

Wendens Ambo Pre-School

4.0 Key Person

4.1 The role of the key person and settling-in

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 setting. By encouraging secure relationships children can thrive and parents have confidence that our staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners within the setting. We aim to make the Pre-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 key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- If the child's key person is absent for any reason then all staff will be able to act as a "back up" key person. We will always try to prioritise a staff member who has built up a stronger relationship with a child to stand in as their key person.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into the Pre-School.
 - Completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms.

- Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
- Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- Acting as the key contact for the parents.
- 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 through the regular use and updating of the child's learning journal.
- 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.
- Encouraging 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 adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend the Pre-School, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our Parents Information Pack and where to find our policies), information about our management committee and individual meetings with parents/carers.
- 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 person 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 a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle in. We are willing to introduce

flexible admission procedures to suit the needs of individual children and their families, if appropriate.

- We encourage parents/carers, where appropriate, to separate from their children for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent/carer 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 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 all children are different and have different needs; some children will settle more readily than others but some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left, so we ask parents to be 'on-call' to a certain extent for at least the first week.
- 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 create greater anxiety.
- We make clear to families from the outset that they will have our support for as long as it takes for their child to settle at the Pre-School, but we also reserve the right not to accept a child without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left.
- Within the first few weeks of a child starting staff are always available to discuss his/her development and progress with the parents to begin to create their child's Learning Journey.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the guidance *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 us 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.

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (2014)*
- *Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (2015)*
- *Creating a Learning Environment in the Home (2015)*

After a review by the Committee members and staff this policy was adopted on: _____

Signed on behalf of the Management

Committee: _____

Name of Signatory: _____

Role of signatory: _____