

4. The role of the key person and settling-in

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Policy statement

The Key Person role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs (in accordance with paragraph 1.10), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents. (DfE Early Years Foundation Stage 2014, Key Person page 21 3.27)

The key person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.

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 the 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 Approach

'This is a way of working in nurseries in which the whole focus and organisation is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between the individual children and individual nursery staff. The key person approach is an involvement, an individual and reciprocal commitment between a member of staff and a family.' (Elfer.P, Goldschmeid.E, and Selleck. D. (2003) 'Key Persons in the Nursery' London: David Fulton.)

Procedures

Practitioners Responsibilities

Relationships with key children

- The key person provides a secure attachment for their key children in nursery.
- They help their key children settle in and become familiar with the setting.
- The key person meets the needs of their key children responding sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- The key person provides a 'secure base' for the children by being there to support them and allowing them to explore at their own pace.
- They are primarily responsible for their key children's care routines.

Relationships with parents/carers

- Key persons must develop a good relationship with parents/carers, ensuring that the child is cared for appropriately at nursery and accommodating their individual needs within the daily routine.

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- Completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms
- Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning
- The key person needs to develop a two-way flow of information between themselves and the parent/carer to help them become aware of any significant aspects of family life that may be important to the child.
- The key person has responsibility for sharing their key children's Learning Journey's with parents.

Records

- The key person is responsible for observational records of their key children, using these to inform next steps, individualised planning and completing Learning Journey's for each of their key children.

Welfare and Safeguarding

- Key persons are responsible for the welfare of the children in their care monitoring patterns of absence, injury and development referring them on where necessary.

Transition

- The key person plays an integral role in transition, aiding this by introducing the children and their parents/carers to their new key person and helping them to become familiar with their new environment.
- It is the responsibility of the key person to pass on records during transition and to ensure that these records are all up to date.
- In the case of a staff members absence it is the responsibility of a secondary key person to cover the role of the primary key person.

Managers Responsibilities

- Allocation of a key person will be completed before a child's start date and parents will be informed.
- There will be a secondary key person for each child who takes on responsibility in the occurrence of staff absence.
- Managers will provide opportunities for staff to give regular feedback and to support staff in their role as key person, ensuring that all developmental needs are met.

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 access to our policies), displays about activities available within the setting, and individual meetings with parents.
- We will host open mornings for children starting in the Autumn Term and Spring Term. These open mornings are held during the holidays, and are for the children to become familiar with the setting and for parents to ask any questions about their child settling in.
- We may offer a home visit to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- 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 explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child settle into the setting.

- We have an 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 time 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 resettle them.
- We judge a child to be settle 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.
- 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 will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
- 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.

The Progress Check at Age 2

- 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 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.

This policy was adopted by	St Mary's Nursery, Camberley	<i>(name of provider)</i>
On	July 2020	<i>(date)</i>
Date to be reviewed	July 2021	<i>(date)</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	<hr/>	
Name of signatory	Andrew Knowles	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson	