**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 providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, 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 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.

They 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.

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**

 Pre-school allocates a key person before the child starts.

 The key person is usually responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.

 The key person completes the relevant forms with parents, including consent forms and any health care plans which may be needed.

* Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.

 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 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.

 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 and completing the 2 year old check. (refer to 2 year old check)

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

 Pre-school promotes 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.

*Settling-in*

 Before a child starts attending pre-school we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our welcome pack and policies), information on any events that would be beneficial that is given to them on their first day.

 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.

* The children and parents are invited into preschool for an hours visit prior to their start date. This is so that all paperwork can be completed and the key person gets the chance to go through the welcome pack with the parents. This enables the key person to spend more time with the child on his/hers first day.

 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 into pre-school.

 We have an expectation that a parent, carer or close relative, will be available to return to pre-school at any point during the whole of their first session and while they are settling in.

 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 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 some children will settle more readily than others. We expect that the parent will work with us to settle the child and if necessary build up the length of the sessions, until their child can stay happily for the whole session.

 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 setting.

 We reserve the right not to accept a child into 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.

 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 scrap book.

The progress check at age two

The key person is responsible for completing the check using information from ongoing observational assessments carried out as part of our everyday practice, taking account of the views and contributions of parents and other professionals.

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 at preschool and identify areas where progress is less than expected.

The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken in preschool 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 interests and needs within preschool and will discuss with parents ways to enhance the child’s development at pre-school and at home.

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Tring stepping stones |
| Held on |  |
| Date to be reviewed | June 2020 |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  |
| Name of signatory |  |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) |  |

MAY 2012 REVIEW – NO CHANGES September 13 review- added 2 year check

Sept 13 review- added 2 year check, removed back up key worker and minor wording changes.

January 2015 review- added in one hour visits.

April 2016- no changes

March 2018 The key person completes the relevant forms with parents, including consent forms and any health care plans which may be needed.

* Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
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* The key person will plan activities to meet the child’s interests and needs within preschool and will discuss with parents ways to enhance the child’s development at pre-school and at home.
* Further guidance publications

June 2019- no changes

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| **Please sign once you have read and understood the policy** | **staff name** | **date** |
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**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)

Further guidance- 2 year check policy