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**Key Person 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 and the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is 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 staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children’s well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

We aim to make the setting a welcoming place where the children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children. The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Every child has a key person. We promote the role of the key person as the child’s primary carer in our setting and as a basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

We allocate a key person before the child starts, however if during the settling in period, a child settles well with another member of staff then we will adapt to suit the individual needs of the child.

The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting. The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental. They work with the parents 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 child minder, another setting and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child’s development with those carers.

The 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 our setting and at home.

The key person encourages positive relationships between children in his/her key group, spending time with them each day they spend together. A supporting member of the staff team acts as a key person buddy in the absence of a child’s key person.

**Settling-in**

Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information including our parent handbook with policies to read, displays about our activities available within the setting, information sessions and evenings and individual meetings with parents.

We provide opportunities for the child to visit the setting a couple of times prior to starting to give them time to spend with the key person to ensure that all relevant information about the child can be made known. They complete an enrolment pack to ensure that all emergency contacts and consents are given. The key person discusses the child’s routine with the parent and how the setting can support them to ensure continuity.

We have the expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, 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 settle them. At times it may be necessary to introduce a special settling in care plan for a child with more individual needs. We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with the key person, seeks comfort with them and is familiar with the environment and other children. When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.

**Baseline Check**

Within the first term of starting, we arrange a baseline meeting to discuss a child’s progress with settling and begin to create a child’s record of achievement. This allows us to discuss any emerging concerns or issues during the initial settling in period.

**Progress check between the age of two and three**

The key person carries out the 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 the setting 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 will support parents to understand the child’s needs in order to enhance their development at home. It is the key person’s role to actively ensure that a child’s specific learning and development needs are being met through the planning and if needed the co-ordination and sharing of information during nurture groups and support sessions.

**Pre School Checks**

During the final term, before a child moves to formal schooling, the key person will meet with parents to discuss their overall learning and skills learnt ready for school. They may provide some additional activities to support the child during the end of term holidays to ensure that the transition to school is as smooth as possible. They handover the final pre-school profile and learning journals which we recommend is shared with the reception class teacher in order for them to carry out their own baseline assessment of a child’s learning.

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