

Early Years Education; ofsted registered; member of the Learning Alliance; registered charity



## **4.1 The Role of the Key Person and Settling-in**

### **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. We are committed to the key person approach which benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting. It encourages secure relationships which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy 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 an initial key person before the child starts. This will generally be one of the play leaders or the deputy play leader.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.

After an initial period, and when we feel the child has settled, we will allocate a permanent keyperson, based on days and hours attended, how many key children a member of staff has, and who the child seems to have formed a natural bond with. This allocation will be notified to parents at the same time as they receive their child’s ‘settling-in sheet’.

### *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 information on our policies as well as individual meetings/conversations with parents as they wish or require.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- 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 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, if not already done so.
- 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 understand that the parent, carer or close relative, may wish to stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child is able to cope. We will work closely with parents and carers to ensure the needs and wishes of the parent and the child are met.
- 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 they have formed a relationship with their keyperson or another member of staff; for example, the child looks for them 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.

- 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 will work closely with parents and carers to respect theirs and the child's wishes and needs.
- We will discuss with parents how they wish the initial separation to be handled and agree with parents how we shall proceed if the child becomes upset once the parent has left. We understand that parents may also feel unsettled and nervous about leaving their child and take measures to ensure we reassure them as well and that they feel comfortable leaving the child.
- 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.
- We reserve the right that if, in our professional judgement, we believe a child is so upset that it is detrimental to their settling with us, we may ask a parent or carer to collect them at any time. We will then work with the parent/carer to continue the settling period by agreeing the best way forward.
- 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. This will include an allocation of a permanent keyperson and the completion of the child's 'settling-in' sheet.

#### *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 referring 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 will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.