

Settling in Policy (including key person policy)

Newdigate Pre-school aims to develop your child's self-help skills and promote independence and self-confidence. The settling in process can often be emotionally difficult for both parent and child; new surroundings, new routines, new playmates, and new caregivers can be overwhelming to start with, especially after previous close contact with familiar family members, carers and friends. All children are special and unique and will settle differently into Pre-school. We want to reassure you as some will appear to take it all in their stride whilst others may find those first few steps a little trickier; however, with encouragement, care and support they will eventually happily settle.

To ease the settling period, your child will be allocated a key person to help them feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents. The allocation of a key person helps children to recognise other adults as a source of help, friendship and authority. The key person will also be able to share with parents the new learning experiences enjoyed by their children in Pre-school.

During the settling in period, you will also be given the choice to drop off your child for an hour or so and gradually increase the time; your child's key person will discuss the timings with you on the day to help your child adjust in the best possible way.

We want parents to feel welcome and involved from the beginning and establish a partnership with parents:

- By creating opportunities for the exchange of information, using among other resources the child's personal Family app profile detailing their daily activities, learning and development tracking, next steps, food, nappy changes etc.
- By ensuring plentiful opportunities for parents to inform the pre-school about their children's current achievements and interests both verbally and by noting on the Family app.
- By encouraging parents to visit the pre-school with their children during the weeks before an admission is planned.
- By offering to arrange a home visit in order to gain more insight into the child's backgrounds and needs, allowing the child and family to become familiar with their key person should it be needed.
- By introducing flexible admission procedures, if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- By making clear to families from the outset that they will be welcome and supported in the pre-school for as long as it takes to settle their child there.
- By reassuring parents whose children seem to be taking a long time to settle into pre-school.
- By introducing new families into the group on a staggered basis where possible, for example two new children a day for a week rather than ten new children all at once.
- By encouraging parents, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absence.

Children cannot play or learn successfully if they are anxious or unhappy. Our settling procedures aim to help parents and children to feel comfortable in the Pre-school, and to ensure that children can benefit from what the setting has to offer and feel confident that their parents will return at the end of the session/day.

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