



Settling-in policy

The 'All about me' form and meeting

Before starting with us we will ask you to complete an 'all about me' form for your child. This will be passed to your child's key person before the 'all about me' meeting. This meeting is designed to take place before your child starts with us. It is an opportunity for all involved to get to know each other. The key person would like to find out things like; what are your child's special interests?, is there anything they don't like? how do they comfort themselves when they are sad? etc. We would also like you to share and discuss their starting points so we know some of the things they can already do and what they might need further support with.

When you know who your child's key person is you can also talk about them at home leading up to the all about me meeting and their first day. You should find their photo on the 'meet the teams' page of the website.

Settling In Bag

We suggest bringing in a few items in a labeled bag; a special toy to play with, a book to read and some family photos to look at in the first few weeks. These can be passed to your child's key person at the all about me meeting or on their first day.

The first day/week

During the initial settling in period, parents are welcome to come on site and settle their child for the first 15 minutes of the day between 9.00 and 9.15.

Your child's key person will take the lead in helping your child to settle. They draw on their experiences and understanding of children to help things go as smoothly as possible. Strategies range from engaging the child in some fun, sensory play or reading a story together in the cosy corner.

During their first week, children do a much shorter day by being dropped off at 9:00 and collected at 12:00.

The first week is very much about children becoming accustomed to the setting and forming an attachment with their key person, who will be with them for much of the time.

The second week

During their second-week children are dropped off at 9:00 and collected at 14:00. This includes sharing a packed lunch with the group.

The third week

During the third-week children can attend a full day from 8:00 until 15:20 and, **if booked on, they can also start attending after kindie.**

After this initial settling in period we ask that your child is dropped off at the main gate. Please see the parent handbook for more details.

What if it's not going well?

We encourage parents to say a quick goodbye even if the child is a little upset. This is because, from our experience, we find it is the process of saying goodbye and separating from the parent that is the most distressing part.

Once the parent has gone the key worker can begin to form those important bonds with the child and comfort them.

The good news is that usually, within 10 minutes or less of parents having said goodbye, we are texting parents and sharing photos of their child smiling and having fun.

However, if a child is particularly distressed and unconsolable we will always phone the main carer/main contact so that they can either come

and be with the child or collect them to take them home. This happens very rarely.

Each child and family are unique

Although we encourage parents to say a quick goodbye we also recognise that for some children (and parents) this might be easier said than done. Equally, this might not sit well with your parenting approach. We value and respect children and parents' choices so arrangements can be made to allow more flexibility at the start. For example, parents may choose to stay for the first hour or so or they may decide that they only want to do a two-hour settling-in session rather than three.

Please speak to your child's key person or with the manager if you'd like to discuss your child's 'settling in' time with us in more detail so we can make these arrangements.

Other ways of helping children to settle

See and Play Sessions in the woods

We encourage all parents and children to attend at least one 'see and play' session before starting with us. They are an opportunity for children and parents to explore the surroundings and become more familiar with the forest school site environment. During this time adults from the kindergarten will start to build relationships with the children and their families by making them feel welcome and including them in the play.

Home Visits

These can be arranged on request. There may be occasions when we suggest we do a home visit if we have concerns about a child.

Starting mid year (any point after the usual September start)

If starting mid year, we request that children do at least one week of settling in from 9:00 -12:00. After this point, the manager and key person will assess the child's readiness to move to longer days, communicate this with you and make arrangements for week 2 and 3. If booked on to After kindie this will always start in week 3.

This policy was adopted by: Out There FS and K	Date: March 2019
Reviewed: Nov 2023 To be reviewed: July 2024	Signed: Jenny Brough