09 Early years practice procedures

**09.4 Prime times – Settling in**

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 and key person explain the need for settling in and agree a plan with the parents, this should be in the best interest of the child..

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

* Information about the ‘settling in’ plan is given at the first visit 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 A parent who refuses to take part in settling in may have the offer of the place withdrawn.

**Prolonged absences**

* If children are absent from the setting for any periods of time beyond one or 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 need to ‘re-settle’ their children and a plan is agreed.

**Two-year-olds starting a setting for the first time**

* A two-year-old may have little or no experience of group care. As part of gathering information from parents, it is important to find out about the child’s experience of non-parental care, for example grandparents, or childminders; this informs staff as to how a child may respond to a new situation.
* To settle in a two-year-old, the setting will go through a process of gradually increasing the time a child attends with a parent/carer during the proximity stage.
* On the first day, the parent attends with the child for one hour, and meets with the key person, on day two, the parent stays longer, however may choose to leave for a short duration if suitable to see how the child settles without the parent, and with the Key Person for support. This time is gradually increased appropriately and should be discussed by the manager, key person and parent.
* Separation causes anxiety in two-year-olds, as they have no concept of where their parents have gone. Parents should always say goodbye and tell them when they will return. Patience with the process will ensure children are happy and eager to come to play and be cared for in the setting.

**Three- and four-year-olds**

* Most children of this age can move through the stages more quickly and confidently.
* After the parent attends an induction meeting with the setting manager or deputy and key person, (or in some circumstances a home visit), then a plan is decided for settling in. This may include the nursery teacher if the settling in of the child is during the 30 hours wrap-around care.
* Each settling in will vary depending on the child and parent requests, and what is best for the child.

**For children whose first language is not English**

* For many children learning English as an additional language, settling may take longer.
* 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. Efforts are made to translate any plans into their home language and shared via email.
* The need for the parent to converse in the child’s home language is important.
* The key person makes the parent feel welcome using smiles and gestures.
* 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, as they would in a usual settling in session.
* Children will be spoken to as per any other child, using gestures and facial expressions to help.

| This policy was adopted by | WORMLEY PRE-SCHOOL | *(name of provider)* |
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| On | February 7th 2023 | *(date)* |
| Date to be reviewed | February 2024 | *(date)* |
| Signed on behalf of the provider | Emily Kilduff | |
| Name of signatory | Deborah Harris | |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) | Chair | |