

SETTLING IN POLICY (EARLY YEARS)

Aim

We want every child to feel safe and confident here at Goodrington within a special relationship with a key person for the child to thrive. We create a welcoming environment where children settle quickly, providing individual care to the child by working closely with parents.

We recognise that for some children and parents, starting a new setting can be a worrying time. We make sure we have robust settling in procedures and a key person approach for us to get to know the child and parents, giving them the reassurance to feel safe.

Implementation

We start the settling in process before entry as we recognise this as a crucial time to build relationships and establish a two-way dialogue.

- We provide parents with all the relevant information before a child starts when they come to visit our setting. They are provided with a prospectus during their visit and after registration they are sent a welcome letter with various information sheets and forms for completion.
- We explain the settling in process to parents however, we are flexible to meet the parent's and child's needs. We recognise that different children have different ways to be settled/ the length of the process may be different, but we work with the parents to devise a strategy together.
- Opportunities are available for the child, with the parent to visit both the Pre-school and Reception classes prior to starting. This occurs towards the end of the Summer Term. Parents may stay and play if they wish. We encourage at least one visit, but cater to the individual child. This visit provides an opportunity to get to know the staff, talk about the individual child, any particular needs and familiarise themselves with the setting. Home visits are also available to those parents who request this option.
- As a number of our Pre-school children enter Reception, the class teacher and teaching assistant already know the children and parents. The Pre-school and Reception staff liaise to share information to ensure a settled transition.
- Each child's progress and learning will be captured in their own 'Trackers Booklet'. We invite parents to be as fully involved in this as possible. Photographs and some pieces of art work and writing will be kept in a scrap book for each child to take home at the end of the year. Parents are invited to send in photos of their own child engaged in an activity at home or visiting places of interest, that can be included in their scrapbook. In Pre-school, the settling in process is gradual and flexible. Parents are encouraged to remain nearby and be readily contactable. During these early times, some sessions may be shorter. In Reception, children start together.
- Every child in Pre-school and Reception is assigned a key person during the initial stages who helps the child to become familiar with the setting and develops a close relationship with them and the parents.

- Each key person has a small group of children with whom they spend time and get to really know personally and build these close relationships. They provide the care, individual attention and support that the individual child requires.
- The key person helps the child to settle in gradually. They greet the child in the morning. At the end of the day, the key person can tell the parents about the child's day.
- During the first days, children are shown where their own personal drawer is and/or peg. Lots of group opportunities are provided to develop the children's Personal, Social and Emotional Development skills.
- If the child is distressed in the morning and has been soothed by the key person, the Office Administrator telephones the parent to reassure them that the child has settled.
- The key person meets that child's needs – e.g. personal needs (toileting); providing comfort if they are upset; supporting them with their independence skills (dressing, undressing); supporting their behaviour.
- The key person is the main point of contact with the child's parents by liaising and talking with them about the particular child. The key person also takes responsibility for the individual child's target tracker book and scrapbook. They carry out observations of their children and together with the parents create this portfolio which is regularly shared and progress discussed. Reports are also produced and shared with parents (October and July).
- Times are planned during the settling in period and throughout the time that they are with us to talk with the parents to get to know the child well.
- Together with the other early years staff, observations are shared in order to plan for the child's next steps.