



31. Settling in to Pre-School Policy and Practice

Aims of Policy

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting. If there are any concerns at any time during a child's time at Seer Green Pre-School, we will discuss these with the parents. This procedure does not simply apply to new children, but throughout their time with us.

We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

Methods

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. We have an electronic 'Starter Booklet' which is available on the website, along with a host of further information. In addition, before a child starts at the Pre-School, we will contact the child's parents where possible to offer a home visit with their key person. Where a home visit is not possible we will offer a chance to visit the setting for a 'Stay and Play' session for parents and children. We will also ensure the parents have an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns.
- We allocate a Key Person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the Key Person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- The Key Person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The Key Person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The Key Person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- A Key Person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up to date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
- The Key Person encourages positive relationships between children in his/her key group, spending time with them as a group regularly.
- We operate Key Person partnerships so the child and the parents have a secondary key contact where the Key Person works part time.
- We promote the role of the Key Person as the child's primary carer in the Pre-School and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.
- We use a home visit meeting to explain all procedures and legal requirements to parents. We also complete the child's new starter forms. We do offer a stay and play option (where possible and on request) before a child starts if a parent wishes to bring their child and supervise them in the setting to help them familiarise themselves with the Pre-School. Although routinely parents are not advised to stay on their child's first day, the settling in process varies for each child. Therefore at the manager's/keyperson's discretion, parents may be offered the chance to stay for a limited period of time to help settle their child.

- When a child starts to attend, as well as at the home visit prior to starting, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- Younger children will 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 he/she arrives, 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 that they will be coming back, and when.
- 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, so we expect that the parent will remain flexible about the need to stay for a short period of time, until their child can stay happily without them.
- 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 the setting. The happiness and wellbeing of a child is the most important factor, therefore we may ask a parent to pick their child up early if he/she is very distressed and unable to settle.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.

As with all the policies for Seer Green Pre-School, the Operational Plan should be referred to for the specific details of day-to-day operations of the Pre-School. In addition, any issues which arise in the course of a child's time with the Pre-School and that are related to a child's health and wellbeing, parent's or staff's concern, or the overall care and safety of our children, staff, parents and equipment will be dealt with in a professional and confidential manner in order to arrive at an appropriate outcome.

This policy was adopted on (date) _____

Signed on behalf of Seer Green Pre-School (Chairperson) _____

This policy was reviewed as indicated below:

2006 created

2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 reviewed and updated as required

July-Nov 2017 reviewed and updated

June-July 2018 reviewed and updated

May 2019 reviewed and updated

June 2020 reviewed and updated

June 2021 reviewed and updated

July 2022 reviewed

June 2023 reviewed

September 2024 reviewed and updated

UNCRC related article:

Number 12

Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and have their views taken seriously.

Number 15

Every child has the right to meet with others and to join in groups, as long as it does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.