Key Person and Settling-in Policy

We, as a setting, understand how difficult it is for parents to leave their child with people who are unfamiliar to them, therefore, we aim to make the setting 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. We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents/carers well, and who can meet their individual needs. This links closely to the EYFS, e.g. PSED; UW - people & communities

**Settling in Procedures**

Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include a full guided and informative tour of the whole nursery, written information (including our policies, Room Life booklet and admission pack) and individual taster sessions for parents and children within the room that they will be starting in.

A full induction will take place. 

* The room leader is responsible for the induction of the family and introduction of their key person who will take the lead in settling the child into our setting. (Please note that the key carer may change if the child does not bond with their key carer).
* The induction reviews the child’s development with the parent and looks at their development across all 7 areas of learning.
* Parents/carers are asked whether their child can do each development matter. If they are unsure, notes are made as to what they can and can’t do. Comments are made during the introduction to support the review. This induction is then used to support on-entry tracking after 6 weeks (see assessment policy)
* If parents have particular concerns about their child, these are usually identified during this meeting. It may include worries about physical development such as walking; use of sounds in babbling or lack of them; problems with listening. All of which our staff can discuss with parents.
* Parents are given a word log to complete before their child starts nursery. This is used as a baseline. Parents and staff add more words until the child speaks fluently. The log may include the child’s attempt as saying particular words and the parents interpretation of the words, e.g. saying brrrrm for car; boc for drink, etc. It may also include signs that children may use for signing. In either case, we will review words, signs with parents to ensure that we understand what is being said.
* A programme of settling sessions is devised with the parents.

**Sessions**

* Parents are expected to stay for the whole of the child’s first session.
* After the initial first session, we are happy for parents to stay until the child is thought to be settled, however, we do encourage parents to stay close by and observe how their child is getting on during the session.
* Some children take longer than others to settle and some settle more quickly and then become distressed a few weeks later. The setting will work with the child’s parents to support their child through this transition period. It is important that both parents and children are relaxed and happy in the setting.
* When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents/carers and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
* When a child starts they are welcome to bring a transitional item i.e. toy, blanket with them for as long as they need the comfort gained from this item.
* We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with the staff in the room; the child is familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities; when they can part from their carer with ease. Please note that this does vary from child to child, and the age of the child.
* When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back later in the day.
* On the child’s first session without their parent/carer, we encourage parents to phone to help put their mind at rest and to let them know how their little one is getting on.
* 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 Learning Journey

# ****Key Person Policy****

# We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to who can meet their individual needs and get to know their parents well.

# We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting 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 the setting. We aim to make the setting 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

# Here at 1st Steps, we offer a dual Key Person system, which we have found over the last 20 years to be much more beneficial to all our children. By having a main carer and a key carer buddy, our children are settled all year round. For instance if their main key person is absent, they will not experience any distress, as they are equally familiar with the other member of staff. The key person is responsible for working with a small group of children providing the reassurance needed for each child to feel safe and cared for as well as building a relationship with parents/carers. The key person will help the baby or child to become familiar with the setting and feel safe within it. They will also talk to parents/carers to make sure the needs of the child are being met appropriately, and the records of development and progress are shared with parent/carers and other professionals as necessary.

# We will use the following procedure to achieve this:

# We allocate a key person when the child starts who will be introduced by the room leader and where possible will be responsible for the induction for the family.

* Each key person works alongside a fellow key person within a key group. This provides a back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child’s key person. We provide a dual key person system so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child’s key person.

# 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, with prior permission from the parents, will make 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.

# The 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 setting and at home.

# The key person is also responsible for feeding information about the child’s next steps for development into the planning team and processes within the setting.

# The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.

# The key person will endeavour to make him or herself available for parents to discuss their child’s progress regularly.

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

See also Transition Policy for further information.

Reviewed by: Bev May 16 Next review date May 18

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**Learning & Development**