

***This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.***



## **The role of the key person and settling-in**



At Woodlands Pre-school, 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. We feel 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 the staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with Woodlands Pre-school. We aim to make Woodlands 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. Set out below is how we ensure this occurs within our pre-school:

- We allocate a key person to every child before they start.
- The key person is responsible for:
  - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into the setting.
  - 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 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 the setting and at home.
  - 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 at Woodlands and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

*"For I know the plans I have for you... plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11*

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### **Settling-in**

- Before a child starts to attend Woodlands Pre-school, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days 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.
- 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.
- We use a pre-start visit when the child attends with their parent/carer to enable staff to meet with both child and parents but also for the parent to complete the registration documentation. We also explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for the whole of the initial session, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child is able to cope.
- 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 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, but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first session, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker and believe that a child's distress may 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 begin to create their child's record of achievement.

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***The progress check at age two***

- The key person will carry 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 Pre-School 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.

**November 2018**

**November 2020**

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