



Key Person and Settling in Policy

Our Approach

At Pavilion Pre-School, we recognise that children settle best when they have a trusted adult who knows them well, understands their individual needs and interests, and works closely with their parents and carers.

We are committed to the key person approach, which supports children to develop secure and positive relationships within the setting. A strong relationship with a key person helps children to feel safe, confident and emotionally secure, enabling them to explore, play, learn and develop to their full potential.

The key person approach also supports parents and carers by providing a consistent point of contact and helping them to feel confident that their child is known, valued and well cared for.

We aim to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where every child and family feels valued. We recognise that every child is unique and that children settle at different rates. Our approach is therefore flexible and responsive to the individual needs, experiences and circumstances of each child and family.

The key person approach forms part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements. Every child attending our preschool will have a named key person who takes particular responsibility for supporting their care, learning and development and for building a strong relationship with the child and their family.

Procedures

Allocating a Key Person

Every child is allocated a key person before they start at the preschool wherever possible. However, we recognise that children form relationships in different ways and that a strong, trusting bond cannot always be established immediately. Where appropriate, we may take some time to get to know the child and observe their interactions, interests and preferences to see which member of staff they naturally gravitate towards. This helps us identify the adult with whom the child feels most comfortable and secure, enabling us to build a positive and meaningful relationship that supports their emotional wellbeing, confidence and sense of belonging.



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We believe this child-centred approach helps ensure that the key person relationship is based on the individual needs, personality and preferences of each child.

Parents and carers are informed of their child's key person and introduced to them before, or when, their child starts.

Where possible, we consider the child's individual needs, family circumstances and existing relationships when allocating a key person.

A buddy or secondary key person will be identified to provide continuity of care when the key person is absent.

All staff share responsibility for ensuring that every child is safe, cared for and supported, regardless of which member of staff is their key person.

The key person approach does not mean that a child can only develop a relationship with one member of staff. We encourage children to develop positive relationships with the wider staff team.

The Manager's Responsibilities

The Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that every child has a named key person.
- Supporting staff to understand and fulfil their responsibilities within the key person approach.
- Providing families with information about the preschool, including relevant policies and procedures.
- Working with the key person and family to support a positive transition into preschool.
- Ensuring that appropriate information is gathered from parents and carers about their child's routines, interests, development, needs and experiences.
- Ensuring that relevant consent and registration information is completed.
- Ensuring that safeguarding procedures and responsibilities, including those relating to the Prevent Duty, are explained to parents and carers where appropriate.
- Monitoring children's well-being, development and progress and ensuring that appropriate support is put in place where concerns are identified.



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- Ensuring that information is shared appropriately with parents, carers and other professionals where necessary and with appropriate consent or in accordance with safeguarding requirements.

The Key Person's Responsibilities

The key person is responsible for developing a positive, secure and trusting relationship with the child and their family.

The key person will:

- Welcome the child and family warmly and help them to feel valued and included.
- Develop a secure and trusting relationship with the child.
- Offer warmth, encouragement and unconditional regard, treating every child with respect and without judgement.
- Get to know the child well, including their interests, personality, routines, strengths, needs and family circumstances.
- Work closely with parents and carers to support the child's individual care, learning and development.
- Act as a main point of contact for parents and carers and share information about their child's experiences, well-being and progress.
- Support the child's individual learning and development by observing, assessing and planning experiences based on their interests, needs and next steps.
- Ensure that the child's voice, interests and experiences are reflected in their learning and development.
- Maintain appropriate developmental records and ensure these reflect the child's experiences both at preschool and at home.
- Support children to develop relationships with other adults and children within the setting.
- Liaise with other professionals and carers involved with the child where appropriate and in accordance with information-sharing and safeguarding requirements.
- Support the child through periods of change, including starting preschool, moving rooms or preparing for school.



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- Ensure that relevant information about the child is shared with colleagues to provide continuity of care.

The key person is an important point of contact for the family; however, all staff have a shared responsibility for children's safety, well-being, learning and development.

Settling-In and Starting Preschool

We recognise that starting preschool is a significant experience for both children and their families. We work closely with parents and carers to make the transition as positive and reassuring as possible.

Before a child starts, we may provide families with information through:

- Written information about the preschool and relevant policies and procedures.
- Information about what to expect when their child starts.
- Open days or stay-and-play opportunities.
- Visits to the preschool.
- Meetings or informal discussions with parents and carers.
- Opportunities to meet the child's key person.
- Information gathering about the child's routines, interests, likes, dislikes, communication, development and individual needs.

Where possible, families will be offered opportunities to visit the preschool before their child's first session.

Supporting Children to Settle

- The key person will welcome the child and their family and support them throughout the settling-in process.
- We will discuss settling-in arrangements with parents and carers and agree an approach that takes account of the individual child.
- Where appropriate, parents or carers may remain with their child for part of the initial sessions.
- The length of time a child attends independently will be increased gradually according to their individual needs and how they are settling.
- We understand that some children may settle quickly, while others may need more time, reassurance and support.



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- Children who have previously attended another setting, have had a significant period away from home or have experienced a prolonged absence from preschool may need additional support when returning.
- We will work closely with parents and carers to identify strategies that help their child feel secure and confident.
- Staff will provide comfort and reassurance when a child becomes upset and will support them to build a trusting relationship with their key person and other familiar adults.
- We do not believe that leaving a distressed child to cry without appropriate support is an effective way of settling them. We respond sensitively to children's emotional needs and recognise that children learn best when they feel safe and secure.
- If a child is experiencing significant distress, we will discuss this with their parents or carers and consider whether a shorter session or a different settling-in approach would be more appropriate.
- The settling-in process will be reviewed regularly with the family and adapted as necessary.

When is a Child Settled?

We recognise that settling is an individual process. A child may be considered settled when they:

- Develop a trusting relationship with their key person and other familiar adults.
- Feel comfortable seeking reassurance, comfort or help from familiar staff.
- Show increasing confidence when arriving at preschool.
- Begin to explore the environment independently.
- Show an interest in play and learning opportunities.
- Develop relationships with other children.
- Become familiar with the daily routines and environment.
- Show signs of enjoyment, curiosity and engagement.

We will not place a fixed timescale on settling-in, as every child is different.



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Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as their child's first and most important educators. Their knowledge of their child is invaluable in helping us to provide appropriate care and learning experiences.

We will:

- Listen to and value information provided by parents and carers.
- Encourage families to share information about their child's interests, routines, development, home experiences and individual needs.
- Keep parents and carers informed about their child's experiences, well-being and progress.
- Encourage parents and carers to contribute to their child's learning and development.
- Work together to identify and address any concerns at an early stage.
- Respect families' individual circumstances, cultures, backgrounds and preferences.
- Provide opportunities for parents and carers to communicate with their child's key person and other members of the staff team.

Supporting Children's Development and Progress

The key person plays an important role in observing and supporting children's learning and development.

Staff use their knowledge of the child, observations, interactions and information from parents and carers to identify children's strengths, interests and next steps.

Planning is flexible and responsive and reflects children's individual needs and interests. We use Development Matters and the EYFS framework to support our understanding of children's development and to inform appropriate learning opportunities.

We recognise that children develop at different rates and that development does not always follow a fixed or linear pattern. Where a child is not making expected progress, we will work with parents and carers to identify appropriate support and, where necessary, seek advice from relevant professionals.



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Progress Check at Age Two

Where a child is aged between two and three years, we will complete the EYFS Progress Check at Age Two in accordance with statutory requirements and any relevant local procedures.

The progress check aims to:

- Review the child's development and identify their strengths.
- Provide parents and carers with a clear picture of their child's development.
- Identify any areas where additional support may be beneficial.
- Identify any developmental concerns at an early stage.
- Agree appropriate actions with parents and carers.
- Work with other professionals where appropriate to support the child's development.
- Provide parents and carers with ideas and strategies to support their child's learning and development at home.

The child's key person will contribute to the progress check using their knowledge of the child, observations, assessments and information shared by the family.

Where appropriate, information from other professionals involved with the child will also be considered, with the necessary permissions and in line with safeguarding and information-sharing requirements.

The progress check will be discussed with parents and carers so that there is a shared understanding of the child's development and any support that may be required.

Key Person for Breakfast and After School Club

Some children attend both Pavilion Pre-School and our Breakfast and After School Clubs. We recognise that children benefit from having a familiar and trusted adult available to support them across all parts of their day.

Children attending Breakfast and After School Club will have a key person allocated specifically for their time in the club. This may be a different member of staff from their preschool key person. The club key person will get to know the child, their individual needs, interests, routines and preferences and will provide a consistent point of contact for the child and their family during their time in the club.



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For children who attend both preschool and the Breakfast and After School Club, staff will work together to ensure that relevant information is shared appropriately, providing continuity and consistency in the child's care and support.

The club key person will support children in much the same way as their preschool key person by:

- Developing a warm, trusting and positive relationship with the child.
- Helping the child to feel safe, secure, valued and welcomed.
- Getting to know the child's individual needs, interests and preferences.
- Providing reassurance, comfort and emotional support when needed.
- Supporting positive relationships with other children and staff.
- Encouraging children's independence, confidence and well-being.
- Communicating appropriately with parents and carers about their child's experiences and well-being.
- Supporting children to participate in activities and make choices during their time at the club.
- Working with the wider staff team to ensure children's individual needs are understood and supported.

Children in Reception

Children who have moved on to Reception but continue to attend our Breakfast and After School Club will also have a named key person within the club.

Although these children are no longer attending our preschool provision or have come to us from another setting, we recognise that they benefit from having a consistent adult who knows them well and can provide reassurance, support and encouragement.

The Breakfast and After School Club key person will build a positive relationship with the child and support their well-being, confidence, independence and enjoyment of the club. Staff will communicate with parents and carers as appropriate and will work together as a team to ensure that children feel secure and well supported.

The key person approach within the Breakfast and After School Club is intended to provide continuity, consistency and a sense of belonging, while recognising that children may have different key people for their preschool and wraparound care.



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Continuity of Care

We recognise that children benefit from consistency and familiar adults.

If a child's key person is absent, the identified buddy key person or another familiar member of staff will provide continuity of care and ensure that the child's needs continue to be met.

Information about children's routines, care needs, interests, learning and development will be shared appropriately with relevant staff so that children experience consistent care and support.

Our aim is for every child to feel safe, secure, valued, listened to and confident to learn and explore throughout their time at Pavilion Pre-School.

This policy was adopted in June 2017.

It will be reviewed annually or as and when required.

Last updated 07.10.26

Signed by Chair of Trustees:

Signed by Operations Manager: