

EARLY YEARS ENTRY

ADDENDUM TO ADMISSIONS POLICY

Early Years Entry/Induction Policy, Frinton Primary School

At Frinton Primary School, we work hard to ensure that every child's transition from their pre-school setting into our Early Years Class is smooth and positive; our concerns for the children's well-being and development are paramount. It is important to us that all children start school, following a carefully planned induction process, at the start of the Autumn Term.

Before children start school

Once school places have been offered, we contact the parents/carers of the children who are due to start with us in September. We welcome parents/carers in to school for an initial meeting where we introduce our staff, show them the setting, talk about what the children will be learning, advise them on issues such as school uniform and school lunches and talk about our school's core-values. Whilst the parents/carers are in this meeting, the children have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the classroom and outdoor area and have the chance to meet the staff who will be working with them and the other children in their co-hort.

In July, the children are again invited into school for some 'taster' sessions. The children benefit from this opportunity to play with their peers and get to know the staff, and they are gently introduced to their new school routine.

During this period the EYFS teacher will also be liaising with the staff from the children's pre-school settings – gathering information about children's learning styles, social-skills, personalities and progress. Where possible, the teacher will also visit the pre-school settings so that she can meet the children in their current familiar surroundings.

Starting School

The EYFS teacher welcomes parents/carers and children to a short individual meeting at the start of the Autumn Term. The purpose is for parents/carers to share any other relevant information or ask any questions or raise any concerns that have arisen over the summer break.

Children then begin the induction process, which is carefully managed in order to help the children settle as quickly as possible. Children are initially welcomed in a group of fifteen; the groupings are designed in such a way that the children are usually joined by other children from their pre-school setting – so there will be some very familiar faces! Children remain in this smaller group for almost three weeks before the groups join together to form a whole class of thirty. In these early days, staff build relationships with the children and are able to carry out initial informal assessments. The assessments inform the teacher's planning and enable her to quickly ascertain what each child's 'next steps' should be.

The induction process is carefully organised so that children have the opportunity to build up their stamina and confidence. They begin by coming in for half days (either a morning, or an afternoon) before moving on to full days. All children are in school full-time by the end of week four.

The Importance of a September Start

It is important that all children start school at the beginning of the Autumn Term, rather than at different points during the year – for example delaying their start until the Spring Term. (These points do not apply for children who have already been in school but, for example, move house during the year, because they will already have experienced a proper induction into school).

A September start is important because:

Children form relationships and friendships quickly. Children who join later, for example after Christmas, may find it more difficult to form these bonds because they are joining a group that is already well-established.

In the first half-term in school, much time is spent helping children become familiar with the routines, expectations, available resources and the layout of the school. It will not be possible to re-visit all of these experiences in such depth when a child joins school (having not been in a school-setting before) later in the year.

Teachers complete their initial assessments within the first few weeks of the children starting school. Children start their 'learning journey' as soon as they join us and will begin, for example, their phonics programme, straight away. Children who join school later will miss these early stages of learning-together and will need to quickly catch-up, which they may find difficult.

A child joining school later will still need to be individually assessed by the teacher. If it is apparent that the child then needs to do some 'catch-up' activities in order to successfully learn alongside their peers, this would probably need to take place on a one-to-one basis. The child would then be spending periods of time away from their peers and would be further missing out on shared experiences and opportunities to make friends.