



## Observation and Assessment Policy

**Due to the introduction of the new EYFS Curriculum in September 2021, this policy is a work in progress and will grow as we adapt our practice to suit the needs of our children and families alongside the curriculum. The new curriculum will have a positive impact on how practitioners spend their time on observation and assessment. There is the expectation that much less time will be spent on recording observations and assessments. The focus will be on really getting to know each child as an individual with individual needs, interests and abilities and on communication with families to support us in getting to know the child, planning the curriculum and sharing information.**

### **Before beginning at Venture**

- We gather information about each child through the All About Me form on Tapestry, which is completed by parents prior to their child starting at the kindergarten.
- Depending upon what the family would like to do, we also discuss the child on the telephone or by meeting the parent when they visit the kindergarten with their child.
- We offer a 'taster day' where children have a one-off visit to the kindergarten before they start and this is a good opportunity to begin to get to know them.

### **The first term at Venture**

During a child's first term at Venture, the focus is on settling in and familiarising the child and family with the ways of working in our unique outdoor environment. The Prime Areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) are where our observations and assessments are concentrated. The key to getting this right is through a strong partnership with families as we recognise that they are the people who know the child best. Therefore the first term has a strong

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focus on getting to know the children through sharing knowledge and developing a relationship with their family and other settings where appropriate.

### Prime Areas of the EYFS:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

### Plan for first half term

- Week 1 - Adults' focus is on settling new and returning children, observation of and conversation with the children to begin to get to know them and what their current interests and needs are, beginning to create those all-important strong bonds and mutual trust with the children. This focus continues and underpins everything we do as the term progresses. During the child's first week, their key person will write a short settling observation and share this with the family on Tapestry. This will determine the child's starting points, and allow them to 'consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child'.
- Week 2 - All parents are invited to a small-group meeting to discuss the kindergarten's aims for this first term and beyond and the ways in which they can support their child.
- Week 3 - As necessary, adults make contact, either face-to-face or by telephone, with any families within their key children group, to indicate areas in which a child could be better supported to access the Venture curriculum. These are usually practical issues which may hold a child back, e.g. the child does not have a suitable backpack which they can easily carry and access independently.
- Week 4 / 5 - Adults meet with each family within their key children group with the aim of feeding back on how the child has settled and finding out more about what the child and family hope to get out of their time at Venture. This information will be used to focus on the needs and interests of individual children as well as informing the Venture curriculum as a whole.
- Week 7 - Assessment point - The adults take the opportunity to think about each of their key children, bearing in mind what they have learned about them through conversation, observation and meeting with parents. They consider how the child has settled into Venture and how well they are managing with the ways of working and routines, and they consider what they need to support the child to achieve next. They will assess whether the child is working at an age appropriate level within the Prime Areas of the EYFS. This is a formal opportunity to identify any children who may have an additional need and begin the process of further supporting them. With permission from the family, we may need to seek advice from outside agencies or from our Early Years Advisors. As a setting we will already have strategies in place for any children needing extra support and these are shared and worked on with the family.

### **Plan for following terms**

During the first half of the term:

- Assessment point - The adults work as a team to make focused observations of each child. Whilst observing the child at play they discuss:
  - Where the child is currently in their learning and development.
  - How well the child is engaging in opportunities presented at Venture.
  - Any barriers to learning, development or engagement and what can be done to overcome them.
  - What needs to be done next to support the child in their learning and development.

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- Each parent is invited to meet with their child's key person, either in person or by telephone, to discuss their child's progress, what they are currently working on and any concerns, and share ways that they can be supported at home.

During the second half of the term:

- A detailed individual observation is written for each child for whom Venture is the primary setting. This is a celebration of what the child has achieved, how they have progressed and who they are as a person, as well as an opportunity to share what they are currently working on and how they can be supported at home. The observation includes links to specific areas of learning (Flags on Tapestry). During the summer term this observation is replaced by the School Transition Report (See School Transition Policy).
- For children who attend Venture for only one or two days per week, their key person will make contact with their primary setting. The way in which this is done, will have been decided during the child's first term (see below).
- When the observations are published a note is written on a noticeboard outside the Kindergarten for all parents to say "Please look out for this terms observations/reports for all children for whom Venture is their primary setting"( ie they attend 3+ days / attends 2 days and does not attend another setting or attends another setting for fewer hours/week )
- If we are not your child's primary setting we will have been in touch with their main setting to talk to their key person. If you would like to speak to us to discuss your child, please let us know and we will happily arrange a meeting.

### **Two Year Review**

- The key person carries out a progress check, called a Two Year Review, for each child who is two years old after one half term of attendance at the kindergarten. If Venture is

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not the primary carer for the child (ie, they attend another setting for the majority of their time), the key person will request access to the child's Two Year Review, completed by their other setting.

- If a child turns 3 during their first half term at Venture and a Two Year Review has not been carried out by another setting, the key person may decide to carry out a review if they feel that there are concerns about the child's progress.
- The Two Year Review is recorded in Tapestry as a 'report' and outlines the child's levels of attainment and progress in the Prime Areas. It is shared with the child's family and parents are advised to share the review with their Health Visitor and any other settings attended or carers.

### **Sharing information with other Early Years settings**

The nature of our setting means that we have a large number of children who attend for only one day per week, the majority of their early years experience being in another setting. As we are not the primary carer for these children, it is particularly important that we gain an understanding of their life outside of Venture.

- During the child's first term at Venture, their key person will make contact with the key person at any other setting that they attend.
- Initially the key person will make a telephone call to discuss the child, their progress and any developmental concerns as well as to get a picture of what the child is like within a different setting.
- After the initial telephone conversation, the nature of information sharing is down to the key person and will differ for each child. Depending upon need, the key person may arrange future telephone calls with the other setting, further correspondence by email or a visit to the other setting to observe the child.

### **Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored by the staff and management of Venture Outdoor Kindergarten and will be reviewed annually or before if necessary.

This policy was written by Venture Outdoor Kindergarten September 2021.

Updated - February 2022.