**4 1 The role of the key person and settling-in**

**Policy Statement**

We aim to offer the highest possible quality of experience for both the children and adults within the setting. 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. The Key Person Approach allows our staff to develop a deeper knowledge of a small group of children and focus especially on them and their needs. The Key Person has special responsibilities for their group of children, giving them reassurance to feel safe and cared for. Also by developing a contact point for parents and building a trusting relationship with them.

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 setting 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 settings.

**Procedures**

* As we are a small group our Administrator Dana Goodwin & setting lead Marie Whiting will work together & share responsibility for providing an induction for the family, for settling the child into our setting. Dana & Marie will also ensure :
	+ Completion of all 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.
* We allocate a key person within the first few weeks after the child starts.
* 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 child-minder, 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 setting and at home.
* 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.

*Settling-in*

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, 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 setting.
* We provide a home visit, stay & play & 2 hour shorter session as part of a phased induction for children.
* Parents /Carers will be reassured if their child has difficulty settling in. When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling in with the child’s parents, and jointly decide on the best way to help the child settle into the setting.
* It will be made clear to parents/carers from the onset that they will be supported in preschool for as long as it takes to settle their child there.
* Parents/Carers, where appropriate, will be encouraged to separate from their child for brief periods at first, gradually building up to longer absences.
* When parents leave we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
* Younger children may 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 are aware that following the pandemic some children & parents will experience heightened separation anxiety & be supported with this in a holistic way.
* 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.
* 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 the setting 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.

*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 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.

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | NBU5s Preschool | name of setting |
| Held on | June 6th 2023 | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed | June 6th 2024 | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  |
| Name of signatory | Marie Whiting |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) | Setting Lead |

**Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

* Play is What I Do (2010)
* Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012) With supporting documentation