



Foresteers Outdoor Preschool

Settling-in and Transition Policy

Including Key Person

Reviewed January 2026

Reviewed by Hayley Smith - Preschool Manager

Introduction

At Foresteers Outdoor Preschool we are committed to meeting and supporting the needs of each individual child. We aim to make sure that the transition process into and within our preschool is a positive and happy experience.

As Early Years Practitioners' we play a key role in working with parents to support their child.

Transition into Preschool

At Foresteers Outdoor Preschool we understand the importance of the settling-in process and are committed to making it as stress free as possible. We approach settling-in in a flexible open-minded way, and try to find out what works for each individual child.

How it will work

- The preschool manager will contact you to arrange two settling-in visits, normally the week before your child's full sessions start. We suggest that for the first hour visit you should stay with your child and for the second visit, once they have got to know the staff a little, you could leave the child for half an hour or so to give your them the experience of you going and coming back. We will play this by ear and if your child is upset at the idea, then you can stay on site, but take more of a background position.
- When the timetable starts properly, you are welcome to stay until your child feels more settled; although it can be counterproductive if this continues for too long.
- After approximately 4 weeks we will invite you to a settling-in review meeting with your child's key person, to discuss how your child is getting on.
- Sometimes after a holiday or absence your child may need to be helped to settle again. We will support you in this.

What to expect

It may be a smooth, easy process, but the more you are prepared, the easier it will seem. It's very common for a child to cry at moment of separation from their main carer and be fine moments afterwards. It's a normal response until your child learns through experience that you are leaving, but you are coming back.

Preparing your child

- Maybe they are already used to this separation and have experience of being looked after by adults other than you. If not, you could try this with a close friend that they know well for short periods before they start preschool. It's important to always emphasise that you are coming back. Be specific as possible. "I'm going to the shops, Claire will look after you, I'll be back when you have had your lunch."

- Always say goodbye to the child before you go. It's tempting to leave quietly when they are happily playing, as you don't want to disturb them and risk upsetting them. But if they look up and you have gone, they are left with the insecure feeling that you could disappear at any time.
- Keep goodbyes as brief as possible – decide you are going then a quick kiss, reminder when you'll be back and leave. The more drawn out it is, the longer that feeling of separation lasts.

Remember we are used to settling children into preschool and will be very patient and know how to help them through it. It sometimes takes a while, but in the end most children will be running happily every day.

What is a key person?

The welfare requirements from the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 1.10 states that *"Each child must be assigned a key person"* Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting.

The key person must:

- help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs.
- seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home.

The framework also states 'Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.' Paragraph 3.27. The Key person should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

The key person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.

Your Child's Key Person

As we are a small preschool, all the adults will be part of your child's experience, however your child will be designated a member of staff that is their 'key person'. A key person will be chosen for your child within the first few weeks of them starting preschool, based upon who the child has formed a bond with thus far. Parents will be introduced to their child's key person and will be advised this key person will be their initial point of contact at the preschool and will be responsible for updating the children's records and updating parents about their child's progress within the play environment.

Key Person Responsibilities

Relationships with key children

- The key person provides a secure attachment for their key children in the preschool.
- They help their key children settle in and become familiar with the setting.
- The key person meets the needs of their key children responding sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- The key person provides a 'secure base' for the children by being there to support them and allowing them to explore at their own pace.
- They are primarily responsible for their key child's care routines.

- As part of our weekly meetings, our managers will provide support and time for their staff to talk through any difficult issues and feelings that may arise as part of the key person role.

Relationships with parents/carers

- Key persons should develop a good relationship with parents / carers, ensuring that the child is cared for appropriately at preschool and accommodating their individual needs within the daily routine.
- The key person needs to develop a two-way flow of communication between themselves and the parent/carer to help them become aware of any significant aspects of family life that maybe important to the child.
- The key person has responsibility for sharing their key children's development profiles with parents and other professionals as required, in cases of children with additional needs or identified children in need they will be called upon to attend reviews and core group meetings with the support of a senior manager.

Records

The key person is responsible for observational records of their key children, using these to inform next steps, individualised planning, Targeted Plans, and completing development profiles for each of their key children. Where a child is supported by another member of staff who is not their key person e.g. SEN support record keeping then becomes a joint responsibility.

Welfare and Safeguarding

Key persons are responsible for the welfare of the children in their care monitoring patterns of absence, injury and development referring them on where necessary. Any concerns should be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection procedure.

Transition to school

At the end of the pre-school age, children will go off to school, usually within the local community. We like to make sure a smooth transition ensues and to help this along we work closely with the child's new school/teacher wherever possible. The new teacher has the opportunity to visit Foresteers Outdoor Preschool to enable the child to become familiar with him/her and talk to the child's key person. Assessments and Learning Journals are forwarded to the new school setting.

Children who have additional needs: We will ensure that all paperwork is passed on to a new school and any other relevant information regarding the children's additional needs.

It is our aim that no child shall be disadvantaged due to transition. They will be allowed to settle at their own pace. Children who are settled and happy will demonstrate involvement and wellbeing and continue to make progress in their learning.

This policy was adopted on

1st January 2026

Signed on behalf of the preschool

Hayley Smith

Date for review

December 2026