

## Whiteley Preschool Transitions Policy



Transitions are a part of life for young children and some children will have mixed emotions during these periods of change. It is our aim at Whiteley Preschool to have smooth transitions where both parents and children are supported. Preparation is key to helping with this process.

### **When a child joins the preschool**

All parents will be contacted at least one month in advance of their child's start date to arrange settling in sessions. Each child can have as many sessions as he/she requires to help them feel comfortable at the preschool. The aim of these sessions are for the child to feel happy and secure enough to allow their parent / carer to leave them in the preschool room, with their key person for a short period of time. Some children adapt to this very quickly and are quite happy to run off and play. However some children are wary at first and we have put in place the following steps to help settle a child. These steps are all followed in sequence however the rate children move up a step is variable.

1. Child and parent stay and play for an hour with minimal contact with staff. The key worker will ideally be in session and able to say a quick hello and have a little play. We do not want to overwhelm a child on their first visit which is why we step back a little. Please do not mistake this as a lack of interest, just our way of giving your child some 'space' on their first visit. One of the managers will chat with the parent to explain a bit about the preschool and to answer any questions they have. This first session can be a good indication as to how many more settling in sessions your child may need and we will discuss this with you at some point. You know your child best and we will always follow your lead.
2. The second stage is when the key person will try to start to play more with the child and we encourage the parent to step away slightly to allow the child to begin to bond with their key worker. The aim is to encourage in the child that this is where they come to play, not where mummy (any parent / carer) comes to play too.
3. The parent can begin to move further away, for longer periods of time; this can be repeated as many times as necessary until the child stops following their parent and is happy to know that they will return.
4. Once a child is happy to play with the other children / on their own or with their key worker and is happy for the parent to quickly pop out of view, we will try to do a longer separation. The parent must always tell the child they are about to leave (to go to the toilet / get a cup of tea / make a phone call) and tell them they will be back soon. It really helps here if the parent can keep a positive tone to their voice and not cuddle their child too much (we know this can be very hard as leaving your child can be very emotional for parents, particularly if the child appears unhappy). Once the parent has said they are leaving they must then leave the main play room, even if the child cries the parent is encourage to leave. If the child is very upset we suggest the parent counts to 30 then comes back into the room. The child needs to understand that when their parent says they will come back they do return. This is then repeated a few times, gradually increasing the amount of time the parent spends out of the room. The aim is that the child can be settled by their key worker and are happy to play.
5. Once all parties are happy that the child is settled for an hour at a time, they can begin their sessions.

Some children will regularly become unsettled when their parent leaves them, no matter how many visits they have had. If this is the case, a member of the management team will speak with the parents to agree a plan which meets the best needs of the child and continues to support the parents.

## **When a child leaves the preschool**

When children leave the preschool, either to move onto school, or to attend another setting we endeavour to support this transition as much as we can. If a child leaves to attend another setting we will seek information on when their last day will be. We ensure we say a fond farewell to the child, acknowledging that this is their last day with us. We ensure all learning journal information is up to date and handed over to the parents. Ideally before the child's last day, where appropriate, the child's key worker will contact the new key worker to hand over useful information. If needed and appropriate, we will visit the child's new setting with them. We ensure we remain open to communication with the child and the parents after they have left the setting, to help with any transition problems that arise.

When a child leaves to start school we support them and the parents in the following ways:

1. Parents are invited to attend a school readiness workshop to inform them about the transition process.
2. Staff work with children to ensure they are school ready.
3. Where possible, children are taken to visit their new school with their key worker.
4. Transition photo books are made for each child with images of their new school.
5. The environment at preschool is slightly adapted to allow for school role play, dressing up, discussions etc.
6. Any concerns that children are not school ready are raised with parents and meetings to discuss this with the schools are arranged.
7. Preschool staff attend a transition to Year R event (communication events for settings and schools to liaise with each other regarding each child). Information such as safeguarding, areas of development and areas of strength are shared.
8. When children have SEND, separate meetings are held with the SEND Co of each setting, other agencies, where needed and parents.

## **Transitions throughout the day**

Some children find change difficult to process. To help, Whiteley Preschool has a clear rhythm of the day which enables to understand what will happen next; a visual time line is used to support this. Children are given a five minute warning when a change to the routine is about to take place.

This policy was adopted on

Date: 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Updated 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Signed:.....Chair person