



Settling into Pre-school Policy

St Marks Pre-school aims for children:

- to learn to be strong and independent through the development of positive relationships. To be confident in the relationships that they have with their Key Person and the practitioner team.
- to feel safe, confident to express their ideas and feelings and feel good about themselves so that they are more inclined to try things out and be more independent.

The Key Person role

When children start with us at pre-school they can be inclined to be emotional, but with a good transition into the setting it is anticipated they will soon feel secure. To support this, before a child starts at pre-school they are allocated a practitioner to be a Key Person. During the settling period the Key Person will respond sensitively to a child's feelings, support their wellbeing and meet their emotional needs. It is anticipated that this Key Person will quickly become a familiar figure who is accessible and available as a point of contact for parents and builds relationships with parents or carers. Each child is also allocated a 'buddy' Key Person ensuring that there is always an identified practitioner there for a child.

Parental Involvement

St Marks Pre-school aims for parents to feel fully involved with their child's time at pre-school right from the start.

In the term before a child starts at pre-school, parents will be provided with a pack of information that will include a registration form, 'All About Me' form, Tapestry Consent form, St Marks Pre-school Privacy Notice and a Welcome booklet detailing lots of useful information and links to key policies on the pre-school website. Each child will also be given a small photo book about starting at St Marks Pre-school.

When a child starts at St Marks Pre-school, their first session will be a two-hour 'settling visit'. Both parent and child will be expected to attend this session. The Key Person will be made available just for the new child and parent/carer. During this time the Key Person will gather the important information from the registration form and All About Me form. This time will enable the Key Person to understand how best to support the child as well as provide an opportunity to play alongside them. During this time parents also have the opportunity to see first-hand the format of a pre-school session and to ask lots of questions.

As far as possible start dates for children will be staggered to enable the Key Person to allocate time for settling. It is the expectation that a parent/carer will stay with their child for at least a portion of their first full session.

For children finding it hard to settle

The settling procedure is completely flexible and will be extended or adapted with parental involvement to ensure that the needs of individual children and families are met and the start to pre-school is a positive experience.

The parent of any child who has struggled to settle happily will be encouraged to telephone the pre-school for reassurance, or alternatively the Key Person or Administrator will make contact.

The pre-school is happy for any new child to bring in a special toy or comforter for the settling period to support the child's sense of wellbeing.

If a child does not settle and is in significant distress, parents will be contacted and asked to return. If the child continues to struggle to settle, a more intensive joint approach to support both the child and parents/carers will be developed in discussion with the family.

Parental involvement and a sense of belonging

We encourage parents to share information with their child's Key Person about achievements at home and current interests. The pre-school requests that parents contribute to an 'All About Me' form for their child and attend a short informal meeting to complete a Starter Assessment. This meeting will be held with each child's parents within the first 2/3 weeks of a child starting.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the pre-school held on (date)

Signed on behalf of the pre-school

Also see: Parental Involvement