

7.1 The role of the key person and settling in process policy

Policy statement

Our aim is to work in partnership with our parents/cares. 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 pre-school. 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, valued, and happy in pre-school 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 pre-school. We aim to make pre-school a welcoming place where children settle smoothly 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 a key person before the child starts.

The key person is responsible for:

- Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into pre-school.
- Ensuring all relevant forms are completed.
- Explaining where our policies and procedures can be found to parents and our responsibility under safeguarding.
- 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 pre-school 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 between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.

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 adults and children.

Settling-in

All our staff are aware about the importance of building strong attachments with children. They use their knowledge of attachments to support children and families settling into the pre-school.

We will work in partnership with parents to settle their child into the pre-school environment by:

- Two or three weeks before a child is due to start, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to engage in short visits of which the number will be planned to depend on the need of the child and or parent.
- Allocating a key person to each child and his/her family before he/she starts to attend. The key person welcomes and looks after the child, ensuring that their care is tailored to meet their individual needs. He/she offers a settled relationship for the child and builds a relationship with his/her parents during the settling in period and throughout his/her time at the pre-school, to ensure the family has a familiar contact person to assist with the settling in process.
- We use the first session at which a child attends to gather, with his/her parents any additional information to add to or update the child's registration records.

- We have an expectation that the parent, carer, or close relative, will stay with their child during their first settling in session which is an hour long. The duration length of the pre-start visits can be extended or shorten depending on the needs of the child.
- 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 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 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 expect that the parent will honour the pre-start visits commitment to continue the process possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we create starting points for the children's development with information provided by the child's parents and key person observations
- Respecting the circumstances of all families, including those who are unable to stay for long periods of time in the pre-school and reassure them of their child's progress towards settling in
- Not taking a child on an outing from the setting until he/she is completely settled.

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
- The progress check aims to review the child's development within the prime areas of learning 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 to enhance their development at home.

Transitions

We recognise that young children will experience transitions in their early years; some planned and unplanned. We are sensitive to the impact of such changes. Some examples of transitions that children may experience are:

- Starting school or a different early years provision.
- Attending another early years provision (shared care).
- Family breakdown.
- New siblings.
- Moving house.
- Death of a pet or family member.

Staff observe their key children and are sensitive to any changes in the child's behaviour and personality. Starting school is an important transition and some children may feel anxious about the move. We do all we can to facilitate a smooth transition and minimise potential stress. We build relationships with the local schools and invite new teachers into the setting. We provide the new school with a report about their child, their development, any needs that the school may need to meet, and any safeguarding concerns.

This policy was adopted on

22nd April 2026

Date to be reviewed

22nd April 2027

Signed on behalf of the provider

Michelle Osman

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Pre-School Manager