Role of the Key Person and Settling in Policy

Statement of Intent

At Bradpole Preschool, we believe that children settle best and thrive when they have a secure relationship with a consistent key person who knows them and their family well and understands their individual needs. Research has shown the key person approach supports children's emotional wellbeing, learning, and development, helps parents feel confident in the care their child receives, and promotes positive professional practice among staff.

We aim to ensure that every child feels safe, valued, supported, and happy within the setting, and that parents feel confident as active partners in their child's learning and development.

EYFS Requirement

The role of the key person is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Every child must be assigned a key person to ensure that their individual needs are met and that they form secure attachments.

Aims of the Key Person System

We aim to:

- Promote strong, secure emotional attachments
- Support children's wellbeing and development
- Ensure continuity of care
- Build positive partnerships with parents
- Support smooth transitions into the setting
- Provide personalised learning and care

The Role of the Key Person

Bradpole Preschool operates red and green key person teams with nominated lead key persons to ensure continuity of care at all sessions.

Each child will be allocated a named key person who will be responsible for supporting the child and family through induction and settling-in, and welcoming the child at the start of sessions whenever staffing allows. The key person will offer unconditional positive regard and a non-judgemental approach, working in partnership with parents to plan for the child's wellbeing, care and learning. They will act as the main point of contact for parents, liaise with other professionals and carers where appropriate, maintain accurate developmental records and share information regularly with parents.

The key person will also encourage positive relationships within their key group and support the child's relationships with other staff members.

(While we do discourage staff from having their own child attending the setting, should this situation arise, a member of staff would not act as the key person for their own child or close relative, in line with the setting's related policies.)

Transitions from Home to Preschool: Settling In

We recognise that settling into preschool is a significant transition for children and families. We aim to make this process as positive and supportive as possible.

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Before Starting

Before a child begins attending, we will provide written and verbal information, including policies and prospectus, and offer information sessions and individual meetings. Families will be invited to pre-start visits and 'stay and play' sessions, and parents will be asked to complete an "All About Me" booklet.

A key person will be allocated prior to the start date. Families will also receive a welcome pack including healthy lunchbox guidance, EYFS information, settling-in guidance, key person details and a preschool photo book.

The Settling-In Process

The settling-in process is flexible and tailored to each child's needs. It may include parents staying initially with their child, gradual separation, short sessions building up over time, consistent routines and regular communication with parents.

Parents are encouraged to say goodbye clearly and positively, reassure their child that they will return and support gradual independence.

Where children become very distressed, staff will contact parents to discuss appropriate next steps. We do not believe that allowing children to cry without comfort supports emotional wellbeing. Distress is responded to promptly and sensitively. In exceptional circumstances, we may require a parent or carer to remain with a child until they are able to settle.
Children returning after absence may require additional settling support.

When a Child Is Considered Settled

A child is considered settled when they show a secure relationship with their key person, seek comfort from familiar adults, appear confident in the environment, engage in play and activities, and build relationships with peers.

Review of Settling In

After approximately four to six weeks, the key person and parents will meet to review the settling-in period, complete a settling-in assessment, identify next steps and agree strategies to support learning and wellbeing.

Partnership with Parents

We value parents as partners and will share information regularly, offer opportunities for discussion, involve parents in planning, respect family knowledge and expertise, and provide guidance and support when needed.

The Progress Check at Age Two

In line with EYFS requirements, the key person will complete the two-year-old progress check.
This will review the child's development, identify strengths and any concerns, provide parents with a clear overview and support early identification of additional needs. The progress check will highlight areas of good progress, identify areas where development is less than expected, outline agreed actions, include referrals where appropriate and support learning at home and in preschool. Key persons will plan appropriate activities and support parents in enhancing development at home.

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Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually. Practice is monitored by the management team, feedback from parents and staff is considered, and updates reflect changes to EYFS guidance.

This policy was adopted by the Bradpole Preschool Committee
During the Summer Term 2026
Date to be reviewed Autumn Term 2027