



HOME VISITS AND SETTLING IN POLICY

Policy Statement

We may offer an optional home visit for children starting at our pre-school at the beginning of the September term, which is our make intake. Alternatively, we may offer a short 'settling in' visit to pre-school.

Home visits are an opportunity for the child and their family to get to know their key person in an environment that is secure and familiar to the child. The key person will begin to form a relationship with the child through engaging with them, if the child is comfortable to do so.

We will use the home visit to talk to and build a relationship with the family as a whole. We will also be able to answer any questions the family may have. Research also shows that children settle more quickly into pre-school if they have had the benefit of a home visit as when a child starts with us, they will remember seeing a familiar, trusting face within their own environment. This will naturally help them to feel a little more secure.

The home visit is offered on the understanding that our staff have volunteered to provide this service to families and it may not always be possible to provide this due to staff ratios.

Procedures

- A home visit may only be offered once parents have confirmed they wish to accept a place at our pre-school.
- The home visit is optional and does not have to be taken up by parents.
- Once a parent has confirmed that they would like a home visit, we will endeavour to provide this before their child starts at our setting. The home visit will be at a time during normal pre-school hours only. One home visit will be offered.
- We will invite parents to refrain from smoking during the home visit. We also request that parents let us know in advance if they have a dog, cat or other pet which may pose an issue with strangers.
- A home visit will always be attended by two members of pre-school staff which will normally be the key persons allocated to the child.



HOME VISITS AND SETTLING IN POLICY (continued)

- Staff will make their own way to and from the family's home.
- Staff will stay together during the home visit and would not expect to be left alone with the child at any time.
- The home visit will last a maximum of 20 minutes.
- Staff will be conscious of the fact that they are guests in the family's home and will treat all families with a high level of respect and regard during the visit.
- All staff will wear their uniforms when conducting home visits and provide evidence of identity if requested by the family.
- Staff will take a First Aid kit when attending a home visit.
- Before attending a home visit, staff will record the following details at pre-school: time, name and address of appointment, method of transport, emergency contact details of staff conducting home visit.
- At any time during the visit, parents may ask a staff member to leave and do not have to give a reason why. Both staff members will leave in this situation.
- If a member of staff feels unsafe or threatened in anyway during the home visit they will leave the premises.
- As childcare practitioners we have a duty of care to all children. In the event that we see or hear anything that may compromise the welfare of a child, we have an obligation to report this to the appropriate authorities.

Settling-In

We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents, to recognise other adults as a source of authority and to share with their parents the new learning experiences they enjoy at our pre-school.

We believe that children cannot play or learn if they are anxious or unhappy. Our settling in procedures aim to support parents in helping their children to feel comfortable in our pre-school, to benefit from the opportunities it has to offer and to feel confident that their parents will return to collect them at the end of the session.

Procedures

- Before a child starts to attend our pre-school, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with information. These include information available from our website, displays about activities available within the pre-school and individual meetings with parents.

HOME VISITS AND SETTLING IN POLICY (continued)

- During the time before they start with us, we provide opportunities for the child and their parents to visit pre-school.
- We allocate at least two key persons to each child and their family before they start to attend. The key persons welcome and look after the child and parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into our pre-school.
- We make clear to families from the beginning that we will support them in the pre-school for as long as it takes to settle their child. We encourage parents, where appropriate, to separate from their child for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
- Younger children usually 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 they arrive, 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 when they will be coming back.
- 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 reassure parents whose child seems to be taking a long time settling into pre-school.
- 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 our pre-school.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into our pre-school without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.