



## KEY PERSON POLICY

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### Policy Statement

Every child at Ohana is assigned a **Key Person**. This role is essential for building secure relationships, supporting emotional regulation, and ensuring continuity between home and nursery. Our children are autistic or have additional needs, and many require a high level of attunement, predictability and co-regulation.

The Key Person provides a consistent, safe and trusted adult who understands the child's communication style, sensory profile, triggers, strengths and vulnerabilities.

This policy aligns with the EYFS requirement that every child must have a key person who ensures their care is tailored to meet their individual needs.

This policy must be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour & Emotional Regulation Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- SEND Policy
- Admissions & Settling-In Policy

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### 1. Aims of the Key Person System

The Key Person system aims to:

- Build secure, trusting relationships
- Support emotional safety and regulation
- Provide continuity of care
- Understand and respond to each child's communication needs
- Develop meaningful partnerships with families
- Coordinate the child's care, learning and therapy needs

- Monitor progress and wellbeing
- Serve as the link between home and nursery
- Support inclusion and transitions

For SEND children, this relationship is foundational to all learning.

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## **2. The Role of the Key Person**

The Key Person is responsible for:

### **2.1 Emotional & Relational Support**

- Creating a safe base for the child
- Offering co-regulation throughout the day
- Being predictable, calm and attuned
- Supporting transitions and separations
- Noticing signs of distress, overwhelm or shutdown

### **2.2 Communication Support**

- Using the child's preferred communication methods (AAC, pictures, signing, gestures, visual supports)
- Modelling language appropriate to the child's level
- Supporting attention, interaction and turn-taking

### **2.3 Understanding Sensory Needs**

- Using the child's sensory profile
- Recognising dysregulation early
- Adjusting environment or expectations accordingly

### **2.4 Care & Routines**

- Supporting toileting, feeding, intimate care and personal care routines
- Following the child's individual care plan
- Recording care routines according to policy

### **2.5 Curriculum & Learning**

- Planning personalised experiences

- Observing and recording progress
- Supporting the child's IEP and therapy goals
- Working with SALT, OT and other professionals

## **2.6 Safeguarding**

- Being alert to changes in behaviour or wellbeing
- Recording concerns accurately
- Reporting immediately to DSL if required

## **2.7 Partnership With Parents**

- Sharing daily information, strategies and updates
- Supporting a two-way flow of communication
- Being sensitive to family needs and concerns
- Sharing observations and progress

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## **3. Assigning a Key Person**

A Key Person is assigned:

- At the point of enrolment
- After considering staffing levels, experience and child needs
- With attention to emotional compatibility, communication and familiarity

Where possible, the Key Person:

- Meets the child during settling-in sessions
- Is available during the child's typical attendance times
- Stays consistent across the year unless changes are unavoidable

If changes are needed (staff leaving, restructuring), we ensure:

- A safe transition
- Joint handover between staff
- Clear communication with the family

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## **4. Settling-In Process**

The Key Person will:

- Welcome the family and provide a tour
- Gather information about the child's routines, preferences, communication and triggers
- Build trust at the child's pace
- Create visual supports if needed
- Support separation gradually
- Ensure a predictable and calm introduction

A settling-in plan may include:

- Staggered sessions
- Parent-stay sessions
- Short visits building over time
- Joint sessions with therapist or SENCO if helpful

SEND children may require extended settling-in.

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## **5. Daily Practice**

The Key Person:

- Greets the child each morning
- Supports transitions between learning areas
- Provides comfort during dysregulation
- Ensures the child has access to their regulation strategies
- Checks communication tools (visuals, AAC) are available
- Liaises with team members working with the child
- Ensures consistency of approach across all staff

The Key Person is not expected to work alone — the entire team supports each child — but the Key Person leads consistency.

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## **6. Sharing Progress & Information**

The Key Person:

- Updates parents verbally, through the nursery system, and during reviews
- Completes IEP reviews with SENCO
- Completes observations as part of assessment
- Supports multi-agency meetings (EHCP, SALT, OT, Early Help)
- Provides evidence for plans and reports

Parents are always encouraged to share updates from home.

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## **7. Covering Absence**

When a Key Person is absent:

- A secondary Key Person or “link person” is assigned
- All staff access the child’s care plan, sensory profile and IEP
- Children are reassured and given extra support for emotional safety

Key Person CPD ensures all staff understand the system thoroughly.

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## **8. Supporting Children With Additional Needs**

Key Persons must:

- Use trauma-informed, neuro-affirming practice
- Notice signs of stress, anxiety or overwhelm
- Adapt expectations flexibly
- Seek advice early from SENCO or therapists
- Build secure, trusting relationships essential for SEND development

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## **9. Key Person Supervision**

Key Persons receive regular supervision to:

- Reflect on their role
- Discuss concerns about a child
- Review IEPs and progress
- Plan next steps

- Address emotional impact of the role

Supervision supports safe, professional practice.

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### **Policy Review & Sign-Off**

- Original adoption: **4<sup>th</sup> November 2022**
- Last review: **8<sup>th</sup> December 2025**
- Reviewed By: Alba Arenas Martín
- Next review due: **November 2026** or earlier if statutory guidance changes.