

Settling-in Policy and Procedure

Our Pre-school believes that children have the right to feel safe, secure and happy in our care. As such we believe that we have a duty to the children and parents/ carers to make sure that each child's needs are taken into account in order to help them settle-in ensuring, ensuring distress is recognised and minimised.

Procedure

The Pre-school recognise that settling-in can be a stressful time for both children and parents. It is important that parents/carers, as well as children, feel welcomed, relaxed and happy in our Pre-school in order to pass on these positive messages to their child. Therefore, the staff will:

- Work closely with the parent/carer;
- Support the child in the move from home, family and familiar people, into the new community of the Pre-school;
- Help the child make a strong attachment to her or his key person;
- Help the child feel secure and confident in Pre-school;
- Learn about what things help children to settle at times of distress.
- Work with the parent/carer to help the child with any difficulties that might arise.

The Settling-in Period

Different children need different amounts of time to settle-in, some may require their Parent/carer to remain with them for longer, some may require extra support at drop off times. This policy therefore relates to the time until the child is confident and secure to be left in the Pre-school without their parent/carer.

The Role of the Key Person

The Pre-school allocates a key person to each child when they start, as well as a second key person in the case of illness/ absence. The key person is responsible for the induction of the parent/carer and for settling the child into the Pre-school.

The key person will:

- Offer unconditional regard for the child and be non-judgemental;
- Work with the parent/ carer to plan and deliver a personalised plan for each child's wellbeing, care and learning;
- Be responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parent/carer and to keep these records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in the Pre-school and at home.

- Use strategies such as “keeping in mind” to aid children in settling.

The settling-in period is the time for the child to get to know his or her key person, with the reassurance of having their parent/carer there too. As the relationship develops, the child will be able to trust that their key person and the other staff in the Pre-school:

- Are able to meet her or his needs;
- Can be helpful, comforting and deal positively with any problems;
- Can provide interesting experiences which make it worthwhile to come to Pre-school.

The Settling-in Process

The Pre-school aim is to settle children in at their own pace. When children are ready to move away from their parents, staff will encourage and support this. In the long run, this means more settled and happier children and parents. The process often goes like this:


1. The parent/carer and child will be invited for a taster session prior to starting to see how the setting works, ask any questions, and introduce the child to the setting and staff. At this time the parent/ carer will be asked to complete a form to provide the Pre-school with information about the child (All About Me), this is inclusive of contact details and allergy advice, in order to help us meet their needs when they start in the setting. Parents/carers will also be invited to look at the Pre-school’s policies and are given a guide to starting and settling-in ‘Welcome to Cygnets Pre-school’.
2. The Pre-school will use the information provided by parents/ carers to get to know your child and to plan activities to capture the child’s attention on starting Pre-school.
3. Parents/ carers are welcome to stay for some or most of the child’s first two sessions as appropriate for each individual child. During this time, parents/carers are available to support their child, to ease the transition for your child from home to Pre-school and to help staff get to know the child. At this stage the key worker/staff will ask parents/carers to be available to their child but without being too involved. In other words, encouraging the parents/carers to avoid getting deeply involved in their child’s play at this time. Staff will always aim to be the first point of call to meet the child’s needs and will learn to recognise signs of upset, in this way the staff will take the place of the parent/carer.
4. The next step is for the child to spend time in the Pre-school without their parent/carer.. It will be up to parent/carer and the key person to discuss when the child is ready for this step. This means that the child has the opportunity to explore the pre-school and have her or his needs met by the key person and the rest of the staff. This might be for quite a short period of time at first, and then for longer stretches of time. It is very important that the parent/carer is asked to say clearly to their child that they will be leaving the pre-school. It is essential that parents/carers do not leave the building without talking with their key person first.
5. Finally, it is for the parent/carer to judge, with the support of the key person, when each child is ready to be left in the Pre-school with the staff. This is usually when they have formed a relationship with their key person so can explore cygnets from the secure base of their key person.

By this time the child will be familiar with where things are and be pleased to see other children and participate in activities. We are flexible with this process and recognise that all children are very different individuals.

Generally

At the start of each session the key person/other staff will ensure that your child is greeted and he/she is engaged quickly in an activity that is known to reassure and focus them.

If a child is distressed at dropping off time and continues to be upset after the parent/carer has gone, the Pre-school will contact the parent/carer. The child's key worker will discuss the best course of action with the parent/carer.

Signed 

Chairperson *B HARRISON*