

Policy Statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, our staff are committed, and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. We aim to make our setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts according to the session that the child will attend and matching this to staffing patterns.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
 - Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care, and learning.
 - Acting as the key contact for the parents.
 - Sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting.

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- Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- Encouraging positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- We provide an induction meeting for the child and his/her parents to go through routines and procedures. We use this meeting prior to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records.
- The key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use the induction meeting prior to their first week to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parents to be on hand to re- settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example, the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.

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- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others, but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left, or to request that a parent will collect the child early in the first few weeks so that the session is not as long for the child. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we will observe the children and plot their 'On-Entry' assessment. Please remember this may not match your views on where your child is within the EYFS and it is perfectly normal for them to appear below age related expectations at this point.

The Progress Check at Age Two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and refers to the guidance *A Know How Guide: The EYFS progress check at age two*.
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of their child's development.
- Within the progress check, the key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.
- The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by us to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.
- If your child has not yet had their 2 ½ review with a Health Visitor this report should be taken with them.

Changing a Key Person

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- Occasionally children will form a stronger bond with a member of staff who is not the key person initially designated. In these cases it may be beneficial to change key person A discussion will take place with parents/carers before this happens.