

SECTION 3.0

KEY PERSON

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child, and build a relationship with their parents.

3.1 The role of the key person and settling-in

Policy statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a keyperson to relate to, who knows them and their parents/carers 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 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 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. Children are assigned into one of our groups, associated with our permanent members of staff/keyperson's.

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

Procedures

- We aim to allocate a keyperson before the child starts. However, there may be times when we allow a period for the child to settle in and observe which adult the child forms a bond with, before allocating a key person.
- Either the Manager/Deputy or keyperson will encourage new parents/carers to come in for an informal chat before their child starts and we offer as many settling in sessions as the parent/carer requires. The Manager/Deputy or keyperson helps with the registration form to get a good grounding to the individual need. We hope to carry out home visits in the future for new children.
- The keyperson 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.
- The keyperson works 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 or grandparent 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 her/his key group, spending time with them every session they work in the setting.
- We provide a back-up key person, so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's keyperson. When appropriate we notify parents verbally or via a parent/carer newsletter.
- 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 staff and children.
- We hold a minimum of two parents evening per year, where parent/ carers are given the opportunity to discuss their child's learning and development or any areas of concern with their child's keyperson. However, we operate an open-door policy, so that parents/carers can come in and discuss matters with their child's keyperson at their convenience.

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 welcome pack,

and policies), newsletters, displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents/carers.

- During the term, a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents/carers to visit the setting for as many settling in sessions as the family feel they require.
- We allocate a keyperson to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the keyperson 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 have an expectation that the parent, carer, or close relative, will stay for part/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. The Manager or Deputy must ensure the correct child/ratios are always maintained.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their keyperson; for example, the child looks for the keyperson 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.
- 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/carer will honour the commitment to assist in the settling in process until their child can stay happily without them (Where practical.)
- 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 young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents/carers to begin to create their child's record of achievement.

