



## **Key person & settling in policy**

**Department - Early Years**

Responsible member of staff: **Sarah Harvey – Director of Nursery**

Review date: **April 2023**

Next review: **April 2024**

### **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**

## **Child care practice**

### **Key person and settling-in policy**

#### **Policy Statement**

Alton School Early Years Department believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to. Ideally, this person will already have got to know them and their parents and will be able to 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 too will have confidence, staff are committed and the Early Years Department is a happy and dedicated place, to both attend and work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in our Early Years Department 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 us.

We aim to make our Early Years Department 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 Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for every child. The Key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

We aim, through our procedures, to develop a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for all children and families within our setting.

#### **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 department.
- 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 sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents. They are responsible for keeping those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our department 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.
- We provide a back-up key person who will be the child's co key person, thus enabling the child and the parents to have a key contact, who knows the child well, 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 department, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

### *Settling-in*

- Before a child starts to attend the Early Years department we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies as required), details about activities available within the setting, open days and individual meetings with parents.
- During the few weeks prior to a child starting Nursery, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting if they so wish.
- We will provide parents with a Nursery handbook.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before he/she starts to attend; the key person/co person, Director of Nursery/Deputy Manager, welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use pre-start visits and or the first taster session, at which a child attends, to explain information regarding the day to day running of the room and complete with his/her parents the child's personal records.
- Our normal settling in process consists of taster sessions which last approximately from 30 minutes to two hours. We explain the settling in procedure to parents prior to starting with us. If a child is likely to find difficulty in settling, we will jointly decide with parents, on the best way to help the child to settle into the department.
- We judge a child to be 'settled' when they settle quickly after being left; for example, if they cried when parents left, this soon stops and they are easily distracted. 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 becoming familiar with where things are and, depending on their age, 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.

- The vast majority of babies and young children settle easily into. We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others. Some children, who appear to settle rapidly, are not necessarily ready to be left. We will always keep parents informed.
- In the Nursery, we do not necessarily believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We reserve the right not to accept a child into the Nursery if the child finds it too distressing to be left and in our opinion, the child is unable to benefit from being at Nursery. This is especially the case with very young children. We will of course be guided by parents who undoubtedly know their child best. We will work with parents to ensure the child settles as quickly as possible.