



HEALTH, WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to belong to healthy, confident, connected and secure communities

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8. SETTLING- IN

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Person responsible for approving Policy	Stuart Buchanan
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This policy has been communicated to parents/guardians.

Relevant staff know the requirements and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to this policy.

Relevant staff have received training on this policy.

Statement of Intent: We aim to ensure children feel safe and secure in the absence of their parents/guardians. Due care and attention will be paid to a child's need for time to settle into our setting.

Policy and Procedure: The Service will therefore endeavour to make the settling-in process a positive experience for children and will work closely in partnership with parents/guardians to ensure this is achieved.

We recognise that in some cases there may be particular difficulties experienced by children, parents/guardians and staff during the settling-in period and we are prepared to explore and consider various ways of settling children into the Service. All children are individuals and we plan to meet their individual needs and resolve any difficulties quickly and smoothly. In order to accomplish this, we will ensure that:

Pre-Admission:

- The Service invites the child and parents/guardians to visit at an agreed time.
- We offer phased/staggered settling-in.
- Prior to enrolment exchange of information will take place between parents/guardians and staff. In order to meet the needs of each child parents/guardians will be asked to fill out the "All About Me" form. Parents/guardians are encouraged to provide us with information on their child's likes/dislikes, interests, achievements etc.
- Parents are encouraged to tell their child when they are going to begin at the service. An infant can be told "(Insert staff member) will take care of you this morning." A toddler can be encouraged to look forward to playing with other children a few days in advance and can then be reminded on the day itself.

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- Parents are encouraged to talk with their child's Key Person about bringing items from home that are important to their child, for example, a favourite soft toy or blanket, photos of family members, or a recording of themselves reading a favourite story or singing a familiar song.

Continuity of Care: Continuity of Care is very important for the development and security of young children. Each child that attends are service has a key person that will be his/her main carer/educator. The key person provides an important link between the child and the parent. We aim to minimize any changes to staff to maintain a continuity of care.

Staff Support: Through supervision, training and support staff are supported to enable effective transitions. If a staff member is struggling in this regard they are encouraged to seek help and support.

First Day:

- We will greet the child and parent together.
- Each child will be appointed a key worker.
- The parent/guardian will be assured of the value of their presence to the child in this process.
- Parents/guardians are offered to stay for the child's first session.
- Some children may not be ready for a full session and the person in charge will advise the parents/guardians on this matter.
- Parents/guardians will be made aware of the necessity of interacting with their child and the other people in the Service in order to reassure the child of the safety of the new surroundings.
- Children must be collected on time and promptly from their session at the agreed time.

On-going Matters: Parents/guardians must never leave their child without saying goodbye. Parents are encouraged to keep their child's Key Person up to date with relevant information on any big changes in the child's home life or circumstances and small changes, such as when their child masters new skills or helps out with tasks and routines at home. Knowing this information, the educators can provide individualised support for the child where needed and recognise and build on the child's skills.

Soothers are only to be used for sleep time, unless a child is upset or has just started and needs comforting.

What Staff Can Do:

- Welcome each child and their parents by name each morning.
- Help parents to recognise a child's need to feel connected to their parents when they are apart.
- Help parents appreciate the importance of goodbye rituals.
- Support both parents and child in their ritual for saying good-bye.
- Continue to make parents welcome. Encourage them to spend time when they bring their child in the morning and when they return at the end of the day.
- Give parents information about their child's experiences each day and invite them to share information about their experiences with their child at home (
- Display interesting items for people to talk about, such as photos of the previous day's/week's experiences.
- Invite parents to bring special items from home that will help their child feel connected.
- Help the child express their feelings about their parents leaving. Talk with them about their home and family later in the day. Suggest that they call their parents on a real or toy telephone.
- Invite the child to paint, dance, sing or tell a story using toys as characters.
- Give the child opportunities to use the skills they know. Sharing tasks like preparing for meals or putting toys away can also reinforce their feelings of competence.
- Play games of hiding and reappearing.

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- Read stories of good-byes and returns.

Transitions Within the Setting:

- Children can attend to personal routines, such as going to the toilet, according to their individual body schedules.
- Children have easy access to their transitional objects when they want or need them and are given time and understanding to help them to become more able to manage longer periods without them.
- While balancing the range of activities (active/quiet, small group/large group/individual, indoors/outdoors), routines and transitions are kept to a minimum and managed consistently so that children can develop trust and a sense of security.
- Transitions within the daily routine, although managed consistently, are as flexible as possible to allow for children to follow their interests where possible.
- Transitions that must happen, involving moving from one type of activity to another, are planned so that children who are ready before others have something to do while they wait.
- Children are given advance notice visually [*for example with an interactive visual routine and or large egg timers*] of changes to routines or planned changes within the schedule of activities that will affect them.
- It is considered important to recognise that some children need to be given more time, support and assistance to cope with changes in activity levels and/or types of activities, than others.
- If the furniture is going to be changed around or major changes made to the environment, this is discussed with the children and explained in advance so that they can be involved and understand why the change is happening.
- Children can participate in helping with routines as much as they are able (for example helping to set the table or cleaning up)

Transition to Primary School: Throughout the years before children move to school they are supported to develop the skills and dispositions they will need to transition and settle in well to the school setting.

These skills and dispositions are developed through our quality curriculum, which is informed by Aistear the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. The curriculum we provide supports children's learning and development under the themes of Wellbeing, Exploring and Thinking, Communication and Identity and Belonging.

We are also:

- Open to liaising with the local primary schools.
- Building a programme regarding "Starting Big School" into our curriculum.
- Focusing on practical "independence" skills.
- Liaising with parents/guardians so that teachers and parents/guardians have a consistent approach regarding preparation for school.
- Keeping children's journals/scrapbooks/folders.
- Having a progress meeting with parents/guardians to discuss school readiness.

Graduation: We organise a graduation ceremony to support the transition to primary school.

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Signed:  **Date:** 8th May 2024

Name: Stuart Buchanan

Person responsible for approving the Policy