

## SETTLING-IN POLICY

Children must feel happy and secure without their parents, before they can play and learn successfully. They need to be confident that their parents or carers will return at the end of the session.

In order to achieve this our procedures are:

- To arrange for parents to visit with their child for part of a session before they start (if the manager feels there is a need beyond the usual Playday)
- Admission to the pre-school is staggered to reduce the number of new children starting at the same time.
- To recognise that parents know their child best and to work with them to make the child feel welcome and secure.
- We insist that the main carer must not sneak off but to tell their child that they are leaving and will return. We find that a child will settle in much quicker with this approach.
- We recognise that at some stage the child may need to be left even though distressed. In such cases the child will be given the continual support of one member of staff. If the child continues to be unduly distressed and is unable to settle, then the parent will be contacted and asked to return.
- If a child is upset when left, parents are welcome to telephone the Pre School at any time to enquire about them. Also, the Pre School Leader will attempt to ring you after the first half hour to let you know how your child is doing.
- Children will be allowed to bring in items of comfort if needed but these are either kept on the 'teachers desk' or in their school bag.
- We aim to give each child adequate time and support to settle into the setting. Parents' worries and concerns will be taken seriously.
- Parents who are anxious about their child will be given reassurance and information about their child's activities and welfare during the session.
- We recommend that parents/carers of children new to the group return early so the child does not become distressed when other children are collected and they are left waiting. (Young children have little concept of time and may not understand that you will "*be here soon*".)
- Children develop at different rates and parents should not be discouraged if their child does not settle in as quickly as another. We will offer reassurance and support.

Please bring in on the first day:

- A coat which is appropriate for the time of year/current weather - **named**
- A sun hat during warm, sunny weather or hat, scarf & gloves in cooler weather (**named**)
- School bag with a **full change of clothes** – this does not need to be uniform (all clearly named)

- Child's Starter Pack & any medication such as inhaler/Epipens (2). Remember to tell the pre-school of any important changes in your child's welfare, including telephone contact details and of any new medical needs e.g. allergies .
- A family photograph to be displayed on our 'Family Tree'

For now, children are to come to Pre School with a light bag that they can carry independently. Parents can have their child's bag stay at Pre School until the Friday for each week or for the duration of the Term if they wish. Items for celebrations e.g. birthdays must only consist of individual packets of chocolate buttons or Haribo (items such as cakes are discouraged). Should a child have a specific allergy that would exclude them from taking part then this would be communicated to all parents/main carers before children start the Pre School year and items for birthday will not be permitted if an alternative cannot be provided.

### **Arrival and Departure**

The Pre School Leader or Pre School Manager will greet children when coming in at the outside greeting point (outside gate) and the same routine will be implemented at departure. Parents/carers are not to come down to the door unless there is an emergency or the Leader or Manager are not outside at the greeting point. We aim to start the Pre School session at 9:00am and the outside gate may be closed from 9:05am for security.

A staff member will be positioned at the Pre School door should they need to assist the staff member at the greeting point. We are mindful that it may be a big step for some children to be led into a new setting by a staff member they're unfamiliar with and we will do our best to minimise the worries of children during this time. If a child is reluctant to come into Pre School on arrival, the staff member/s will attempt to reassure, support and appropriately distract the child. With the consent of the parent/carer and if deemed appropriate for the child and parent, a staff member will carry the child into Pre School. To assist with a smooth and positive handover, it is important that the parent/carer attempts to settle their child before coming to the meeting point. To ensure an efficient and safe arrival of children is maintained, the parent/carer may be asked to return to their car to settle their child if he/she continues to be too unsettled to come into Pre School but a managerial decision may be made to carry the child in, even if they are upset, as depending on the child, returning to the car may give mixed signals that they are 'going home'.

We will continue to work in partnership for the wellbeing of every child and in working in partnership with parents/carers, open lines of communication must be actively promoted for the best interests of the child. We will discuss if your child becomes increasingly unsettled coming into Pre School beyond the settling in period,

and we will work together to find ways to help your child (e.g. providing information on child's interests, favourite songs/music that could be played when child is coming into setting). As a parents/carer you will have your own concerns and whilst this is understandable, children can pick up on these feelings. If and when you can, 'paint a positive picture of the Pre School!' – talk about the fun activities they'll be doing, the new things they'll learn, the friendships they'll make and how your child can talk to the adults/staff at any time if they're feeling sad, angry or worried.