



Together, caring and learning

Settling Policy

We aim to make the big step from home to pre-school a positive experience for parent/carer, child and key person so we work closely with each family to ensure they have all the information and experience of the preschool they need to feel confident about the care offered. We treat each child and their family as unique and will develop a flexible plan to meet the needs of each one.

How do we do this?

Prior to entry:

All parents/carers are encouraged to visit the group when putting their name on the waiting list to ensure it offers the kind of experience they want for their child. They are encouraged to read our policies and procedures, to observe how the staff interact with the children and to ask for any information they would like.

There is an annual parents evening for all those on the waiting list for the following year where information is given about early years education and what to expect at Salway Christian Pre-school.

Once offered a place parents are encouraged to visit the pre-school during a session to look around with their child.

This is followed by a home visit made by manager and key person to begin to establish a relationship between pre-school and the child in a secure environment and to give both parent and child information about the pre-school. Shortly before the child starts they will be invited to attend a pre-school session with their parent carer. During these visits the carer and key person will begin to make a settling plan based on the wishes of the carer, the experience the child has already of being separated from parents and their personality. The parent/carer will also be asked to fill in all the registration forms, initial child profile and "all about me" sheet and to discuss any concerns with the key person and manager if appropriate.

When a child moves from another setting to Salway their key person will contact that setting and where possible visit the child in that setting to understand how they interact with the key person and the environment and to liaise with the key person about a smooth transition for the child.

On Entry:

Start dates are carefully planned so the intake is staggered and a key person will never have more than one new child on any day so on a child's first morning they will be free to concentrate on the new child and his/her parent/carer.

While a different plan will be made for each child and the settling period will be paced according to how each child copes with the separation and the pre-school routine there are certain guidelines which we ask all parents/carers to follow. These are set out below:

Settling in your child – Please talk to your child’s key person about this process. As each child is different and has had different experiences up to this point this will be different for each child. We would encourage you to stay as long as is necessary for your child to feel secure but during this time to gradually encourage your child’s first steps of independence perhaps at first by keeping to the other side of the hall, then leaving for short periods. We do not want to rush this but we will try to encourage you to leave as soon as your child seems ready. We suggest that to help your child you:

1. Explain to them exactly what is happening and who will look after them until you return.
2. Settle them with an activity they enjoy
3. Say goodbye confidently and move out of sight.

If your child cries do not return immediately, many children cry for a few minutes when first left then settle down happily. We will of course contact you if your child shows prolonged signs of distress. Throughout this time it is most important that you stay in control, so we recommend that you don’t tell your child you are going to leave unless you are confident you can carry it through. If you are unable to do as you have said the process can become much longer and more painful for everyone involved.

Parents/carers are encouraged to telephone if they are anxious to know how their child is getting on during the morning. Parents of younger children or those who have little or no experience of separating from their parent may be encouraged to return early before the child gets too tired as a shorter but happy first day is much better than a longer one with an unhappy ending.

Throughout the settling process parents/carers are encouraged to communicate regularly with their child’s key person and after a few weeks (depending on the number of sessions attended per week) the key person will arrange a time to meet with the parent/carer to discuss their early observations and to agree on targets that can be worked on at home and at pre-school. At this time they will also be encouraged to take their child’s profile book home to share with their family. Regular communication and a close relationship between family and key person are continued throughout a child’s time at pre-school.

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