

36: Key Person

Our setting is committed to ensure that the care and learning of every child is tailored to meet their individual needs.

As a safeguarding and welfare requirement, the key person is only required for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The key person will be the main point of contact with the child and parents/carers and will record their key children's progress.

Aims of the key person system for parents/carers

- To enable the parent/carer to feel confident that they have made the right decision in placing their child in the setting
- To help the parent/carer know who to ask about their child, and enable them to receive regular and detailed information about their child's progress - reducing, to some extent, their feelings of having 'lost' and 'missed out' on being with their child

Aims for the child

- To offer the child a consistent and settled relationship with the key person so that s/he can sense (at the moment of 'handing over') it is approved of by parent/carer - aiming to reduce any inexplicable (to the child) feelings of abandonment, in being left in the hands of others
- In receiving care by their key person whenever possible, the child is assured of regular contact with her/him on an intimate basis just as s/he is from parent/carer at home. The aim is to reduce the number of different handlings (touch, smell, voice) by different people, and so limit the number of people a child has to get used to during the day

Aims for the key person

- To create meaningful relationships with a consistent group of children
- To reduce stress levels caused by relating equally to large numbers of children at once
- To enable sensitive observation and developmental record keeping of a small number of children over a period of time
- To encourage good relationships with parents/carers of key children

The key person will be assigned before a parent's initial visit, and spend time with a new child and their parent/carer during introductory visits, so that they will get to know each other in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The key person will find out children's routines, likes and dislikes etc., and explain setting policies and procedures (eg. medicine forms etc.). They will 'settle in' their new child, in partnership with their parents/carers, and review their progress with parents/carers at regular intervals.

Staff are encouraged to 'pair' as key person with another member of staff, so that each half of the pair can act as back-up at the beginning or end of the day when the key person is not in, to cover key staff sickness and holidays with each other's key children, and to act as mutual support.

Every effort is made in a consistent way by senior staff to:

- Support the key person through regular supervision as part of the personal/professional development of each worker
- Ensure that 'cover' and support staff, students and others, are fully aware of the role and responsibilities of the key person toward her/his 'key' children
- Ease the transfer of child (and parent) from one group to another, when necessary, with mutual understanding and preparation

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage items 3.26 states that:

'Each child must be assigned a key person.'

'Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.'¹

Updated By: Derek Beesley (Director of Childcare) Date: 6th March 2016

Signature: *D. Beesley*

