



# Settling-In Policy

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## **1. Policy Statement and Aims**

We recognise that starting an early year's setting is a significant transition for children and their families. Our aim is to ensure that every child is welcomed sensitively, feels safe and secure, and is supported to build trusting relationships with adults and other children. We understand that children settle at different rates and that the settling-in process must be flexible, responsive and tailored to each child's individual needs, stage of development and family circumstances.

We are committed to working in close partnership with parents and carers so that children experience a calm, consistent and positive start. Through a well-planned settling-in process and a strong key person approach, we seek to promote children's emotional wellbeing, confidence, sense of belonging and readiness to learn.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a consistent and caring approach to settling children into the setting.
- Support each child to form secure attachments with familiar adults.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to understand each child's routines, preferences and needs.
- Reduce anxiety for children and families during times of transition.
- Ensure that children's care is tailored to their individual needs.
- Identify and respond appropriately to any additional support needs at an early stage.
- Promote children's wellbeing, confidence and full participation in the life of the setting.

## **2. Scope and Legal Framework**

This policy applies to all children joining the setting, including babies, toddlers and pre-school children, and to all staff involved in admissions, care, learning, development and family support. It also applies when children return after a long absence or experience other significant transitions that may affect their emotional security.

This policy should be read alongside the current Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers in England, particularly the requirements relating to the key person approach, safeguarding and welfare, information sharing, and partnership with parents. The EYFS requires that each child is assigned a key person to help ensure that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become

familiar with the setting, to offer a settled relationship, and to build a relationship with parents and carers.

### **3. Key Person**

Each child will be assigned a key person before the start of their placement. The key person plays a central role in helping the child become familiar with the setting and in developing a positive relationship with the child and their family.

The key person is responsible for:

- Welcoming the child and family into the setting.
- Gathering relevant information about the child's routines, interests, culture, language, health, comfort needs and stage of development.
- Planning and leading settling-in sessions in partnership with parents and carers.
- Observing the child's responses and adapting the settling-in process as needed.
- Providing reassurance, comfort and continuity for the child.
- Sharing information with colleagues to ensure consistency of care.
- Maintaining regular communication with parents and carers during the settling-in period.

### **4. All Staff**

All staff have a responsibility to create a welcoming, calm and inclusive environment. They must support the child's emotional wellbeing, follow agreed routines and strategies, and communicate professionally and sensitively with families. Staff should be alert to any signs that a child is distressed beyond what would normally be expected during transition and must report concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

### **5. Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are children's first and most important educators. We ask parents and carers to work in partnership with us by: sharing accurate and up-to-date information about their child; attending settling-in sessions where appropriate; following agreed routines as far as possible and communicating any concerns or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's wellbeing.

## **6. Before the Child Starts**

Before a child begins attending the setting, we will take reasonable steps to gather and share information so that the transition is as smooth as possible. Depending on the needs of the child and family, this may include:

- Sharing information about the setting, daily routines, staffing, rest arrangements, policies and procedures.
- Introducing the child and family to the key person and, where applicable, a buddy or back-up key person.
- Asking parents and carers to complete registration and health forms and to provide emergency contact details.
- Gathering information about the child's likes, dislikes, comforters, sleep patterns, feeding needs, toileting, languages spoken, cultural practices and any medical or developmental needs.
- Agreeing a provisional settling-in plan with the family.

Where helpful and appropriate, we may liaise with previous settings, childminders, health professionals or other agencies, with parental knowledge and consent unless safeguarding concerns require otherwise. This supports continuity of care and helps us prepare effectively for the child's arrival.

We encourage parents and carers to tell us about anything that may affect how their child settles: recent family changes, medical needs, allergies, trauma, developmental concerns or anxieties. This information will be treated sensitively and handled in line with data protection and confidentiality requirements.