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The Role of the Key Person and Settling In

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 pre-school is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the pre-school and to feel secure and comfortable with all our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners along with the setting.

We aim to make the preschool 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 (2021). 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.

Procedures

- The key person is responsible for the preschool setting induction for the child and their family. The key person is also responsible for the settling in of the child at the start of each session they attend, when staff shifts allows.
- Bradpole Preschool have red and green keyperson teams, with a nominated lead keyperson, therefore there should always be a key person at each session the child attends.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental
- The key person works with the parent's to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning



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- 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 to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in pre-school 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 promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in the pre-school, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children

Transitions from Home to Preschool – Settling In

- Before a child starts to attend the preschool, 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 pre-school, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents
- We ask parents to complete our 'All About Me' booklet which asks for information regarding family background, current interests, social, emotional development, communication and language development and physical development
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the pre-school
- We allocate a key persons 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 when staff shifts and the child's sessions allow
- We use pre-start visits, 'stay and play sessions', to explain and complete, with parents, the child's admission forms. At this visit we also offer parent's the opportunity for a home visit from their child's key person, Preschool leader or Senco.
- We provide parents with information about the settling in process and the various strategies that we may use and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the pre-school
- Parents/carers are encouraged to stay with their child when they start to aid the transition from home to setting. When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to



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their child and explain that they will be coming back. We encourage parents to start with a short period of separation when the child shows anxiety, gradually increasing the period of time as and when the child is able to cope

- We provide new parents with a welcome pack when the children come for their 'stay and play' visit before their child starts. In the pack we include:
 - 'a healthy lunchbox' information leaflet
 - Information leaflet about the Early Years Foundation Stage
 - A settling in information sheet
 - Information about their child's key person
 - A guide about home visits
 - A small teddy in the colour of the child's keyperson group. We explain how this can be used when the child starts pre-school as a transition tool/comfort object.
 - A photo book of the pre-school.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home, if children become very distressed or do not settle we will contact the parents and discuss the way forward. 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 judged to be settled when they are familiar with where things, are pleased to see other children and participate in activities
- 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 pre-school. Parents will be contacted if their child is very distressed
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the pre-school without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children
- After the child's first four to six weeks, we discuss and work with the child's parents to complete a settling in assessment to identify the child's next steps and work with the parents on how we are going to support these



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The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with and referring to the guidance: A Know How Guide: the EYFS Progress Check at 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 preschool to address any development 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 preschool and will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of: The Committee of Bradpole Preschool

Held during the Autumn 2023

Date to be reviewed: Autumn 2024