



## **Strawberry Hill Pre-School**

### **Settling in - Parents as Partners Policy**

#### **Statement**

Our setting - We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy and to feel secure and comfortable. We also want parents to feel reassured and confident that their child's wellbeing is paramount.

#### **Aim**

Our aim is to make the setting a welcoming place where children and families settle quickly and easily. We do this by treating each family and child as individuals with unique needs. A key-person will be allocated to your child. The Management will aim to work closely with each family to help your child form a strong attachment to them and eventually the rest of the team. We will help your child to feel confident and secure by working at a pace that most suits your child. We will work with you to help your child with any difficulties that might arise.

#### **Method**

Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide parents with information. This includes written information, emails and policies. We complete a home visit prior to your child starting the nursery, and visits and tours around the nursery are encouraged.

Children settle in to our setting in lots of different ways. Some children will be confident as soon as they come in, whilst others may be anxious and nervous about leaving their parents. Most children will be somewhere in the middle. Please be reassured and try not to worry if your child experiences difficulties – it is all a normal part of child development.

Because of this, please note it is important that your child spends some time (settling in and having visit/s) with the key-person before the actual start day; this will help them to feel a little more settled and confident about their new environment. It also gives parents the opportunity to ask any questions and find out about how your child will be spending their day and the daily routine as well as getting to know the staff team and key-person.

These visits are a very important part of your child's settling in process. It is a time when relationships with the key-person, other children and staff can be built and you and your child can feel that they can start to build trusting relationships within a safe and secure environment. The length of the visit/s can vary depending on your child's individual needs and may need to be reviewed if your child needs more time to settle, but together we will jointly decide on the best way to help your child to settle. (settling in day/s will be free)

Children and parents will be shown around the areas of the nursery that are used for children, such as where they will play (indoors and out), eat and rest/sleep. Parents will be able to discuss any particular sleeping or eating habit, dietary and health needs their child has or any other individual needs they would like the key-person to consider.

This is also a good time to discuss how long the settling in day/s will be; ideally the first day/s should be shorter and planned so that the child is not the last one to be collected, as this can be upsetting for them. On their first day, parents may want to stay a while to see that their child is settled and happy. However, they need not feel obliged to do this and may leave soon after saying goodbye to their child. Parents are invited to telephone/text at any point during the day to check that all is well.

Progress of the morning will be explained upon collection. We have an expectation that parents, carer or close relative will stay for a short time during the first days/week to help their child adapt and cope with their new surroundings, especially if their child has not previously spent time away from you or home.

We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker and believe that a child's distress will prevent them from being happy, confident and secure in the long term. Children who have had a period of absence from our setting may need their parent on hand to re-settle them.

The key-person will judge a child to be settled and use indicators such as; when they have formed a relationship with their key-person, your child seems pleased to see the key-person and other children; is comfortable with their surroundings, and participates in activities. When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back later.

If a child finds it distressing to be left alone, we encourage the parent/carer to stay until the child is comfortable with their new surroundings. This will be reviewed to meet your child's individual needs.

Reviewed March 2019

*All Staff have signed to say that they have read and understood this policy*