**Portreath Pre-School**

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

**Policy Statement**

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who builds a relationship with them and their parents, and who can meet their individual needs. 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 EYFS 2024. 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**

* We allocate a key person before the child starts.
* When a home visit is carried out before the child starts, this is done either by the manager/deputy manger and the key person, or just the key person.
* The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting.
* 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 childminder, 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. We direct parents who are interested in the setting to look at our prospectus, our Facebook page and website. We welcome visits from prospective parents, and will show them around the setting and give verbal information about the provision we offer.
* We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; 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 offer a home visit by the person who will be the child's key person. This enables us to have our initial interactions with the child in their own, familiar environment. We go through the Pre-School Welcome Pack, and talk with the parent(s) about their views and knowledge of their child’s skills, development and character. This helps us towards forming a ‘baseline’ for the child. We ask the parents to fill in a ‘My Story’ booklet for the child and leave them with the relevant forms they will need to fill in plus a photo sheet of the staff, info re healthy snacks and lunches, a leaflet about the importance of nursery rhymes and funding information.
* Before the child stays for a full session they will come for a ‘play and stay’ session with their parents. This enables the child (and parent) to become familiar with the environment of the pre-school and their key person. The session usually lasts as hour.
* .When a child starts to attend, we 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 most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
* Younger children will 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 week, 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. 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.
* Observations of the child are begun from their home visit and will be the initial observation in their Learning Journal. A baseline of the child will usually be completed in the first 3 weeks of a child starting with us.

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | Portreath Pre-school |  |
| Held on | 22.03.2019 |  |
| Last reviewed and amended:  | 24/06/2024 |  |