



3.6 The Role of the Key Person

This policy was adopted at the meeting of Little Thetford Acorns Pre-school and Children's Club. Staff failure to comply with this policy may be considered serious enough to result in the induction of disciplinary procedures.

Date of adoption	March 2018
Reviewed	June 2020
Signed (on behalf of the management committee)	
Name of signatory	Kate Hilton
Role of signatory	Chair
This policy will be reviewed	Annually
Date of next review	June 2021

3.6 The Role of the Key Person

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

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 and parents have confidence. The role of the key person is vital in the early identification and support of children with SEND and in supporting children with English as an Additional Language.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated, valued and happy in the setting, and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in their children's wellbeing, their child's key person and their role as active partners with the setting. We aim to make the 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. Relationships are valued and built.

Embedded in our everyday practice is the focus on children's personal, social and emotional development. Throughout our practice we ensure that children learn right from wrong, mix and share with other children, value other's views, know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes.

The key person's role is set out in the Safeguarding and 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.

COVID 19 Update

During the COVID-19 outbreak it is likely that some children will not have their usual key person. Where this is the case, the principles of the key person role are followed as closely as possible.

Any temporary staff must be trained to proficiently and safely administer medication and medical procedures for individual children. They must also adhere to the guidelines and procedures on caring for the individual needs of children with SEND, as detailed in their Health Care Plans. *7.14 Prioritised Place Risk Assessment* should be used to identify any risks that may be incurred due to a change in key person for such children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person during the child's Taster Session.
- The Key Person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting and overseeing their taster session.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child, is non-judgemental and is expected to build a secure and caring relationship with individual key children and their parents.
- The key person will:
 - Provide an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
 - Complete relevant forms with parents, including consent forms.
 - Explain our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
 - Offer unconditional regard for the child and be non-judgemental.
 - Become knowledgeable of the individual characteristics of each of their key children;
 - Will learn and show their knowledge through their practice, observations and reports about children's individual learning styles and their stages of development;
 - Become familiar with children's preferences, choices and individual needs;
 - Identify any key issues with a child's learning, development and well-being;
 - Regularly instigate and hold conversations with parents about their child's time at pre-school or discuss any concerns they have with the child's parents, taking their views into account also;

- Offer suitable advice and support to parents and other key staff – sharing information about their key child in planning meetings, supervisions, staff meetings and day to day practice;
 - Liaise and plan any necessary and appropriate action with the SENCo, ENCo, Manager, staff and parents;
 - Help to implement support in the provision; and
 - Advise and support parents with home learning activities.
- 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 primary contact for 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 maintaining 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.
 - Where possible we operate a buddy key person system so that parents/carers have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person. To ensure continuity and consistency, the key person will always share relevant information about their key children at regular intervals such as staff meetings, supervisions etc. The Setting Manager and Deputy should ensure they have a good sound knowledge of all children in attendance.
 - 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 staff and children.
 - We ensure that in our practice, staff members and a key person does not particularly favour any of our children, or give excessive one-to-one attention, beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibility - for example purchasing gifts, visiting them at home or attending parties.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with relevant information. These include written information (including our parent handbook, contact details, term dates, first day list and how to view our policies on-line), displays about activities available within the setting, information days/evenings and individual meetings with parents.

- Before a child is enrolled, we provide the opportunity for the parent/carers to visit the setting to see the setting for the first time. Once a start date is agreed, a free taster session is offered to all new starters. This can be taken at a date that suits the setting, parent/carer and child. We require parents to stay at this taster session.
- During the pre-start visit 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. This of course can change once the child starts.
- We allocate a key person to each child before their official First Day; 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 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. Younger children may 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 in setting 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 when they will be coming back.
- 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 will contact parents if a child is upset and we are unable to settle them.
- In order to facilitate the child's settling in, parents/carers are encouraged to remain in the setting 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 work with the child's parents to start to create their child's Learning Journey.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance current guidance. *A Know How Guide: The EYFS progress check at age two.*
- 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.
- The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by the setting 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 (2010)
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2017)
- Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)
- Creating a Learning Environment in the Home (Pre-school Learning Alliance 2015)