

SAFEGUARDING & WELFARE REQUIREMENT: KEY PERSON

4.1 The Role of the Key Person and Settling In



Policy Statement

At St John's Playtime Pre-school 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, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want all our 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 the setting. We aim to make St John's Playtime Pre-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 child must have a Key Person as stated in these requirements and the 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 to each child before they start in our setting.
- 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.
 - We encourage the child's sense of belonging by asking parents to complete an 'all about me' form to include the child's likes, dislikes, comforts etc. The key person will follow the child's interests and needs and will use the information provided to support the child.
 - Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
 - 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, and 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 St John's Playtime Pre-school, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information in our prospectus and our 'New Starter Pack', policy information available via links on our website and individual meetings with parents.
- We provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting and meet our staff.
- 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 will offer a home visit by the member of staff 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 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 our setting.
- Parents and carers are welcome to stay with their child during their first few sessions if they feel that this would be beneficial for their child and the settling-in process.
- 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 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 may contact parents if a child becomes too distressed. We allow parents to make the choice of whether or not to collect their child in these circumstances. We work together to extend the settling in period on an individual basis if needed.
- 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 will discuss and work with the child's parents to begin 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 with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the 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 our 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 their child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

Key person and parent/carer relationships

- Staff will respect parents right to confidentiality.
- Staff must remain professional in respect to their personal circumstances and be aware that personal situations and beliefs must be kept private and not shared.
- All staff will remain professional at all times in the best interest of the child.
- If these guidelines are not adhered to and the matter is brought to the attention of the manager, disciplinary procedures may follow.

This policy was adopted at a meeting held by St John's Playtime Pre-school committee on 17th June 2009.

This policy was reviewed & updated on: March 2021

This policy will be reviewed again on: March 2022

Signed on behalf of the Management committee and provider:

Name of Signatory: Chris Coyle 

Role of Signatory: Committee Chairperson