Little Oaks Pre-School
Brackley

Settling in Pre-school –
(including the role of the Keyperson)

At Little Oaks we believe that children have the very best chance of thriving and learning if they are happy and confident in their environment. We therefore acknowledge the importance of the settling in process and our need to invest time and patience in this.
We want children to feel safe and happy in the absence of their parents, to recognise other adults as a source of kindness, authority, help and friendship and to enjoy their time at Little Oaks.

We also recognise that for some parents/carers leaving their child at Pre-school can be a stressful and unsettling event and that they too may need our support, care and guidance.
In order to accomplish this, we will therefore:

- Encourage parents to visit the Pre-school with their children during the weeks before an admission is planned.

- Explain to parents and carers that wherever possible we would encourage them to stay with the child for their settling in session and possibly for at least parts of several subsequent sessions, should this be required. Where it is not possible for a parent to stay then another adult who is important and special to that child will be very welcome to stay, for example, a grandparent, aunt, childminder or adult sibling.

- Ensure that parents understand that they are welcome to stay for whole or partial sessions if their child is struggling to settle until they feel that their child is ready to be left, Or a child can do shortened sessions until they are more settled.

- Encourage parents, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.

- Make clear to families from the outset that they will be supported in the Pre-school for as long as it takes to settle their child there.

- Reassure parents that if, on being left, a child shows signs of being in genuine distress then a member of staff will contact them.

- Allow comforters, blankets, etc. to be brought to the session if this helps the child feel secure and settled. Work over time with the family to help reduce the child's dependence upon these.

- Obtain as much information from home about the child's likes, dislikes, etc. prior to the child starting. This will be carried out via the Home Visit Questionnaire, completing the 'All About Me' section on Tapestry and at face to face meetings.

- Encourage parents/carers to bring family photos prior to the child starting at Little Oaks; these will be mounted and used for reassurance purposes or when they feel the need to share them.

- Acknowledge that moving from the Play Group room to the Pre-school room may be as stressful for some children as their first day in Play Group. Therefore, the above strategies will be used, if needed, at this stage too.

In order to ensure the transition from home to Pre-school is a positive and successful one for the child, we acknowledge that 3 hour sessions may be too long for some children at the onset of their time with us. Staff will therefore use their professional judgment and may suggest shorter sessions for some children, always with the aim of working towards full 3 hour sessions.

The Role of the Keyperson (and paired Buddy System)

At Little Oaks we fully appreciate that for children to feel settled, secure and ready to learn they need to make attachments to key people within the setting. We also believe that the same applies to parents and carers. In order to accomplish this, the following will apply:

- All children will be allocated a Keyperson prior to their first sessions at Little Oaks.
- The Keyperson will be allocated on a "best fit" basis and the following will be taken into account: sessions attending, number of key children each staff member already has and any expertise that staff may have.
- Wherever possible staff will not act as the Keyperson to a family with whom they have a personal relationship to ensure there is no conflict of interest and the relationship remains professional.
- The Keyperson will build a close, yet professional, relationship with the family which will encourage the two-way sharing of information and working towards the common goal of ensuring the very best for the child.
- The Keyperson will be responsible for ensuring all records (including developmental) are up to date and available (as applicable) to the parent/carer.
- The Keyperson will be responsible for ensuring all observations (including the 2-year old progress check) are carried out and shared with the parent/carer.
- The Keyperson will ensure that the child's individual needs are met via the planning process
- As children will work with a new Keyperson when they move from our Play Group into our Pre-school the above process will apply during that transition.

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

See also Fees and Charging policy.

Date of Review	Summary of Changes Made	Signed on behalf of the committee	Role of signatory
July 2012 – January 2025	Historic policy reviews	N/A	N/A
November 2025	Added new review table	Emily McGurk	Secretary
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Policy effective from July 2012