



The Role of the Key Person and Settling In

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

Policy statement

At Whitchurch Pre-School, 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. This not only benefits the child, but 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. Effective Key Person procedures and working practices, promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

We strive to make Whitchurch Pre-School 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.

Procedures

We allocate a key person shortly after the child starts pre-school. This allows the child to naturally build a bond with a member of the team who will then take on the role of key person. In the interim period, all staff will play an active role in the care and education of the child.

The key person is responsible for:

- providing an induction for the family and continuing to settle the child into our setting.
- jointly with the Manager, explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- 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 sharing information on a regular basis with the parents. Keeping those records up-to-date, and ensuring they reflect the full picture of the child at pre-school and at home.
- having links with other carers involved with the child and coordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- encouraging positive relationships between children in pre-school, spending time with them as a group each day.

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.

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 Welcome pack and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information/coffee mornings, and individual meetings with parents. Families are invited to visit the pre-school and join events. We use pre-start visits to ensure all records are accurately completed and to get to know families.

On the first day and during the settling in process, the Manager or Deputy, will welcome and look after the child and his/her parents. The process of settling in will be explained to parents and they, along with staff, will jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle in. Most families will stay for most of, if not all of the first session, gradually taking time away from their child and increasing this time as their child adjusts and is able to cope. Some children will take longer to settle 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 expect parents to honour the commitment to stay for at least the first session or sessions, possibly longer, until a child is happy to stay without them. Each child is unique and staff will continue to monitor the situation for some time.

When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child, and explain that they will be coming back, and when. We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them 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.

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 will be familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities. The creation of the child's learning journey will begin on their very first day, enabling parents to participate in the child's learning and observe their progress from the very beginning.

The progress check at age two

The key person will carry 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 check will review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture. Parents will be asked to share any recent check completed by their child's Health Visitor, which may be relevant. The Key Person will note areas where the child is progressing well, and identify areas where progress is less than expect.

This will lead to actions and other steps that we can take to address any developmental concerns, including working with other professionals where appropriate, and 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.

Key Buddy

In exceptional circumstances, i.e. long-term absence of the Key Person, the Pre-School Manager will act as 'buddy' or allocate another member of the team. The buddy will be responsible for the child in the Key Person's absence and will provide a second source of support to the family.

This policy is reviewed annually, or as deemed necessary.

Policy reviewed and updated.....14/6/18.....(date) Signed.....H Roberts.....