

# THE ROLE OF THE KEY PERSON AND SETTLING-IN POLICY

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.

## ***Role of Key Person***

We aim to promote effective and positive relationships for children by ensuring each child has a key person as set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early years Foundation Stage and achieve this by adopting a key person approach as follows:

- We allocate a key person before the child starts and if this is not possible, we will ensure a member of staff is appointed to look after the child and child's parent/carer at their first session.
- The key person is responsible for:
  - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting, which may include completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms and explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
  - 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.
  - Developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
  - 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 with their key children by spending time with them
- 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 attending our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies) and individual meetings with parents.
- We encourage children and their parent/carer to visit the setting for an informal visit before they actually start.
- Before a child actually starts attending a Registration Form and All about Me questionnaire have to be completed and returned. This ensures all relevant information is shared and

provides an opportunity for discussion to decide on the best way to support the child in settling-in.

- 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.
- 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. We would suggest that the parent/carer stays for at least the first session when their child starts attending and/or separates from the child for brief periods of time at first, gradually building up to longer absences, until the child is happy to be left for the whole session. Another option is to leave the child to be settled by staff
- 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 parent to be on hand to re- settle them.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- 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 staff members and children and participates in activities.
- 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. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's record of achievement. In particular for children who are under three years of age when they start the Two Year Progress Check will be carried out (see our Curriculum and Progress Recording Policy)

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