

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

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 Nursery School by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the Nursery School is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the Nursery School 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 School.

We aim to make the Nursery School 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 Nursery School 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 Nursery Schools.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person as soon as the child starts.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- 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 regularly sharing information with the child's parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our Nursery School and at home.
- We provide a back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our Nursery School, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend the Nursery School, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the Nursery School, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the Nursery School.
- We use trial days and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- 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 School.
- 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 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 School.

- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the Nursery School without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left.
- Within the first few weeks of starting Nursery, we begin to create a child's Home-Link booklet and we share this with the child's parents. We explain how the booklet is used to build a record of their child's achievements with the addition of parental observations and comments.

The progress check at age two

- The key person and Head carry out the 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 we 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 we will take to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parents.
- We will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the Nursery and will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

Re - Key Person

Dear Parents

The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage), which became mandatory in September 2008 and updated in 2014 for all schools and early years providers in Ofsted registered settings states that:

“Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs (para 1.10), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with the parents.” (page 21 Practice Guidance Sept 2014)

At Privett Montessori Nursery School your key person will aim to help your child feel confident and safe by working closely with you and by taking a special interest in your child in order to develop a close bond with him/her. In order to achieve this your key person will endeavour to:

- liaise regularly with you about your child.
- get to know and understand your child really well.
- ensure that your child's Home - School Record goes home and remind you (if necessary) to bring it back!
- read and make written observations in your child's Home - School Record regularly.
- review your child's Home - School Record each half term focusing on his/her learning and achievements while noting his/her strengths and weaknesses.

As parents and people who know and understand your child best, please help us by:

- liaising regularly with your child's key person and sharing your concerns and information about your child.
- ensuring that you take your child's Home - School Record home and bring it back **every week**.
- reading our observations and making your own written observations about your child in his/her Home - School Record regularly.
- updating your child's record of interests and skills when asked to do so.