



Wedmore First School Academy & Nursery

Prime times – Settling in and transitions

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children need to form attachments with the adults who care for them, primarily a key person, but others too. In this way they feel part of a community; they are able to contribute to that community and receive from it. Very young children, especially two- to three-year-olds, approach separation from their parent with anxieties, older children have a more secure understanding of 'people permanence' and are able to approach new experiences with confidence; but also need time to adjust and feel secure. It is the entitlement of all children to be settled comfortably into a new environment.

The setting manager agrees a plan with the parents for the settling in period. These details are then included in the welcome letter.

We offer:

1 x 30 minute settling session for parents and child

1 x 1 hour stay and play session for child only

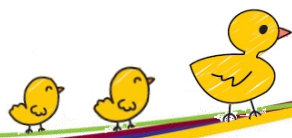
If a child is settled after these 2 sessions then they may start their full hours, however, if a child hasn't settled then additional settling in sessions are offered or a staggered start with reduced hours can be arranged.

Settling-in for children with SEND

- If a child has been identified as having SEND then the key person/SENDCo and parents will need to identify and address potential barriers to settling in e.g. timings of medication and invasive procedures, specific routines and levels of support.
- Where applicable a Preschool entry planning meeting will take place within the setting with parents/carers and the setting SENDCo. We gather information from other professionals involved if necessary such as speech & Language therapist, health visitor, area SENDCo, paediatrician, etc. This is so we can plan the best ways to help the child and their family with the transition into the setting, build the professional relationships between the family & the setting, and ensure all involved with the child know exactly what is going on.

Promoting proximity

- One hour is sufficient for a child to attend on their first settling in session initially.
- On the first day, the manager/key person shows the parent around, introduces members of staff, and explains how the day is organised, making the parent and child feel welcome and comfortable.
- Where possible, the key person always greets the parent and child whilst they are settling in.
- The parent is invited to play with their child and the key person and other members of staff spend time with them.



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Promoting secure base

- When the parent leaves, they are encouraged to say goodbye and say they are coming back. If a child is upset when a parent leaves then staff will set up activities around that child's interests to try and settle them and engage them in play. If a child does not settle well and is very distressed, parents will be called.
- All children are allocated a key worker; this is usually done at the settling in sessions. If a sibling has attended nursery previously, we aim to keep the same key worker across the family. If a child forms a strong bond with a different member of staff to their keyworker, we can always change the keyworker to suit the child's needs at any time during their time at nursery.

When a parent is unable or refuses to take part in settling in

- Information about the 'settling in' plan is provided in the welcome letter and the reasons are explained.
- If the parent feels that this will be difficult – perhaps another close relative can come in instead.
- Genuine difficulties need to be handled sensitively, but generally speaking this is not an issue where the parent has a choice not to attend with their child. A parent who refuses to take part in settling in may have the offer of the place withdrawn. A meeting can be arranged between the parents and manager.

Prolonged absences

- If children are absent from the setting for any for periods of time beyond two weeks, their attachment to their key persons will have decreased and will need to be built up again.
- Parents are made aware of the potential need to 're-settle' their children and a plan is agreed based on the individual needs of the child.

For children whose first language is not English

- For many children learning English as an additional language, the stage of proximity takes longer as the child is dependent upon the parents' input to make sense of what is going on.
- If the parent does not speak English, efforts are made to source an interpreter for induction; it will be helpful for them to see around the setting and be clear about their role in interpreting in the play area.
- The settling-in programme is explained to the parent, and it is emphasised how important it is that they stay with the child and talk to him/her in the home language to be able to explain things.
- Through the interpreter, the key person will try to gauge the child's level of skills in their home language; this will give the key person an idea of the child's interests and levels of understanding.
- The need for the parent to converse in the child's home language is important.
- Staff make the parent feel welcome using smiles and gestures.



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- With the parent, make a list of key words in the child's home language; sometimes it is useful to write the word as you would pronounce it. These words will be used with the child and parents will be addressed with 'hello' and 'goodbye' in their language.
- The key person prepares for the child's visits by having a favourite toy or activity ready for the child to provide a means to interact with the child.
- Children will be spoken to as per any other child, using gestures and facial expressions to help.
- When the child feels happy to spend time with the key person (secure base), the parent should spend time outside of the room.
- Progress with settling in will be done as with any other child; it just takes a little longer to reach dependency/independence.

Transitioning into Reception

- Nursery work closely with Reception to plan a smooth transition for the pre-school children moving into Reception. Children and parents are offered opportunities to visit the Reception classroom prior to starting. If nursery staff feel that children need an enhanced transition plan, then this arranged depending on individual needs.

Transitioning into Reception for children with SEND

- Where applicable a school entry planning meeting or school led transition meeting will be held in school with the child's parent(s) or carer(s), and other professionals around the child such as - the school class teacher, school SENDCo, nursery professional (Key person / Manager / SENDCo), health visitor, speech & language therapist, etc. This allows the school to plan the best way forward for the child and family during the transition into school and ensure all those around the child are aware of the support being put into place.

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Review: April 2025