



Harvard Park Policies and Procedures:

Settling In and Key Person Role

6. Settling in and Key Person Role

Policy Statement

We believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their /carers well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents/carers, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents/carers have confidence, staff are committed, and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend of work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff. We also want parents/carers to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners within 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 their children and their families.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Each child must have a key person. Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person explain their role, when a child starts the setting. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts at the setting.
- The key person is responsible for:
 - Providing an induction for the family including building a relationship, finding out about the child and families journey and for organising an individual settling in plan for the child and their family.
 - Completing relevant forms with parents and/or carers, including consent forms, all about me and making sure they have signed up to the relevant communication platforms.
 - Collecting and sharing photos, information booklets and any other relevant resources to support the settling in process.
 - Explaining our policies and procedures to parents and/or carers with particular focus on policies such as Safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
 - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgmental.

- Working with parents and/or carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning including how families enhance their child's development and learning at home and how to use the online communication systems.
- Acting as the key contact for the parents and/or carers.
- Updating developmental records and sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents and/or carers to ensure all records are up to date and are reflecting the full picture of the child within our 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. This includes any other early years providers a child attends.
- Encouraging positive relationships between children in their key group and making time to spend with them as a group each day.

Settling in

- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents/carers with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities and current staff members, planning available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents/carers. Families have an informal interview with managers and/or directors followed by a 'Getting to know you meeting' with key persons.
- The key person welcomes and looks after the child and welcomes their parents and/ or carers at the child's first session and during the settling in process. They will carry out a 'keyperson chat' where they will gather information about the child such as dietary needs, likes and dislikes. This information is collected prior to the child starting at the setting and is destroyed after the child ceases their placement with us – we do not keep it on record.
- We may offer a home visit by the key person and a member of managerial staff to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling-in with their parents and/or carers and jointly decide on the best way to help the child settle into the setting.
- Parents and/or carers are given an opportunity to leave their child for an hour for the first and second week, each session, which are chargeable hours. These hours are then increased over the settling in period but will always be discussed with parents/carers in advance.
- We advise parents/carers not to stay for their child's first session as this can often be a more distressing time for both parents/carers and children, where necessary we may encourage a parent/carer to stay for their very first visit. In Baby Studio (Day nursery, Feltham), we like children to start a month before their start date with one hour visits every other day then going onto half days before leaving baby for the full day.

- Younger children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from their home. Children who have had a period of absence may also need their parent/carer 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 they arrive and goes to them for comfort. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
- When parents/carers leave, we ask them to say good-bye to the child and explain they will be coming back and when. This helps the settling process and gives the child re-assurance.
- 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. A meeting is held with parents/carers before this decision is made to ensure we have done everything we can to help the child settle. This is to protect the child's well-being as they may simply not be ready.
- We encourage the parent/carer to bring a special item from home which is familiar to the child, for example a blanket or doll. In some instances, this should be sprayed with a familiar scent such as mummy's perfume or belong to a parents/carer which smells of them. If a child has a comforter the parents/carers are more than welcome to bring this in as it may help the child settle.
- Although all children are assigned a key-person, the early years educators throughout the whole setting look after all the children in our care. Parents/carers are informed of this, and all early years educators are expected to deal out duties in the absence of a key person. We use images of our current early years educators around all rooms and settings to help children familiarise themselves with early years educators from other rooms and/or settings.

Key Person Role and Responsibilities

In addition to the role mentioned in the above section, a key person is responsible for:

- Completing relevant forms with parents/carers, including consent forms. This is a legal obligation.
- Add any additional notes to their all about me and dietary sheets which is relevant and ensures this is kept up to date.
- Keep diaries, learning journals and observations up to date
- Share information with key child's parents/carers including special dates and reminders.
- Ensure that babies visit Small Steps often and Small Steps open the door to Freedom Zone once a week or when it is appropriate to do so. This applies to the Day Nursery, Feltham.
- Ensure that all children grow accustomed to a second key person in case of their absence.

- Support children in familiarising themselves with early years educators throughout all rooms and across both settings (where necessary).
- Notify manager(s) and Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL) of any concerns they may have
- Follow all policy and procedures from both Staff and Health & Safety Handbooks
- Always keep confidentiality remembering UK - GDPR.
- Keep parents/carers informed when nappies, creams & wipes run low.
- Ensure that siblings present in the setting visit sibling's rooms at least once a week.
- Inform managers when they take the last of any tissues, black sacks, gloves, glue, paint, etc.
- Make sure all letters, flyers, artwork and / or belongings go home and that children's cubby holes are empty and free of clutter.
- Make sure all soiled clothing is appropriately labelled and sent home with the correct family.
- Make a mental note of children's belongings and ask parents/carers to name children's belongings.
- Contact parents /carers once a week informing them of any upcoming events.
- If one of their key children does not turn up for more than two days without a phone call to the setting – the key person is to make a phone call or attempt to contact parents/carers. This may be subject to change in the light of illness or hospitalisation. Where necessary, we will seek advice from the Hounslow Early Years team.
- Further information regarding absence will be outline in the Attendance, Punctuality and Absence policy – key persons must be aware of this and bring any concerns to managerial attention.
- To make sure they learn some multicultural words to help their key children by writing on the backs of their lanyards.
- Working with the child's new key person and next room to ensure a smooth transition when the time comes for a child to move to the next room.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to [Progress check at age two – Non-statutory guidance for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) (guidance).
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents/carers 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 us to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s)/carers.
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and will support parents/carers to understand the child's needs to enhance their development at home.

This policy was adjusted by Harvard Park.

Date meeting was held on 30/04/2026

Signed on behalf of the Directors and Proprietors

Nicki Saunders and Tracey Milstead