

## **The role of the key person and settling-in Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

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 Preschool by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed and the Preschool is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in. We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the Preschool and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the Preschool.

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 Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each Preschool 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 Preschools.

Any temporary staff must be trained to proficiently and safely administer medication and medical procedures for individual children. They must also adhere to the guidelines and procedures on caring for the individual needs of children with SEND, as detailed in their Health Care Plans. *8.4a Prioritised Place Risk Assessment* should be used to identify any risks that may be incurred due to a change in key person for such children.

### **Procedures**

- ↗ We allocate a key person before the child starts, based on staffing and the sessions the child attends.
- ↗ The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into Preschool
- ↗ 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 leaning.
- ↗ 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 our Preschool 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.
- ↗ 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 our Preschool, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

### **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 about the Preschool in the form of a booklet, displays about activities available within the Preschool, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- ↗ During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the Preschool.
- ↗ We allocate a key person to each child before they start to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and their parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- ↗ We may offer a home visit by the person 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 the child's registration records with their parents.
- ↗ When a child starts, 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 the Preschool.
- ↗ Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may 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 they arrive, 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 expect that the parent work with us until their child can stay happily without them.
- ↗ 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 Preschool.
- ↗ 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.
- ↗ Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to start to create their child's record of achievement, and discuss any concerns that the parents may have.

### **The progress check at age two**

- ↗ The key person, liaising with the manager, carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the supporting guidance to the EYFS *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 the 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 the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

**This policy was adopted at a meeting of Pickering Pre-School Playgroup held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**Date to be reviewed – Before end of August 2024.**

**Signed on behalf of the management committee**

**Name of signatory – Richard Allenby (Chairperson).**