



“A Confident Start in a Caring Environment”



HOME FARM CHILDREN'S NURSERY (HFCN)

Key Person and Settling in Policy

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KEY PERSON POLICY

This policy must be read in conjunction with the following policies: '*Confidentiality*', '*Settling-in*', '*Health*' and '*Food*' Policies.

Policy Statement

HFCN recognises that young children require a 'key person' whom they can trust and with whom they feel secure when away from their parents/carers. A key person is allocated to each child upon their entry to the Nursery. Their primary responsibility is to sensitively meet the individual needs of the child in their care and to respond appropriately to their feelings, ideas, and behaviour. Furthermore, it is their duty to communicate regularly with parents/carers to ensure the child consistently receives the best possible experience at the Nursery.

Definition of a Key Person approach

'This is a way of working in nurseries in which the whole focus and organisation is aimed at enabling and supporting close attachments between the individual children and individual nursery staff. The Key Person approach is an involvement, an individual and reciprocal commitment between a member of staff and a family'

Elfer.P, Goldschmeid. E, and Selleck. D; 2003; Key Persons in the Nursery London David Fulton

Procedures

- The role of the Key Person as the child's primary carer is promoted at the Nursery and used as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.
- A Key Person is allocated to a child prior to their admittance, in consultation with the parents/carer.

- The same Key Person is allocated to families wherever possible to build and maintain high quality relationships and confidence to share information
- The Key Person works with the parent/carer to formulate and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- Arrangements are made for parents/carers and the child to be greeted and supported by the Key Person during the induction process. This provides an opportunity for establishing a genuine bond with the child and enables both the child and family to become familiar with the setting and feel confident and safe within it.
- The Key Person acts as the key contact for parents/carers and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder. The Key Person will coordinate the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- The maintenance of developmental records and sharing information with the child's parents/carers, is the responsibility of the Key Person. Records are regularly updated to reflect the child holistically, whilst at the Nursery and at home.
- The Key Person will be fully involved with the co-ordination of additional professional services, for example the implementation and sharing of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with the parents/carers in consultation with the SENCo
- Opportunities for parents/carers to meet with their child's Key Person other than daily contact
- The Key Person encourages positive relationships among the children within their designated key group, spending dedicated time engaging with them.
- The Key Person is responsible for undertaking all personal care routines where practicable (e.g., nappy changing, toilet training, feeding, and settling the child at rest times). Should the Key Person be unavailable, the settings operate a 'Buddy System' to ensure the child and parents/carers always have a consistent point of contact.

Key Person System in settings:

1. Home Farm Children's Nursery: A Key Person is allocated to children as they progress developmentally through the different rooms within the nursery. Care is taken to meet each child's individual needs, including thorough parental consultation. The Key Person supports children during periods of transition to help them feel happy and confident in their new environment, facilitated by the sharing of their 'My Unique Story' records and by liaising with parents/carers and other relevant professionals.

Key Person Responsibilities and Management

- The role of the Key Person is clearly documented in all relevant job descriptions and is addressed through individual performance management and appraisal processes.
- Clear professional boundaries are established from the outset of this role.
- The manager provides essential support and dedicated time for staff to discuss any challenging issues or feelings that may arise as part of their Key Person responsibilities.
- A child's Key Person will only be changed with the full consent of the Nursery manager and, wherever possible, in consultation with parents/carers.

Useful documents/websites

Siren Films (2007) *Life at two: attachment, key people and development*, Siren Films and Video Ltd, Newcastle upon Tyne.

EYFS (2008) CD ROM- Positive Relationships-Key Person-Research and resources.

Elfer, P, Goldschmied, E., Selleck, D. (2003) Key persons in the Nursery. London: David Fulton

KCC (2011) Transitions Matter

SETTLING IN

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Key Person Policy.

HFCN recognises that starting nursery or pre-school often marks a child's first significant separation from their parents/carers, and this period of transition can be stressful for the entire family. To facilitate a smooth integration, an initial visit is arranged for parents/carers and their child to explore and experience life at the Nursery, providing an opportunity to ask any questions.

HFCN settings aims to:

- help children feel happy and secure in their new environment.
- help children feel confident to explore and experiment in their new surroundings.
- help children develop independence to freely access all of the resources available.
- respond sensitively to the feelings, ideas and behaviour of every child and endeavour to meet their particular needs and those of the parent/carer.
- support children to develop positive relationships with both adults and other children.
- promote appropriate behaviour with clear expectations and positive reinforcements.
- work in partnership with parents in their child's learning.
- encourage and welcome open and honest communication between staff and parents/carers.

Settling-In and Transition Procedures

At Home Farm Children's Nursery, a smooth transition is ensured for both children and parents/carers by arranging for the child and parent/carer to spend as much time in the nursery as necessary before the child's official start date.

During these pre-visits, a discussion takes place regarding the child's initial attendance schedule, with the intention of gradually increasing their time in the Nursery. There is no charge for these visits.

A registration and medical form are completed, and any potential issues are discussed. Information is obtained concerning the child's health, dietary needs, and family background, as well as their individual strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, and favourite toys, songs, and stories. This comprehensive information is utilised to help the child settle into the Nursery. For babies, a written record of the child's daily routine, detailing times for bottles, food, and sleep, is required.

Children are invited to gradually extend the length of time they spend at the Nursery until they feel happy, relaxed, and confident. On occasion, it may be necessary to ask a parent/carer to return sooner than planned if a child is particularly upset.

A Key Person is assigned before the child's arrival to welcome them and assist with settling in on their first session or day. This process is explained during initial visits, where parents/carers can also review Nursery Policies. If a child consistently struggles to settle, the Nursery may suggest they return when older or discuss alternative childcare options.

Parents/carers are encouraged to bring comfort items (e.g., dummies, blankets, special toys) to aid settling. (Refer to the Dummy Policy for more details). If a child becomes very unsettled and cannot be comforted, advice will be sought from parents/carers.