

Key Person Policy

Date adopted by governors: Autumn 2018

Date for review: Autumn 2019

STATUS: LOCAL EY

REVIEW: ANNUALLY

Committee: PDBW

1. Aims:

We believe that children settle and thrive best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their family well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the family, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, families have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy place to attend or work in.

We aim to make our nursery and 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 Governing Board of Shere Infant School and Fox Cubs Nursery recognises its duty under The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements sections of the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2017, paragraph 3.27 states that:

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with the parents.

The key person is the named member of staff assigned to an individual child to support his/her development and to act as the key point of contact with that child's parents. The key person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to the family to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately.

2. Definition of a key person approach:

“The key person approach is a way of working in nurseries in which the whole focus and organisation is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between the individual children and the individual nursery staff. The key person approach is an involvement, and individual and reciprocal commitment between a member of staff and a family.”

Elfer. P, Goldschmeid. E, and Selleck. D. (2003) 'Key Persons in the Nursery' London: David Fulton

The key person system helps build positive relationships with the children between families and staff. This is achieved by:

- An adult who is trusted, supportive and enables independence
- An adult who helps the child become familiar with the setting and to feel confident and safe within it
- An adult who cares and responds sensitively to a child's feelings, ideas and behaviour
- An adult who is tuned in to the child and family and actively builds positive relationships and communication
- An adult who oversees and builds the shared record of a child's development and progress with staff, families and other professionals.

3. Key person selection:

The key children are selected based on staff working hours to ensure that where possible each key person is available for their key children. We also consider each member of staff's training and areas of expertise so that they are well matched to meet individual children's needs where appropriate. The key person will have the opportunity to greet their new key child during transition. Should a parent wish to change their key person for any reason they will need to make an appointment to discuss this with the Headteacher.

4. Key Person Responsibilities:

Each Key Person should:

Ensure that all children in their care experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

Build friendly professional relationships with families maintaining appropriate boundaries. **A key person is a friendly professional, not a friend.**

Communicate regularly with parents/carers to ensure that additional needs are being met within the setting

Ensure that records of development and progress are available within the setting to be shared with families and support agencies.

Understand and work within the guidance of the setting's policies which make reference to children with additional needs, e.g. SEND, medical conditions, safeguarding and behaviour management

Attend appropriate training in order to be proactive in supporting the children's needs.

5. Procedures:

We allocate a key person before the child starts at nursery or school.

The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.

The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.

The key person becomes attuned to the child's individual preferences, learning styles, attitudes and characteristics, and works with the family 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 family and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a child-minder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.

The key person is responsible for development records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's family to keep those records up to date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.

We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and as the basis for establishing positive relationships with other staff and children.

The key person will provide particular support wherever there is a transitional change, a significant event in the child's life and throughout the day-to-day events where the child needs personal care.

Siblings are placed together in the same key group unless this is against the wishes of their family.

6. Settling in:

During the term before the child starts, we offer opportunities for them to visit the nursery or school with their families.

New families are invited to annual events, so that they can get to know other families, their key person, the staff and children in a relaxed informal atmosphere.

We allocate a key person to each child and family before the child starts nursery or school. The key person welcomes and looks after the child and family during the initial sessions and during the settling in process.

Families are given an introduction booklet prior to starting. This includes:

- General information about the nursery/school
- A written introduction to each member of staff
- Our Safeguarding Children statement and whistle-blowing policy.
- Essential policies
- All About Me and All About Our Child Forms
- Routines
- Kit List for children's clothes etc.
- Information about EYS and our nursery/school philosophy

During the first session the nursery administrator will ensure that all statutory information about the child has been collected and that all necessary permission slips and agreements have been signed.

When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling in with the family and jointly decide on the best way to help the child settle into the setting.

As part of our induction process, families will be asked to spend a whole or part of a session with their child. We believe this is important because:

- Families see the nursery and are familiar with the ethos and routines.
- The child is able to explore and experience the nursery day with a familiar adult to support them.
- Families, staff and children have the opportunity to get to know each other in a relaxed and informal way.
- Families are happy and more confident having seen first-hand the quality of care provided for all children, an essential element when forging good relationships built on trust and respect.

The key person will discuss with the child's family his/her likes and dislikes, his/her routines and their wishes for care. The key person will spend time with the child playing with them and forming a relationship.

Families will be encouraged to introduce their child gradually to the nursery, leaving him/her for just a few hours at the beginning and building each day.

We recognise that younger children may take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have a period of absence may also need their family on hand to re-settle them.

The amount of time spent inducting a child to the nursery/school will depend solely on the needs the individual child and their family.

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 adults 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 and that some children who appear to be settled rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the family will honour their commitment to stay with their child until they are happy and settled to stay without them.

We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them 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.

We understand that many young children find transitions difficult and will support them to say goodbye in ways that are easiest for them. We will encourage children to wave or blow kisses and will stay with them until they are busy and happily at play.

We will telephone families after 20 minutes of adult support if their child is still not settled and happy.

Staff do not work shift patterns, so key people are always on hand to assist with these transitions.

7. Daily communication between families and key people:

Wherever possible children are greeted by their key person on arrival, with all staff present to welcome children and families into the nursery and discuss, share and explore any issues, changes or news.

Wherever possible key people are available throughout the child's day, with the exclusion of lunch breaks, enabling children to feel safe, confident and secure. This enables key people to be aware of the child and the events which occur, and to be knowledgeable when discussing the child's day with families at the end of the session, using first-hand knowledge and personal experience.

The nursery and school will strive to create an informal relaxed environment, where families and staff can chat freely about the children's day, with the child present and a central part of the conversation.

Records, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting, are compiled in a child's portfolio which is always available for families and children to read and contribute to.

Parents are asked to inform their child's key person of any events or incidents that may affect the child physically or emotionally. It is important that we know about any changes in family circumstances or impending changes. We also need to know about any illness or sickness that the child or close family may have suffered. We can therefore play an important role in helping to support the child with such events and emotions and are in a better position to understand their mood and behaviour.

8. Progress Check:

The key person carries out the regulatory 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 making good progress, any areas where the child is not 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 families. 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. Families will be given the opportunity to meet their child's key person, to discuss and contribute to the progress check.

Shere Infant School & Fox Cubs Nursery

Key Person Information



Child's Name	
Their Key Person is	
Contact Number	
Contact Email Address	

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