Welcome to the Norbury Hill Cubs Family!

We're absolutely delighted to welcome you and your little one to the Norbury Hill Cubs family! Starting at a new nursery is an exciting milestone for both you and your child - though we know it can feel a bit like the first day at a new job, except your 'colleague' is two years old and might have strong opinions about snack time!

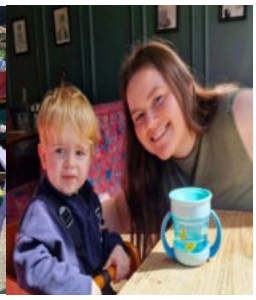
At Norbury Hill Cubs, we're not just a nursery - we're a close-knit family with a strong community ethos. From the moment you walk through our doors, you'll feel the warmth and belonging that makes children settle more easily and parents feel confident in their choice. Our children, families, and staff all contribute to creating a nurturing environment where everyone feels valued, supported, and truly at home (and where the coffee is always on for parents!).

This guide has been lovingly created with input from our wonderful parent community, including Claire (Rosalie's mum), Selina (Cyrus' mum), Chloe (Mason's mum), Rebecca (Amari's mum), and Stu & Aimee (Eden's parents), to help ease any concerns you may have and provide you with everything you need to know about your child's transition into our caring community. Think of it as your friendly handbook to navigating this exciting new chapter.


Selina & Cyrus


Claire & Rosalie


Aimee, Stu & Eden


Chloe & Mason


Rebecca & Amari

One parent shared their thoughts: *"I think this is really good and even though it feels long, it's really clear, reassuring and helpful for those who might want more detail to build more familiarity. Personally I felt I had lots of questions and curiosity at early stage and this would touch on a lot of what I would've found helpful."*

Before You Even Start - Getting to Know Us!

One of the things our parent community absolutely loves is how we help families get familiar with us well before any official settling-in begins. We're big believers that the more comfortable you and your child feel with us, the smoother everything becomes later on.

Monthly Family Events:

- **Birthday parties** hosted right here at nursery - because where better to celebrate than with your extended family?
- **Parent and child yoga sessions** - perfect for getting those wiggles out together
- **Music sessions for families** - prepare for some serious singing
- **French lessons for children and parents together** - "Bonjour" has never sounded so cute

Drop-in Class Visits: We warmly encourage families to pop in and experience our regular classes and activities.

Why Parents Love This Approach: As one of our families put it, "By the time we started proper settling-in, my daughter already knew half the staff by name and kept asking when she could go back to 'her nursery' to play with her friends!"

Another parent shared: "Attending 2 birthday celebrations before my son started really helped me see and feel integrated, recognise the space and the staff and feel safe and familiar. We came to 2 before settling days and it really helped me feel comfortable and confident to leave him."

Important note: Once you register with us, you're immediately welcome to join our monthly birthday celebrations - even before your child officially starts! Many families find this incredibly helpful for building familiarity and confidence.

These relaxed, fun experiences help your child see our nursery as a place of joy and celebration rather than somewhere new and unknown. Plus, you'll start building those lovely relationships with other families that make our community so special.

Our Approach at Norbury Hill Cubs

As you know from our NHC 12 curriculum, we're guided by four key words: **GROW, EXPLORE, CELEBRATE, DISCOVER**. During your settling-in sessions, you'll see these values in action as your child begins their journey with us.

You'll notice how we encourage children to explore their environment and choose activities, developing skills naturally through play. Our approach of observing, waiting, watching and wondering allows us to ignite curiosity based on your child's individual interests. We believe, as Dr. Seuss wrote, that "A person's a person, no matter how small" - and your child's voice and choices will always be valued and respected.

Our Settling-In Process

Every child is unique, and we recognise that starting nursery can feel overwhelming for both children and parents (and yes, sometimes the parents need more settling-in than the children!). Our settling-in process is specifically designed to help your little one gradually become familiar with our environment, staff, and daily routines, ensuring a smooth and positive transition.

We typically recommend two settling-in sessions before your child's official start date.

The Two Settling-In Sessions

Session 1: Getting Acquainted (9:30am - 10:00am) This first session is all about gentle introductions. Your child will start building their special relationship with their key person and meet other staff members. There's no pressure - just time to get familiar with the space, the people, and the daily rhythm.

Session 2: Building Confidence (9:30am - 12:00pm) During the second session, your child will experience more of our daily routine, including our morning snack time.

What to Bring:

- A change of clothes (because adventures can be messy - and that's the best kind!)
- Any comfort items your child might need (teddies are always welcome members of our community)
- Seasonal wear (hats, sun cream, coats) as we embrace outdoor play in all weather (yes, even when it's drizzling - children are surprisingly waterproof!)
- Any special dietary requirements or medicines should be discussed with us

What You'll See During Your Visits

During your visits (when you stay with your child), you'll witness our NHC 12 curriculum in practice. Your child might be exploring sensory materials, embracing outdoor adventures, or discovering their voice through conversations with their key person. You'll see how we balance child-led exploration with thoughtfully planned activities, ensuring your child develops confidence and skills naturally.

When you later progress to our settling-in sessions (where you leave your child), we'll keep you updated throughout the sessions with photos and updates so you can see how well they're doing. This really helps support parents during those first independent sessions.

Building Relationships Within Our Family Community

During your settling-in sessions, your child will be introduced to their key person - a specially assigned staff member who will build a close, nurturing relationship with your child and become your primary point of contact. This relationship is crucial for your child's emotional security and development within our family setting.

But it's not just about one relationship - at Norbury Hill Cubs, your child will become part of our wider family community. They'll interact with all our staff members, form friendships with children across different age groups, and benefit from the supportive network that makes our nursery so special. This community approach means your child will always feel they belong and have multiple caring adults looking out for them.

Daily Life at Norbury Hill Cubs - What Does a Typical Day Look Like?

We follow a lovely rhythm throughout the day that balances structure with flexibility (rather like a good playlist - familiar favourites with room for spontaneous dance breaks!). Here's what your child can expect:

Morning Arrival & Free Play (8:00am onwards) Children arrive and breakfast is served from 8am – 9am. After breakfast the children choose from various activities - some head straight for the paint, others make a beeline for the building blocks, and a few wise souls head directly to the book corner for a gentle start to the day. We also offer an early start option from 7:30am for families who need it, with additional early start fees.

Morning Snack (10:00am) Fresh fruit and milk - because growing minds and bodies need fuel! We encourage children to help prepare their own snacks when age-appropriate (and yes, this sometimes means more banana ends up on faces than in mouths, but that's all part of the learning!)

Outdoor Play & Learning Weather permitting (and sometimes when it's not permitting but we go out anyway because children are surprisingly resilient!), we spend time in our wonderful outdoor spaces.

Lunch (12:00pm) Freshly prepared, nutritious meals in our 5-star rated kitchen. Our kitchen works magic with vegetables - even the most dedicated potato-only eaters often discover they quite like carrots and olives when their friends are enthusiastically eating them!

Afternoon Activities Depending on your child's age and needs, afternoons might include quiet time, creative activities, or more outdoor adventures.

Our experienced team works closely with parents to understand each child's individual needs, preferences, and any allergies or intolerances. We maintain detailed records and follow strict protocols to ensure every child's safety and enjoyment at meal times. We're proud to hold a 5-star food hygiene rating from the Food Standards Agency, reflecting our commitment to the highest standards of food safety and preparation.

For our youngest babies who are not yet weaned, we work closely with you to continue their milk/formula feeding routines exactly as they have at home, ensuring complete continuity of care during this important transition period.

How Children Thrive in Quality Early Years Settings

Why Nursery is Beneficial for Young Children

Extensive research demonstrates that high-quality nursery experiences provide tremendous benefits for children's development. Our approach at Norbury Hill Cubs is designed to maximise these positive outcomes whilst ensuring every child feels secure and valued.

Research consistently shows that quality early years environments support children's social, emotional, and cognitive development. Children develop confidence, learn to form relationships, and gain independence in a nurturing, structured setting. If you'd like to know more about the specific research supporting early years education, we're happy to share additional information.

Social and Emotional Development

- Children who attend nursery are more likely to share toys and show empathy for others, and less likely to be worried or unhappy
- They develop confidence through new experiences and achievements
- Children learn to interact with peers and adults outside their family, developing crucial social skills and emotional regulation

Cognitive Development

- Rich learning environments stimulate curiosity and exploration
- Analysis of the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) found benefits at age 4 years with use of early childhood education
- Research from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development found that children who experienced high-quality childcare scored higher on measures of cognitive and academic achievement

Long-term Benefits

- Children who attended nursery were still showing benefits in their academic results years later
- International research shows that children who spend longer in early years provision have better educational outcomes
- Research following 4,500 children found that childcare provides benefits for child development regardless of a family's background

At Norbury Hill Cubs, we create an environment where every child can develop and thrive, guided by our NHC 12 principles and supported by extensive research and early years theory. As one parent noted: *"I like the theory - shows you are doing things from a strong evidence base "*

Our approach is informed by leading child development theorists who have shaped our understanding of how children learn and grow:

Jean Piaget demonstrated that children think differently from adults and learn actively through exploration. His work shows us that children need to be "hands-on scientists," experimenting and discovering the world around them. This supports our belief in learning through play and child-led exploration.

Lev Vygotsky emphasised that learning is inherently social and happens through interaction with others. His concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" - what a child can achieve

with support before doing it independently - guides how our practitioners scaffold learning. As Vygotsky said, "What a child can do in cooperation today, he can do alone tomorrow."

John Bowlby's attachment theory shows us the critical importance of forming secure relationships with caring adults. This is why our key person approach and strong community bonds are so vital for your child's emotional security and development.

These theories confirm what we see every day at Norbury Hill Cubs: children flourish when they feel secure, valued, and supported by caring adults in a rich learning environment.

Managing Your Own Emotions During This Transition

It's Normal to Feel Anxious (We've All Been There!)

Starting your child at nursery often brings up a complex mix of emotions for parents. You might feel excited about your child's new adventure whilst simultaneously worrying about how they'll cope without you. These feelings are completely normal and shared by virtually every parent who has been in your position - even that seemingly super-confident parent at the playground has probably had the same wobbles!

One parent reflected: *"I think this emphasis on both the child and the parent's wellbeing as part of the settling in process is so important as it can be so overwhelming for both. If I were a new parent this would make me feel really reassured and confident that these people know what they're doing and have my family's best interests at heart! "*

Natural Feelings During Transitions

It's completely natural for both children and parents to experience a range of emotions when starting something new. Young children are incredibly perceptive and often pick up on their parents' emotions, including any worries or concerns. Studies show that environmental factors account for approximately 70% of outcomes in child anxiety, which means your positive, confident approach can make a real difference to how your child experiences this transition.

The Research Behind Confident Parenting

Studies consistently show that children whose parents approach new experiences with confidence and positivity are more likely to develop resilience and adaptability. Research published in meta-analyses reveals that parental modelling of positive behaviours promotes emotional security in children.

By focusing on the exciting opportunities ahead and maintaining a calm, positive outlook, you're giving your child valuable tools to embrace new challenges with enthusiasm.

Remember, your confidence in our nursery and your child's abilities makes a significant difference to their settling-in experience.

Age-Specific Strategies for Supporting Your Child (9 months - 4 years)

For Young Babies (9-15 months):

- Keep your voice calm and cheerful when talking about nursery - babies are brilliant at reading the room (or should we say, reading the parent!)
- Maintain gentle, relaxed body language during visits - babies are like tiny emotion detectives
- Bring familiar items like their favourite blanket or soft toy to provide comfort
- Stick to their usual feeding and nap routines as much as possible during settling-in sessions
- Keep goodbyes very brief and matter-of-fact - prolonged farewells can increase distress (think of it like ripping off a plaster rather than peeling it slowly!)

Tips for preparing very young children: While babies can't understand verbal explanations about nursery, you can help them by maintaining consistent, calm routines at home and speaking positively about the lovely people they'll meet. Familiar songs, gentle play, and maintaining their usual rhythms will help them feel secure.

For Mobile Toddlers (15 months - 2 years):

- Start talking about nursery in simple, positive terms: "You're going to nursery to play!" (enthusiasm is contagious - in the best possible way)
- Read simple picture books about nursery together
- Practice short separations at home with trusted family members (grandparents are excellent for this - they love feeling useful!)
- Encourage independence with simple tasks like putting toys away or feeding themselves
- Create a special goodbye wave or kiss that becomes your routine
- Avoid asking if they're scared or worried, which might introduce anxiety they hadn't considered (sometimes ignorance really is bliss!)

For Older Toddlers (2-3 years):

- Involve them in preparing for nursery - let them help pack their bag or choose clothes
- Talk about the exciting activities they'll do: painting, singing, playing in the garden
- Practice nursery routines at home like washing hands before snacks
- Read books specifically about starting nursery and discuss the pictures together
- Use role play with toys to act out nursery scenarios in a fun way
- Help them understand the routine: "After snack time, Mummy will come back"
- Encourage their growing independence whilst providing reassurance

For Pre-school Children (3-4 years):

- Have detailed conversations about what nursery will be like and answer their questions honestly
- Let them help choose a special nursery bag or water bottle to build excitement
- Practice independence skills like putting on coats, using the toilet independently, and tidying up
- Talk about making new friends and the fun activities they'll do
- Create a simple visual schedule showing the nursery day so they understand the routine
- Encourage them to express their feelings about starting nursery - both excitement and worries are normal
- Read books about friendship, sharing, and new experiences together

During All Sessions (All Ages):

- Stay calm and confident during drop-off - children are like tiny mood barometers and pick up on everything!
- Keep goodbyes short and sweet rather than prolonged (think "see you later, alligator" rather than a Shakespearean farewell)
- Trust our experienced staff to comfort your child if they become upset
- Remember that some tears at separation are completely normal and usually brief - we promise we're not traumatising them, just helping them grow!

After the Sessions (All Ages):

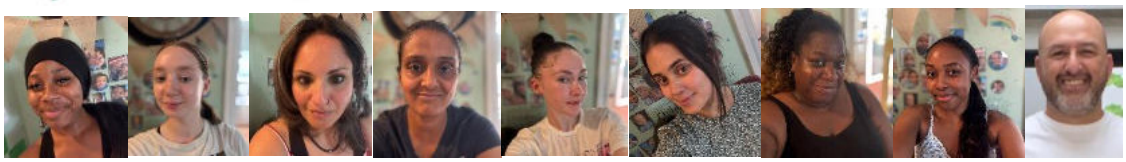
- Ask about the positive aspects of their experience using simple language appropriate to their age
- Celebrate small achievements: "You played so nicely with the other children!"
- Maintain regular communication with your child's key person
- Focus on the fun they had rather than any difficult moments

Additional Support During Your Journey

Photos and Videos: We love sharing the special moments of your child's day through photos and videos on our parents whatsapp group. Many parents tell us that seeing their child happy and engaged at nursery helps reduce any worries they might have. These precious snapshots allow you to celebrate your child's experiences and can be a lovely way to talk about their day when you're back together.

As one parent beautifully put it: *"The pictures received have helped me so much as a new parent and should be celebrated as they get to see their children having great experiences and can relive those moments. We watch the videos and pictures together when he gets home - it's really nice."*

Welcome to the Norbury Hill Cubs family - we can't wait to begin this wonderful journey with you and welcome you into our close-knit community!



The NHC 12 Curriculum - Our Foundation for Learning

Our curriculum is built around four key words: **GROW, EXPLORE, CELEBRATE, DISCOVER**

1. Develop Physical Potential - Children explore their environment and choose activities, developing skills naturally through well-planned, adult-led activities.

2. Appreciation of Your Senses - Through sensory play, we stimulate children's brain development, language skills, and problem-solving abilities.

3. Embrace the Outdoors - Outdoor play develops peer interaction, language skills, and gross motor abilities while building spatial awareness.

4. Develop a Sense of Self and Wellbeing - We help children understand their place in society by valuing their thoughts and feelings.

5. Ignite Curiosity - We observe, wait, watch, and wonder, then set up provocations based on children's interests.

6. Explore Your Creativity - Through free play, children express imagination and creative ideas. "Children learn as they play. Most importantly in play, children learn how to learn" - O Fred Donaldson.

7. Understand the Wider World - We build on what children know about themselves to help them celebrate similarities and differences between cultures.

8. Discover Your Voice - We give children a voice through choice, opinions, and emotions, helping them feel valued and confident.

9. Love Literacy and Numbers - We maintain a strong emphasis on speaking and listening, surrounding children with meaningful talk and print.

10. Engage with Local Community - We nurture connections between children, families, and local organisations.

11. Celebrate, Appreciate and Learn from Various Cultures - We respect diversity and help children develop understanding of our diverse world.

12. Embrace Individual Differences and a Sense of Belonging - Following Dr. Seuss's wisdom that "A person's a person, no matter how small," we involve children in decision-making and foster independent learning.

For more information about our curriculum, please visit our website or speak to any member of our team.

A Special Thank You to Our Lovely Parent Community

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our wonderful parent community who helped shape this settling-in guide. Special thanks to Claire (Rosalie's mum), Selina (Cyrus' mum), Chloe (Mason's mum), Rebecca (Amari's mum), and Stu & Aimee (Eden's parents) for their invaluable feedback, insights, and suggestions.

Their honest reflections and experiences have helped us create a guide that truly addresses the needs and concerns of families starting their journey with us. This collaborative approach perfectly represents what makes our NHC family so special - we genuinely listen to and value each other's voices.

Thank you for helping us make this guide something we can all be proud of!