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

2.5 The role of the key person and settling-in

Policy statement

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. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, our staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated 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 role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the current Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers. Each child must be assigned a key person, whose 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, to offer a settled relationship for the child and to build a relationship with their parents and/or carers.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before or when the child starts, share the key person's name with parents and/or carers, and explain how the key person will support the child's care, learning, development and well-being.
- The key person is responsible for:
  - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
  - Completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms.
  - Explaining our policies and procedures to parents and/or carers, including safeguarding, child protection, attendance and absence reporting, whistleblowing, online safety, safer eating, intimate care and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
  - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
  - Working with parents and/or carers to plan and deliver a personalised approach for the child's well-being, care, learning and development, including reasonable adjustments and additional support where required.

- Acting as the key contact for parents and/or carers alongside the room leader and, where appropriate, the setting's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Maintaining appropriate developmental records and sharing information regularly with the child's parents and/or carers, so that records remain accurate, proportionate and reflect the full picture of the child in the setting and at home.
- Liaising, with parental consent where required and in line with safeguarding duties, with other professionals and carers involved with the child, and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development and welfare.
- 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 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 parents and/or carers with information. These include written information, policies, displays about activities available within the setting, information sessions, individual meetings and opportunities to share important information about the child's health, care, learning, development, dietary needs, allergies, comfort routines and any additional needs.

- The key person welcomes and supports the child and their parents and/or carers at the child's first session and throughout the settling-in process.
- We may offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete, with parents and/or carers, the child's registration records, emergency contact details, medical information, dietary requirements, allergy information, permissions and absence reporting arrangements.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to 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. We offer 2 x free settling sessions and then additional charge for more settling sessions if required.
- 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 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.
- 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 also 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 hour, 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.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's record of achievement. We currently use Tapestry (an on-line learning journal).
- If a child is absent unexpectedly or for a prolonged period, we follow our attendance and absence procedures, contact parents and/or carers promptly, consider patterns or concerns, and take safeguarding action where required.
- Where online learning journals or digital communication systems are used, we follow our data protection, safeguarding and online safety procedures and ensure information is shared securely and appropriately.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with the current EYFS statutory framework, local procedures and Department for Education guidance on the progress check at age two.
- The progress check reviews the child's development in the prime areas of learning and helps ensure that parents and/or carers 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 any actions that will be taken to address developmental concerns, including working with parents and/or carers, health visitors, the local authority and other professionals where appropriate.
- The key person plans activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and supports parents and/or carers to understand and enhance the child's development at home.

This policy was adopted by	Stowey Bears Preschool	*(name of provider)*
On		*(date)*
Date to be reviewed	Reviewed annually and when statutory guidance changes	*(date)*
Signed on behalf of the provider	*Rachel Penny*	
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson	

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, Department for Education, current version
- Progress check at age two guidance, Department for Education, current version
- Development Matters and What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents, current versions