

## Use of Comforters

Comforters are a 'Transitional object' the first which a child has chosen themselves, for example a blanket, muslin, dummy or teddy bear.

A child will use a comforter to lessen the stress of separation, while they sooth and comfort the child. When the child is tired, it will help them get to sleep. When they are separated from parents, it will reassure them. When the child is frightened or upset, it will comfort them. When they are in a strange place, it will help them feel at home.

These special comforts are called transitional objects, because they help children make the emotional transition from dependence to independence. They work, in part, because they feel good: They're soft, cuddly, and nice to touch. They're also effective because of their familiarity. Comforters have the child's (and home) scent on it, and it reminds them of the comfort and security of their own home. It makes them feel that everything is going to be okay.

The comforter allows for and invites emotional well-being and so without it true feelings may be concealed, suppressed or dismissed leading to emotional difficulties and poor mental health in later life.

In nursery we are preparing the children to be school ready, therefore during the pre-school year particularly and earlier if the child is ready, we will encourage the children to explore the setting and activities without the support of their comforter. The comforter will remain available to the child either in their bag or in the comforter basket. This will be addressed on an individual basis between the parent and the child's Key Person

When encouraging the child to put their comforter in the basket or bag staff will:

- The Key Person discuss with parents the best support for the child and will take the lead in managing use of the comforter at nursery
- Show the child the comforter basket and gently encourage the child to put the comforter in the basket
- Engage the child in an activity – the child will have less time to cling to the comforter if they have got interesting things to do, such as crafts, puzzles, and building toys.
- Give lots of hugs and reassurance, so the comforter isn't his only source of solace.

*Other toys or items brought in from home will be kept in the child's bag and parents encouraged not to bring items in. This is to prevent items being lost or broken, ensure the safety of the toys or items and for the consistency of sharing and turn taking.*