

37. Settling In and Key Person

Statement of intent

Polesden Lacey Playschool intends to support parent/guardians to help their children settle at their own pace by giving consideration to the needs and circumstances of every child and their family.

Aim

Our aim is for children to feel safe, secure, happy and stimulated with all staff and their new environment. We also want to build parent/guardians confidence in both their children's continued wellbeing and their role as active partners; with the child being able to benefit from what the Playschool has to offer.

Practice

Before starting

Inviting prospective parents/guardians and children to visit the setting whilst we are in session allows us to showcase how we engage with the children in their learning, development and care. We find that this facilitates parents/guardians in asking questions which are important to them and their child.

Prior to a child starting, we use a variety of approaches to share information with parents/guardians - both verbally and in writing. During the summer term we invite new parents to a Welcome Evening where they parents and can meet the team, other parents and ask any questions. We will share the New Parents Guide detailing what parents/guardians need to know.

We ask parents to complete, with their child, an 'All About Me' form which will inform us about the child's likes and dislikes, favourite toys and methods of comfort.

Our policies are available on request in paper form at the setting.

We establish from the outset that we will be supporting the child to settle at playschool for as long as it takes. We will work with parents/guardians to decide the best strategy to settle their child, recognising that this is different for each child. The child will be given a picture booklet at the settling session to take home and share with their family.

Allocating a key person

Polesden Lacey Playschool will work in partnership with parent/guardians to settle their child into the playschool environment by allocating a key person to the child and their family, before they start Playschool.

The key person will:

- welcome and look after the child ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs;
- offer continuity for the child, further helping to build a relationship with their parent/guardians during the settling in period and throughout their time at the Playschool;
- ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process;
- facilitate the first one hour settling in visit. This is provided free of charge.
- welcome parent/guardians to stay with their child during the first few weeks until the child feels settled and the parent/guardians feel comfortable about leaving their child. Settling in visits are key to a smooth transition and to ensure good communication and information sharing between staff and parent/guardians;

- reassure parent/guardians whose children seem to be taking longer to settle at playschool and develop a plan with them to recognise the challenges; and
- encourage parent/guardians, where appropriate, to separate themselves from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

The on-going role of the key person will be to:

- provide parent/guardians with relevant information about the policies and procedures of the Playschool; and
- respect the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the Playschool and reassure them of their child's progress regarding settling in.

Should your key person be unavailable the management team will be your point of contact.

Policy Review

As part of Polesden Lacey Playschool monitoring of settling in this policy will be subject to periodic review.

Policy adopted by: Ellie Pragnell (Chair), Caroline O'Leary (Manager)

Date: September 24

Policy Review Date: September 25