

Multiple Birth Families Policy

At The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston we ensure that all families are included and supported fully, no matter how big or small. There are increasing numbers of multiple births occurring in the UK, with twins, triplets and more. As a nursery we accommodate all families and work together with parents to ensure all children are treated as individuals and supported to make the best progress they can.

At The Orchard Day Nursery Kingston, we recognise that every child is unique and has their own individual personality, interests, strengths, needs and developmental journey. We recognise that children from multiple-birth families, including twins, triplets and higher-order multiples, may have a particularly close relationship with their siblings. We value and respect these relationships while ensuring that each child is recognised and supported as an individual.

Our approach is based on the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), including providing personalised care, supporting children's individual development, promoting positive relationships and working in partnership with parents and carers.

We will ensure that children from multiple-birth families receive the same high-quality care, education, opportunities and support as all other children, while recognising any additional considerations arising from being part of a multiple birth.

This policy should be read alongside the nursery's:

- Settling-In Policy;
- Key Person Policy;
- Parents as Partners Policy;
- Curriculum Policy;
- Assessment Policy;
- SEND and Inclusion Policy;
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
- Behaviour Policy; and
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Recognising Each Child as an Individual

We recognise that children who are twins, triplets or higher-order multiples may have similarities in appearance, personality, interests or development, but they remain separate individuals.

Staff will:

- learn and use each child's name;
- become familiar with each child's individual personality and preferences;
- identify each child's individual interests;
- understand each child's individual routines and care needs;
- recognise individual strengths and areas where support may be required;
- celebrate each child's individual achievements;

- avoid making assumptions based on the child's sibling;
- avoid comparing children's development unnecessarily;
- provide opportunities for each child to develop their own identity; and
- ensure that each child's voice and preferences are recognised.

Children will not be expected to behave, develop, communicate or learn in the same way as their sibling.

Starting Points and Individual Information

Before or during the settling-in process, we will work closely with parents/carers to understand each child individually.

Information gathered will include, where relevant:

- personality and temperament;
- interests and preferred activities;
- communication style;
- comforters and settling strategies;
- sleep routines;
- eating and drinking preferences;
- toileting and personal care;
- allergies and dietary requirements;
- medical or additional needs;
- sensory preferences;
- developmental information;
- family routines;
- relationships with their sibling(s);
- ways in which parents distinguish between the children; and
- any specific information that will help staff identify and respond to each child.

Separate records will be maintained for each child.

Information about one sibling will not automatically be treated as information about another sibling.

Identifying Children

Where children look very similar, staff will work with parents to establish reliable ways of identifying each child.

This may include:

- learning individual physical characteristics;
- understanding differences in personality and behaviour;
- using photographs where appropriate and in accordance with the nursery's data protection procedures;
- using individual name labels;
- using information provided by parents; and
- asking parents for guidance where staff are unsure.

Staff must never guess a child's identity where they are uncertain.

Where there is any uncertainty, staff should seek clarification from another member of the team or the child's parent/carer.

Key Person Relationships

Each child will have an identified key person in accordance with the nursery's Key Person Policy.

Where multiple siblings attend the nursery, consideration will be given to whether:

- having the same key person would provide consistency and security; or
- having different key persons would provide greater opportunities for individual relationships and experiences.

There is no automatic requirement for siblings to have either the same or different key persons.

The decision will be based on the individual needs of the children and the organisation of the nursery.

The key person will develop a strong relationship with each child and ensure that the child feels safe, secure, known and valued.

Settling-In

The settling-in process will be tailored to each child.

We recognise that multiple-birth siblings may respond differently to starting nursery.

For example:

- one child may settle quickly while another requires more time;
- one child may be confident separating from their parent while another may need additional reassurance;
- one child may actively seek their sibling while another may confidently explore independently.

Staff will respond to each child's individual needs rather than assuming that both or all children should follow the same settling-in process.

Parents will be kept informed about how each child is settling.

Relationships Between Multiple-Birth Siblings

We recognise that siblings may provide one another with comfort, reassurance, companionship and emotional security.

Staff will support positive sibling relationships while also providing opportunities for each child to:

- develop relationships with other children;
- form secure relationships with adults;

- make independent choices;
- develop their own interests;
- participate in activities independently;
- build confidence;
- develop their own identity; and
- experience success in their own right.

Staff will not deliberately separate siblings simply because they are twins or multiples. Equally, siblings will not automatically be kept together for every activity.

Decisions about being together or apart will be based on the children's individual needs, interests, development and wellbeing.

Opportunities for Individual Development

Staff will provide opportunities for each child to pursue their own interests.

For example, if one child is particularly interested in construction while their sibling prefers creative activities, practitioners will support both interests.

Children will not be expected to participate in the same activities simply because they are siblings.

Where appropriate, staff may provide:

- individual activities;
- small-group experiences;
- focused adult interactions;
- opportunities to play with different children;
- separate access to resources;
- individual challenges; and
- opportunities to develop different interests.

The aim is to support each child to become confident and independent while maintaining their important sibling relationship.

Separation

There may be occasions when providing some separate experiences is beneficial.

This could include:

- focused adult-led activities;
- small-group activities;
- outdoor play;
- opportunities to develop individual friendships;
- activities based on different interests;
- supporting confidence and independence; or
- addressing an individual developmental or emotional need.

Any decision to provide regular separation will be carefully considered.

Where appropriate, parents/carers will be consulted and their views taken into account.

As children become older and more able to express their preferences, their views will also be considered in an age-appropriate way.

Separation will not be used as a punishment or as a response to normal sibling disagreements. The nursery will regularly review whether any separation remains appropriate and beneficial.

Supporting Togetherness

There may also be times when being together is particularly beneficial.

Staff will recognise that siblings may:

- seek reassurance from one another;
- enjoy shared play;
- communicate non-verbally with each other;
- support one another emotionally; or
- have a strong shared interest.

Where being together supports the children's wellbeing, learning or relationships, staff will facilitate this.

The nursery will seek an appropriate balance between togetherness and individuality.

Assessment and Development

Each child will be observed and assessed individually.

Practitioners will consider:

- each child's starting point;
- individual development;
- individual interests;
- knowledge and skills;
- characteristics of effective teaching and learning;
- progress over time;
- strengths;
- areas requiring support; and
- individual next steps where appropriate.

Children will not be compared against one another simply because they are siblings.

For example, if one twin is developing a particular skill before the other, this will not automatically be viewed as a concern.

Equally, staff will not assume that a child who develops a skill later than their sibling is experiencing a developmental difficulty.

Any concerns about a child's development will be considered against the child's individual development and relevant developmental information, and discussed with parents in accordance with the nursery's Assessment and SEND policies.

Communication With Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are an important source of information about their children.

Staff will work closely with parents to understand:

- what makes each child unique;

- how the children interact with one another;
- individual interests and preferences;
- changes in behaviour;
- individual routines;
- achievements outside nursery;
- any concerns; and
- any changes within the family that may affect the children.

Parents will receive information about each child's individual day, rather than receiving one combined update for all siblings.

Where appropriate, parents will be told about:

- what each child has enjoyed;
- achievements;
- learning and development;
- friendships;
- eating and sleeping;
- emotional wellbeing; and
- any concerns or significant events.

Parental Consultations

Where consultations are offered, each child will be considered individually.

Parents will receive information about:

- the child's individual development;
- achievements;
- interests;
- learning;
- progress from their starting point; and
- any areas where further support may be beneficial.

Staff will avoid unnecessary comparisons between siblings.

Where a developmental concern is identified, this will be discussed sensitively with parents and managed in accordance with the nursery's SEND and Inclusion Policy.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The nursery will ensure that children from multiple-birth families are not disadvantaged because of their family circumstances.

We will ensure that:

- each child has equal access to the curriculum;
- each child receives appropriate attention and support;
- siblings are not stereotyped;
- children's individual identities are respected;
- individual differences are celebrated; and
- staff avoid assumptions about twins, triplets or other multiple births.

We recognise that multiple-birth families may have different experiences and circumstances, and we will work with parents to understand their individual needs.

Safeguarding

The nursery's safeguarding responsibilities apply equally to every child.

Staff will ensure that:

- each child is individually accounted for;
- attendance records are accurate for each child;
- children are never assumed to be present because their sibling is present;
- collection arrangements are followed for each child;
- each child is released only to an authorised adult;
- safeguarding concerns relating to one child are considered individually; and
- staff do not assume that information relating to one sibling automatically applies to another.

Particular care will be taken where children are very similar in appearance to ensure that the correct child is identified during:

- arrival;
- collection;
- toileting and personal care;
- administration of medication;
- meals and dietary requirements;
- outdoor play;
- sleep/rest;
- outings; and
- emergency procedures.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to each child will be recorded and shared appropriately.

Although parents may have information about both or all children, staff will maintain appropriate confidentiality and will only share information in accordance with the nursery's privacy, safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Records will be maintained separately for each child.

Transition

When children transition to another room, setting or school, relevant information about each child individually will be shared with the receiving provision, in accordance with the nursery's transition procedures and data protection requirements.

Information may include:

- strengths;
- interests;
- individual routines;
- developmental progress;
- successful strategies;
- friendships;
- communication needs;

- additional needs; and
- any relevant information that will support continuity of care and education.

Where siblings transition together, information about each child will still be provided separately.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff are responsible for ensuring that children from multiple-birth families are treated as individuals.

Staff will:

- learn each child's individual identity and characteristics;
- use each child's name;
- maintain accurate records;
- follow individual care routines;
- provide individual learning opportunities;
- avoid unnecessary comparisons;
- recognise individual achievements;
- support positive sibling relationships;
- provide opportunities for independence;
- communicate appropriately with parents; and
- raise any concerns with the key person, room leader or manager.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Settling in policy and Parents as partners policy. In addition to these, to support the needs of multiple birth families we will:

- Acknowledge multiple birth relationships as special and to be celebrated as well as encouraging children to develop as individuals
- Work with parents to explore each child's individual preferences, interests, needs and starting points including, where applicable, ways for staff to identify them
- Complete individual forms for each child to discover their individual routines, specific requirements, dietary needs etc.
- Recognise and celebrate all individual achievements
- Report back on each child separately at the end of the day to the parents
- Consider separation if this is beneficial for their development. Parents, and where appropriate, the children, will be involved in the decision for when, where and how this may occur (e.g. focused activities, outdoor play)
- Arrange parental consultations for each child. Each child will receive the same time during the consultation as any other child in the setting. Assessments will be shared based on their individual progress and comparisons between the children will not be made, any concerns will be discussed as per SEND policy
- Understand that each child is unique and not expect them to behave in the same manner, excel in the same areas or enjoy the same activities.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the nursery	Date for review
11/08/2026	F.Joyce	December 2026