



## **Key Person Policy**

We aim to create a welcoming environment where children settle quickly, working closely with the parents to provide individual care to the child. We hope that every child feels comfortable and happy to go to any member of staff for support and guidance once they are fully settled. We believe that children settle better when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well and who can meet their individual needs. This also encourages secure relationships, which support children to thrive.

It is our aim to ensure that whenever possible, children's Key Persons remain with them until they are ready to move onto school or leave the setting.

## **Role of the Key Person**

We make sure we have robust settling in procedures and use the Key Person approach for us to get to know the child and parents, giving them the reassurance to feel safe. The Key Person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.

*As outlined in the EYFS: "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 (in accordance with paragraph 1.11 quoted above), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents."*

The Key Person will have a group of children with whom they spend time and build close relationships. They provide the care, individual attention and support that the individual child requires. Other staff will always be available to support a child in case their Key Person is absent.

The Key Person will work with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's wellbeing, care and learning. We start the settling in process before entry as we recognise this as a crucial time to build relationships and establish a two-way dialogue.

Prior to starting Preschool:

- During a viewing parents are introduced to all the staff members
- Every child is assigned a Key Person before they start at Preschool who will help the child to become familiar with the setting and develops a close relationship with them and the parents.
- We provide parents with a welcome pack before a child starts which includes all the relevant information they need for starting at Preschool. This includes information about the key person role and a photo of the child's Key Person so that they can become familiar with them.
- Parents are asked to fill in an 'All About Me' on their child's Tapestry account which will be given to the child's Key Person. This allows the Key Person to get to know the child and help them settle more easily.

Settling in sessions:

- We explain the settling in process to parents however, we are flexible to meet the parent's and child's needs. We recognise that different children have different ways to be settled/ the length of the process may be different, but we work with the parents to devise a strategy together.
- Before starting we invite parents and children to join us for a 45 minute 'Stay and Play session' where the child will be encouraged to spend time with their new Key Person and familiarise themselves with the setting. This is an ideal opportunity for parents to begin to get to know the staff, share any additional information about their child and ask any questions that they may have before their child starts.
- We then offer a 2 hour settling in session prior to the child starting their normal hours. Parents are welcome to stay to help settle but we do recommend that parents leave the child at some point, even if it is just for a short amount of time. We can offer more 2 hour sessions if staff and parents feel that this may benefit the child.
- The settling in process at Preschool is gradual and flexible. Parents are encouraged to be available, but gradually moving away when their child is ready which allows the Key Person to support the child in their play. The Key Person will be there to support the child through settling in sessions, and will spend time with them and getting to know them. During these early times, some sessions may be shorter if needed.

Starting Preschool:

- The Key Person helps the child to settle in gradually, and will try to ensure that they are available to greet the child in the morning. At the end of the day, the Key Person will feedback to the parents whenever possible.
- When parents leave we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back.
- The child's Key Person will help support them as they learn the daily routine.
- If the child is distressed in the morning, the Key Person will text/call the parent to let them know when the child has settled.
- The Key Person will add photos and observations to the child's Tapestry account that can be viewed immediately by the parents.
- The Key Person will always try to be available to help meet the child's needs – e.g. personal needs (toileting); providing comfort if they are upset; supporting them with their independence skills (dressing, undressing); supporting their behaviour.
- Small group times and meal times provide good opportunities for children to spend time with their Key Person.
- The Key Person is the main point of contact with the child's parents by liaising and talking with them about their child. The Key Person also takes responsibility for their Key Children's learning journeys by overseeing their Tapestry account, termly tracking and any transition reports.
- The child's Key Person will feedback to parents/carers whenever possible, parents are welcome to request a time to arrange a chat about their child's progress if that is more convenient.