



Observation and Assessment Policy

Before beginning at Venture

- We encourage each family to visit us at the setting to begin to get to know our staff members and the space and so that we can begin to get to know them.
- We gather information about each child through the 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 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 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** - The key person's 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 welcome observation** and share this with the family on Tapestry. This will be to let parents know how they are settling in, and is a little insight/reassurance for the parents as soon as possible.

Settling Observation

After the first few weeks of attendance, and following a period of observation and relationship building, each child's key person will complete a formal **settling observation**. This observation will capture the child's starting points, interests, development and any potential barriers to accessing the provision. It also helps us to identify any additional needs and begin to plan how best to support them to thrive at Venture.

We will always make contact with the child's previous and/or current settings, to gain a full picture of the child's background, development, and experience. This collaboration allows us to create a smooth transition and ensure continuity of care.

- **Week 2** - All parents are invited to a **small-group or individual meeting** with the setting leader 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, the key person makes 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 / 6** - The key person meets 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 5 / 6 / 7 - Assessment point** - The staff team takes 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

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Advisors. As a setting we will already have strategies in place for example an IEP, for any children needing extra support and these are shared and worked on with the family. If a child attends another early years setting, the key person will contact the other setting (see 'Sharing information with other Early Years settings' below)

Plan for following terms

During the first half of each term:

- **Assessment point** - The staff 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.

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.

During the second half of each term:

- *Autumn 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).
- *Spring Term*: 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 (next steps) and any concerns, and share ways that they can be supported at home.
- *Summer 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). This observation is replaced by the **School Transition Report** for those who will be moving on to school (See School Transition Policy).

Note on children who attend Venture for one day per week:

- For children who attend Venture for only one day per week a shorter individual observation is written in place of the detailed observation.

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- For children who attend Venture for only one day per week, their key person will make contact with their primary setting. The way in which this is done, will have been mutually decided during the child's first term (see below).

Two Year Review

- The key person carries out a progress check, called a Two Year Review, for each child who is still two years old after one half term of attendance at the kindergarten. If Venture is not the primary setting 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

For children who attend another setting alongside ours, 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 short 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 at both settings 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.

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