

Key person and Settling-in Policy



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, 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 Pre-School and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with Pre-School.

We aim to make Pre-School 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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.2 Inclusive practice 1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.2 Parents as partners 2.4 Key person	3.2 Supporting every child 3.3 The learning environment	4.4 Personal, social and emotional development

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- Home visits are carried out by the allocated key person prior to the child starting.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into Pre-School.

- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- A key person is responsible for 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 Pre-School and at home.
- We provide a back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in Pre-School, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend Pre-School, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within Pre-School, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- Before a child starts Pre-School, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; 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 offer a home visit by the Committee member responsible for new entrants, to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known, and to gain more insight into the child's background and needs.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends 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 Pre-School.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative will stay for the first two sessions, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- 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.

- We judge a child to be settled when he/she is familiar with where things are and is pleased to see the staff and the other children and to 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.
- 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 expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least two sessions, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- We do all we can to reassure parents whose children seem to be taking a long time settling into Pre-School.
- 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 Pre-School.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into Pre-School without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- We ensure plentiful opportunities for parents to inform us about their child's current achievements and interests.
- We offer flexible admission procedures, if appropriate, to meet the needs of individual families and children.
- We introduce new families into Pre-School on a staggered basis, for example two new children a day for a week rather than ten new children all at once.

Adoption of policy

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	_____	name of setting
Held on	_____	(date)
Date to be reviewed	_____	(date)
Signed on behalf of the Committee	_____	
Name of signatory	_____	
Role of signatory (e.g. Chair)	_____	

[Policy 4.2]