with children and their families.

The provision of an e-mail address is for business use only. Employees may not use the setting's e-mail facilities for personal use.

Where an e-mail is received which is of a personal nature the employee is permitted to forward that e-mail to their own personal e-mail address and the e-mail must then be deleted from the employee's inbox and "sent box". They should inform the sender that further e-mails should not be sent to the setting, but to their personal e-mail address.

Other than as permitted above, employees will not forward any e-mails that are:

- not work-related,
- offensive, indecent or obscene.

Only copy (CC or BCC) to colleagues and others where there is a need for them to be aware of the communication; avoiding “information overload”.

When receiving e-mails ensure that they are from a reputable source before accessing.

Do not open any e-mail that is suspect, but inform the setting manager.

1.4.1.4. Accessing the Internet

Access to the internet is for business purposes only during working hours. Employees may access the Internet during their lunch breaks but must adhere to this policy:

- Viewing or downloading offensive, obscene or indecent material is forbidden.
- Downloading material protected by copyright is forbidden.
- Accessing chat lines, gambling or games sites is forbidden.
- Where downloading material is permissible it must only be from a qualified reliable source (eg Croner's information website).
- Accessing social networking websites or online diaries (blogs) is forbidden.
- Social Networking Websites and Blogs.

Whilst the setting cannot prevent employees accessing social networking websites and online diaries (blogs) from their personal computers in their own time, the setting would consider it gross misconduct and a breach of confidentiality for inappropriate material to be posted concerning its business.

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery has an official page on the social networking website Facebook. It is our policy that no pictures of children will be posted on Facebook without written consent from the parent or guardian of the child(ren). Staff, volunteers and students are only permitted to communicate on behalf of the setting on social media through the official Lower Covey Facebook page.

The setting reserves the right to enforce its disciplinary rules if any such material appears that breaches the confidentiality of the business, its employees, the children at any time in its care, their parents/guardians or the setting's suppliers, or that brings the setting into disrepute.

1.4.1.5. Preventing the Introduction of Viruses

The greatest risk to the setting's computer system from viruses is in downloaded programs and executable files. The spreading of viruses is illegal under the Computer Misuse Act 1990.

Uploading and downloading any software is forbidden.

Where an employee believes that a piece of software may be of use to the setting, they will suggest this to the setting manager. The setting manager is the only person permitted to upload or download such material.

Only e-mails that are received from a known reputable source should be opened.

Accessing file-sharing sites is forbidden.

1.4.1.6. Data Security

All employees shall adhere to the Data Protection Act 1998.

The use of USB sticks, CDs, DVDs or other media that would enable material to be copied from the setting's computer system is forbidden unless expressly authorised by the setting manager. Such media must not be brought into the workplace without authorisation.

Those with access to the laptops should read the section on laptops below.

The sending by e-mail or other electronic methods of any confidential information is forbidden other than during the proper execution of the employee's duties and must at all times adhere to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Replying to, or clicking on links within, an e-mail where the source is not verified is forbidden; advice should be sought of the setting manager where there is any grounds for concern.

1.4.1.7. Passwords

Login details and passwords should not be disclosed to anyone other than the setting manager or as directed by the setting manager.

The same password should not be used for all applications.

Passwords should be changed when required by the individual program or software, or earlier if it is possible that their integrity has been compromised.

Passwords, when changed, must be notified to the setting manager.

1.4.2. Telephones

1.4.2.1. Landlines

Access to international dialling codes must be authorised by the setting manager.

Telephones should be used for outgoing personal calls only in an emergency or for health and safety reasons. Personal calls should be brief.

Incoming personal telephone calls are permitted only for emergency situations and should be brief.

Faults, problems and queries must be reported to the setting manager.

1.4.2.2. Company Mobiles

All users issued with a company mobile phone must:

- adhere to the ICT policy,
- keep the mobile phone in a secure place when not in use,
- use it for personal calls (incoming and outgoing) only in an emergency,
- keep the mobile phone clean and in good order,
- keep the phone suitably charged,
- immediately inform the ICT manager if the mobile phone is stolen, lost or damaged,
- not use the mobile phone whilst driving.

1.4.3. Laptops

It is the responsibility of the user to:

- adhere to the ICT policy,
- keep the laptop in a secure place when not in use,
- keep the laptop clean and in good order; it should be kept in the carry case to prevent damage,
- keep the minimum amount of confidential information on the laptop,
- back up regularly, keep the backup secure and give a copy to the setting manager,
- update the virus checker software as appropriate before using to check all different types of media.

The setting's general policy is not to allow the transfer of material; however, it is acknowledged that laptop users will need to download and upload material from the central computer system and this must be done with the knowledge and advice of the setting manager.

Breaches of this policy will be subject to the setting's disciplinary procedures.

The management team shall monitor the Internet and e-mail use of employees insofar as it is necessary to enable the setting manager to enforce this policy.

It is the responsibility of the setting manager to carry out this policy. The policy will be reviewed on a yearly basis.

1.5. The Protocol for Writing a Policy

In this setting all policies must be written with staff representative involvement, signed off by the management, communicated to staff and regularly updated.

The following general principles should be taken into consideration when anyone in the organisation is writing or developing a policy:

- Once it has been decided that a new policy needs to be written, information needs to be gathered and support gained from other team members.
- As many people should be involved in the policy development as possible, including staff representation, but a named person should be identified as responsible for leading on the development.

- The approved set template should be used.
- Discussing the protocol at a meeting is generally a good way of getting started, generating ideas and getting everybody involved.
- Policies should be kept simple and plain language should be used. Clear statements of fact are preferable to long, involved, complex paragraphs.
- Plans for an agreed audit should be included in the policy. This allows for information to be collected in a standardised way and makes the evaluation procedure much simpler.
- A review date should be written into the policy.
- The draft policy should be considered at the relevant management meeting and agreed.
- The policy should be dated and signed.

The following Policy Template should be used:

- Version Control Record — This section should provide a record of the different versions of the policy and state when it was updated and what content was changed at each update. The person responsible for each update should be identified.
- Policy Title.
- Organisation Name.
- Policy Statement — This should set out the main agreed beliefs of the organisation in relation to a given subject.
- Aim of the Policy — This should define the overall purpose of the policy. What is it that the organisation wishes the policy to achieve?
- Goals — Here an organisation can outline specific end points or outcomes that the policy seeks to deliver. These should be measureable so that the success or failure of the policy can be assessed.
- Main Section Sub Titles — This section or sections should spell out the central guidelines to be followed. Sections should list key staff who will be involved and list their qualifications, skills and expertise as appropriate. It may be helpful to refer to any legal considerations including relevant Acts or statutory guidance.
- Training — This is a key area in any policy. The section should list what training staff have undertaken in the area and identify what training needs have to be covered for staff to perform the roles required by the policy.
- Review Date.
- Signature.

2. Cleaning

It is the policy of Lower Covey Montessori Nursery to provide a clean care and working environment for children and staff as part of its Health and Safety Policy.

The person responsible for carrying out this policy is **Julie Partridge**.

They shall from time to time write and review at regular intervals:

- what needs to be cleaned — this will include, area by area, equipment, machinery, surfaces, furnishings, furniture,
- identify items that should be sanitised,
- how often each should be cleaned/sanitised,
- how each should be cleaned with regard to chemicals and equipment,
- write a schedule of cleaning based on the above points,
- consider the use of Personal Protective Equipment as necessary.

The Employer shall:

- ensure that the cleaning schedule is carried out in line with this policy,
- provide Personal Protective Equipment as necessary,
- provide a secure area for the storage of cleaning equipment and chemicals,
- appoint someone to ensure that the cleaning schedules are carried out to an acceptable standard,
- provide training as necessary,
- maintain a library of data sheets according to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.

All staff shall:

- keep all areas clean and tidy as a general part of their everyday work,
- undertake any cleaning duties as directed by the employer where there is an immediate concern regarding cleanliness, cross contamination, spills, etc,
- use, maintain and keep safe any Personal Protective Equipment,
- ensure that all cleaning equipment and chemicals are securely stored and always out of the reach of children,
- report any defects or concerns promptly to their line manager,
- attend any training as directed by the employer.

3. Disabled Access and Facilities

3.1. Disabled Access

3.1.1. Policy Statement

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery believes in providing a welcoming, comfortable, accessible environment that is safe and easy to use for pupils, their parents and relatives, staff and other visitors and users of the nursery premises. The nursery believes that the accessibility of nursery buildings is a critical issue, especially for people with a disability. In this respect, the nursery understands that entrances and exits need to balance welcome and ease of access with the need to control access and ensure safety and adequate levels of security.

In this nursery, all disabled pupils should have a unique individualised plan of care which takes into account their needs and wishes and those of their parents, carers and others involved in their care. Needs identified from these care plans will inform the disability access and premises development and maintenance plans to ensure that all individualised needs are met wherever practicable.

3.1.2. Aims of the Policy

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery is committed to the implementation of a policy to achieve equality of opportunity for all its pupils, ensuring that they are given a chance to attain their full potential through equal access to all nursery facilities.

3.1.3. Procedure

This setting adheres fully to the provisions of the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order 2005, the Road Traffic Act 1991, and the Equality Act 2010, which places a duty upon owners of premises to provide adequate access for disabled people.

The nursery is especially committed to providing safe access for pupils who use wheelchairs, who are infirm or unsteady on their feet, or who suffer from sight, hearing or other sensory impairments.

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery recognises that the Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make “reasonable adjustments” for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their service. The school also understands that employers have to take reasonable steps to remove, alter or provide reasonable means of avoiding physical features or attitudinal barriers that make it impossible or difficult for people with a disability to use a service or to be employed in a workplace.

To comply with these aspects of the law, and to provide full access as stated above, this school has put measures in place that identify barriers to access. It regularly reviews its systems and processes for the way that its services are provided.

Key processes in place include:

- access to specialist advice and guidance from appropriate occupational therapy, physiotherapy and architectural design experts to ensure that the needs of disabled pupils and other disabled users of school buildings are met,

- the development of a disability equality scheme, for annual review, which seeks to actively promote the interests of disabled people and to increase the access of pupils to the school, the curriculum and information, both written and computer based.

In this nursery, all access points to the building are reviewed annually as part of the accessibility plan and suitable adaptations are made under the Equality Act 2010 and the building regulations.

All works or extensions should consider disabled access as a key part of building design and incorporate a “level floor” policy, avoiding the use of ramps and slopes wherever possible by ensuring that individual floors are kept to one level.

All works or access alterations must include a full fire risk assessment to consider the impact of changes on fire exits.

3.1.4. Training

All staff are offered training covering basic information about staff duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and about health and safety risk management and the reporting of hazards. All new staff receive induction training, including a comprehensive tour of the premises.

3.2. Disabled Employees

3.2.1. Policy Statement

The provision recognises that it has clear obligations towards its staff and the community at large to ensure that people with disabilities are afforded equal opportunities to enter employment and progress at the provision. In addition to complying with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, the provision will follow procedures designed to provide for fair consideration and selection of disabled applicants and to satisfy their training and career development needs. When a member of staff becomes disabled in the course of their employment, reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate their disability by making adjustments to working practices and arrangements, to enable him or her to remain in employment with the provision wherever possible.

3.2.2. Procedure

3.2.2.1. Statutory Requirements

The law imposes an obligation on employers not to discriminate against disabled people on grounds relating to their disability unless this is unavoidable in the sense that their disability makes them unable to perform a key function of the job, or that it is too expensive or impracticable to change the physical features of the premises or other arrangements to accommodate their needs.

The provision will ensure that efficient practices for the effective management of staff are in place. The reflect current employment legislation, including discrimination, family friendly policies, and the rules relating to the Working Time Directive.

3.2.2.2. Recruitment and Selection

The provision will ensure that all job descriptions/personnel specifications and recruitment advertisements are drafted in such a way as to make clear which are the essential requirements of the position and consideration will be given to making reasonable adjustments to job descriptions/personnel specifications to accommodate the needs of people with particular disabilities.

Providing the provision has been made aware of the interviewee's disability, the relevant staff will be informed when a disabled person is expected to arrive for interview and instructed them on how the disabled person should be greeted and assisted.

A risk assessment will be undertaken before the disabled person begins work and, where doubts exist over a disabled applicant's ability to perform the full duties of the job concerned, a trial period may be offered .

Where adaptation of parts of the provision premises is required to enable a particular disabled person to take up employment, the matter should be discussed with the LA which will liaise with the local Disablement Advisory Service where appropriate. In cases where advice is needed on a medical condition or on the safety implications of recruiting a disabled employee, the school will contact the LA for guidance.

3.2.2.3. During Employment

All employees are expected to show consideration towards their disabled colleagues. Where special measures need to be taken to ensure health and safety, the member of staff concerned, together with safety and other employee representatives, will be fully briefed.

Training and promotion opportunities must be available to all, regardless of disability.

3.2.2.4. Disabilities Arising During Employment

When an employee becomes incapable of carrying out his or her normal duties because of a disability, consideration must be given to reasonable adjustments to the job and working conditions, redeployment and retraining.

3.2.2.5. Termination of Employment

Members of staff have recourse to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 in any proceedings related to disability, which could lead to the termination of his/her employment at the provision.

3.2.2.6. Redundancy

In a redundancy situation the circumstances of disabled employees will be given appropriate consideration. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the selection criteria in order to prevent a disabled employee from being disadvantaged by the methods used to carry out the redundancies.

3.3. Equal Opportunities

3.3.1. Policy Statement

We understand “equal opportunities” to describe an environment in which no child or adult is prevented from taking a full part in the life of the nursery as a result of:

- age,
- disability,
- gender reassignment,
- race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality),
- religion or belief (including lack of belief),
- sex,
- sexual orientation.

At our nursery, we benefit from the diversity of experience that our pupils bring. We welcome differences and celebrate culture, respecting the needs of the individual, the group and the school community as a whole. We seek to share the different cultures represented here to inform and enrich.

We recognise the importance of allowing all our pupils and their families equal access, as far as possible, to the facilities and activities we have to offer. High standards are possible for all and we seek to ensure that our expectations are challenging everyone, whatever their level of intellectual or physical ability, gender, race or religion. We try to extend this welcome to our staff, parents and guardians, pupils and the community.

Our children and families may have unequal starting points and may need special attention and provision in order to work with others on a more equal basis. We seek to provide these opportunities and raise awareness within the community of the needs that they have.

It is important that we encourage the active involvement of our pupils and help them to understand their rights as well as the need to respect the rights of others. We actively engage with our community to ensure that prejudice, discrimination and stereotyping are challenged and to provide a harmonious working environment in which everyone feels valued.

3.3.2. The Aims of the Policy

We aim to:

- achieve the highest standards of learning and development for every child, irrespective of ethnicity, religious belief, age, gender, ability and disability or social background,
- encourage respect for and understanding of the beliefs, doctrines and personal circumstances of individuals,
- involve, as far as possible, representatives from diverse groups within our catchment,
- consider, when defining nursery policy and procedure, the implications for different groups within our catchment,
- work with other nurserys in order to share strengths and seek ideas for improvement,

- seek to promote the welfare of the children in the nursery who have specific physical, emotional, learning and religious needs,
- deal swiftly, effectively and firmly with comments and incidents that are detrimental to the well-being of others.

3.3.3. Procedure

3.3.3.1. Responsibilities

It is expected that all staff and children will pay due regard to the feelings of others and their needs and will implement this policy to the best of their ability. A spirit of fairness and openness will be encouraged and negative stereotyping is prohibited.

Practitioners are responsible for:

- ensuring the implementation of this policy to the best of their ability within the nursery and in their own dealings with staff, pupils and the nursery community,
- contributing to discussions about equal opportunity issues,
- monitoring their own procedures and routines to ensure that pupils are treated equitably,
- referring incidents and concerns, where appropriate, to the Head.

All nursery staff are responsible for:

- setting an example to children in terms of their treatment of one another and by displaying tolerance and understanding towards the beliefs and cultures of others,
- ensuring that policies and procedures are implemented,
- being vigilant for incidents of racism, sexism and prejudice and acting upon them,
- encouraging children to try new activities that challenge stereotypical roles and prejudices.

The management team is responsible for:

- ensuring the place of equal opportunities within the nursery's development plan,
- recording and dealing with incidents of racism, bullying and other inappropriate behaviour,
- ensuring that equal opportunities is covered within our policies and procedures,
- providing opportunity for resources to be ordered to support this policy,
- ensuring the application of the admissions policy,
- continuing to monitor the progress of actions identified in development plans,
- being instrumental in the review and evaluation of actions and their impact,
- helping to identify positive actions to tackle particular disadvantage,
- ensuring that there is an equal opportunities policy in place and reviewing its content and efficacy on an annual basis,
- assessing the impact of the policy on the standards attained by different groups within the nursery,
- making reasonable adjustments if the premises or employment arrangements limit access to particular community groups or individuals on the basis of disability or gender,

- planning to increase over time the accessibility of the nursery to disabled pupils,
- assessing the impact of this policy,
- setting equality objectives every four years.

3.3.3.2. Developing Our Ethos

Nursery ethos is set by the quality of relationships within a nursery and the sense of vision that the nursery has as a whole.

All staff and children within the nursery contribute to our ethos. The key factors are:

- the examples they set through relationships and actions,
- the organisation of the nursery and the extent to which it values involvement, co-operation and consultation,
- curriculum development and improvement, with a priority placed upon maintaining the broad and balanced curriculum,
- nursery projects and groups that emphasise the importance of social skills and the development of self-esteem,
- a positive behaviour policy, where every opportunity is taken to praise and reward and encourage a sense of community and shared responsibility,
- taking every opportunity to celebrate our successes and strengths as a nursery,
- that the ethos reflect the value placed on every individual child,
- that nursery publications reflect our commitment to equal opportunities,
- that we have a communication-friendly environment.

3.3.3.3. Involving Parents and the Local Community

We seek to involve as many parents and members of the local community in our nursery as possible. We encourage active involvement through:

- written communications, such as letters and newsletters,
- parents evenings,
- parent meetings,
- parent mornings,
- fundraising and social events, eg sports day, Christmas nativity.

4. Finance

4.1. Fundraising

Lower Covey Montessori Nursery does from time to time have a variety of fundraising events. These fundraising events are usually for a specific purpose (ie to buy a new piece of equipment). Occasionally after such an event there are insufficient funds raised to make the proposed purchase. In these circumstances the funds raised will be placed in a suitable, separate, bank account until further funds are raised, or at the discretion of the fund raising committee, the funds used for other items to the benefit of the setting. Funds raised will not be used for general running expenses of the setting.

Where funds are raised over and above the required amount then the additional funds raised will be placed in a suitable, separate, bank account to be used at the discretion of the fund raising committee, with the funds used for items to the benefit of the setting.

In the unlikely event that the setting needs to raise funds for general expenses, this will be made clear to those who participate in its fund raising activities.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the setting manager.

5. Planning and Organisation

5.1. Key Workers

5.1.1. Settling-in

5.1.1.1. Policy Statement

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.

5.1.1.2. Aim

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.

5.1.1.3. Procedure

In order to help children settle comfortably in our setting we use the following procedure:

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person, to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- Parents are advised to arrange times for a settling-in visit when the child is normally at their most content, ie not hungry or in need of a sleep. Whilst parents are welcome to stay for these sessions we normally recommend that they do leave the child for a short period. The key worker can discuss with parents how this will be arranged so it is the least distressing to child and parent. They will ensure they know how to settle the child if he/she becomes distressed. Parents will be contacted immediately if staff are unsuccessful at settling a child and other strategies will be tried.
- Children are encouraged to bring in a comfort object (clearly labelled with their name) if it will enable them to settle.
- Some children take longer to settle. This can be for a variety of reasons; maybe they have not been left before or have had an unhappy previous experience when parted from their main carers. The key person will work with the parents to try different settling techniques.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.

- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first session, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from setting.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to create their child's record of achievement.

5.2. Observation and Assessment

5.2.1. Learning and Development

We at Lower Covey Montessori Nursery are strongly committed to supporting every child's learning and development across the prime and specific areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development,
- Physical Development,
- Communication and Language,
- Literacy,
- Mathematics,
- Understanding the World,
- Expressive Arts and Design.

We work to the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

We support each child to learn and develop. This involves us observing each child, gathering information from families, making assessments and planning for future activities to enable each child to progress to the next stage of learning and development.

We use the EYFS Practice Guidance book. It informs our practice by providing examples of the types of activity and experience that children can be involved in to

support their learning and development. It also acts as a guide for children's development.

We are all aware of the Early Learning Goals and will support children to develop their knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes in order to help them work towards them. However we also know that not all children will go through the same process and some will reach goals very quickly and others will take longer and need additional support.

We are happy to discuss a child's learning and development with their parents/carers at any time.

5.2.2. Observation, Assessment and Planning

We continually observe the children in the nursery. We use the following methods.

5.2.2.1. Planned Observations

A member of staff observes the child playing independently or with another member of staff. This observation may be up to 10 minutes long and will include any language used.

5.2.2.2. Spontaneous Observations

Staff will note down a child's achievements and actions they may make whilst playing or interacting with them.

These observations are recorded in the child's file and we share them with the child's family regularly. We encourage the child's parents/carers to contribute to this file with information on their child and their experiences at home and outside the setting.

We also use other resources to record a child's progress. These include videos, photographs, art work and tape recording of their conversations or music-making.

All of this information is then assessed by the child's key worker and the room leader. They will evaluate how the child is progressing.

This assessment is then used to plan further activities for the child to support them in developing on to the next stage for them. Planning is for each individual child and uses their previous experiences and abilities.

Observation, assessment and planning is an ongoing cycle for each child, aimed at supporting their individual development and learning across the prime and specific areas of learning.

5.2.3. Play

We work to the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is underpinned by play.

We provide opportunities for children to play:

- Indoors,
- Outdoors,

- spontaneously and in child-initiated activities,
- in adult-led activities,
- in challenging environments with or without support when required,
- intellectually,
- creatively,
- physically,
- socially and emotionally,
- quietly and reflectively,
- energetically and boisterously,
- safely.

Children learn through play and this supports and extends the prime and specific areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development,
- Physical Development,
- Communication and Language,
- Literacy,
- Mathematics,
- Understanding the World,
- Expressive Arts and Design.

We are aware that not all children are able to play spontaneously and some may need our support. We will observe the children playing and offer support if and when required. We plan play activities that will extend the children's learning by providing challenges and the opportunity to explore and develop.

Play helps children to develop ideas and practice skills, express feelings and concerns, learn about rules and turn-taking, take risks and make mistakes in a safe environment, and to investigate and solve problems.

We believe that children's play is closely linked to each of the five outcomes for children: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

If you have any concerns about play or this policy do not hesitate to contact us.

5.3. Planning for Early Years

We use the Early Years Foundation Stage to guide our practice. We plan for the whole setting and for different rooms/groups; however, our main planning is around each individual child, enabling us to support personalised learning.

We make an annual plan of major events and festivals that we will celebrate with the children. This is more a calendar of dates than detailed planning and includes, eg Harvest Festival, Chinese New Year, Christmas, Diwali. This helps us to promote positive attitudes towards diversity and differences within all the children. It enables us to plan our displays and resources that we will require.

We do more detailed planning for the short term, using the chosen themes to plan a variety of activities for the children. All the staff are aware of the need to keep this

planning flexible in order to accommodate the changing needs and interests of the children and to take advantage of spontaneous opportunities when they arise.

We link our short term planning to the prime and specific areas of learning:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development,
- Physical Development,
- Communication and Language,
- Literacy,
- Mathematics,
- Understanding the World,
- Expressive Arts and Design.

Whilst an activity may focus on one particular area of learning, we try to look at the framework holistically, bringing in all areas where possible.

Key workers are responsible for developing personalised learning plans for their children. These are based on the needs, interests, abilities and previous experiences of the individual child. The key worker will be expected to build up a “picture” of each of their named children, involving the parents in gathering information and by doing observations on the child and also by listening to the child themselves. This will enable them to develop a personalised learning plan for each child, supporting them to develop and move onto the next stage of their learning at a pace that is right for them. These personalised learning plans are discussed with the room leader and used to feed into the main planning of the room. The personalised learning plans are also regularly reviewed.

Staff are encouraged to attending training to develop their skills in planning and to learn about the different theories in play.

Room supervisors are responsible for overseeing the planning in their room, ensuring that it meets the needs of the children, reflecting the cultures of the group and includes support for children with English as a second language, or those with learning difficulties or disabilities. It must avoid gender stereotyping and promote positive images of all groups. It must provide opportunities for both indoor and outdoor play and have a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

Rooms within the nursery are planned to allow the children to move freely between activities and to meet a variety of different needs, eg space for more boisterous play, a quiet “den” area to allow children to rest, talk quietly to one another or share a book.

All planning is regularly reviewed and evaluated.