



The role of the Key Person and Settling in to the Nursery

It is very important to us that the children at School House Nursery are happy. A new child should feel comfortable, cared for and integrated as quickly as possible. 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 Nursery by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the Nursery is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the Nursery and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the Nursery.

We aim to make the Nursery 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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

EYFS key themes and commitments

| A Unique Child | Positive Relationships | Enabling Environments | Learning and Development |
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| 1.2 Inclusive practice 1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being | 2.2 Parents as partners 2.4 Key person | 3.2 Supporting every child 3.3 The learning environment | 4.4 Personal, social and emotional development |

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our Nursery.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our Nursery and at home.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- The Nursery Manager will act as a back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- The key person encourages 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 Nursery, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts at the Nursery, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including details of our website, welcome pack which includes our prospectus, relevant forms and policies).
- Parents are encouraged to come and visit the Nursery with their child prior to applying for a place. In addition, parents can take advantage of taster sessions, if required.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; 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 can also provide the opportunity to attend the nursery to help complete any forms if necessary.
- 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 Nursery.
- 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 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 re-settle them.
- We allow flexible arrival and collection times during the settling in period. We will agree arrangements with families on an individual basis.
- 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 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 Nursery.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the Nursery 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 start to create their child's learning journey.

In cases where children seem unable to settle we will follow the following:

We stagger the child's staying periods

- We encourage the use of comforters of familiar objects from home to help the child to feel comfortable.
- We will also examine at the child's developmental needs and any special and additional needs and work with the parents/carers and other professionals to provide the necessary support for the child.

We always include the parent/carers at each stage and encourage open discussion about the best way to progress with each child.

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| This policy was adopted on: | 31 August 2011 |
| Date to be reviewed by: | 31 August 2012 |
| Signed on behalf of the Management Committee: | |
| Signatory Name: | Lisa Kennedy |