

## **Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person**

Each child is 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

### **4.1 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 Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child is allocated a key person before they start.

These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

#### **Procedures**

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for:
  - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
  - 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 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 setting and at home.
  - Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
  - 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 his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our welcome pack and link to nursery policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child starts at Downside Nursery, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- 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 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 settling in sessions, and the first session at which a child attends to ensure we have all the relevant and necessary information for our records.
- At registration, 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 will discuss that we will work together with the parent, carer or close relative to help the child to settle. For some children, it will be appropriate for their parent / carer to stay for as long as is necessary 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 re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they independently separate from their parent and is familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents leave, we suggest that they 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 may still not ready to be left. We will work together with the parent 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.

### *The progress check at age two*

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two within the first term of starting nursery, referring to the guidance *A Know How Guide: The EYFS progress check at age two* if necessary.
- 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.
- For areas identified for development at any point, an action plan is put into place with support from the nursery SENCO.
- 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 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.

### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Play is What I Do
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With supporting documentation