



Little Cherries

The role of the Key person and settling in policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person.

As outlined in the EYFS: 'Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.'

Aim

At Little Cherries we want every child to feel safe and confident, and to thrive within a special relationship with a key person. We create a welcoming environment where children settle quickly, providing individual care to the child by working closely with parents.

We recognise that for some children and parents, starting a new setting can be a worrying time. We make sure we have robust settling in procedures and a key person approach helps us to get to know the child and parents, giving them the reassurance to feel safe.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- If it is deemed necessary to carry out a home visit before the child starts, this is done by the key person plus one other member of staff.
- 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 parents/carer to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person completes relevant forms with parents including consent forms.
- The key person is responsible for explaining policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child (such as a child minder), and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers which includes the use of the online learning journal, Tapestry.

- A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents/carers 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

We start the settling in process before entry as we recognise this as a crucial time to build relationships and establish a two-way dialogue:

- Before a child starts to attend Little Cherries, parents are provided with all relevant information. These include our prospectus, guidance on 'getting started' and any relevant policies and procedures. Parents are also informed as to how these can also be accessed via our website.
- Parents are required to complete registration forms, 'What to expect when' and 'All about me' information, which assists the staff in getting to know the child with the aim to help them settle more easily.
- During the Spring Term, prospective parents are invited to an Open Evening which enables parents to get a flavour of what Little Cherries has to offer.
- We allocate a key person to each child and their family before their start date. The key person welcomes and looks after the child and their parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We provide opportunities for the child and parents to visit the setting prior to their start date. These visits provide an opportunity to get to know the staff, find out about the curriculum, talk about the individual child and any particular needs, and familiarise themselves with the setting and procedures. The sessions are outlined below:

First one-hour settling-in session – both child and parent/carer to attend. An essential time to meet a child's keyworker and other staff, for the child to familiarise themselves with the toys and activities available in Little Cherries and to discuss any concerns with the child's keyworker and for Little Cherries to get to know the child and parent/carer.

Second one-hour settling-in session - both child and parent/carer to attend. An essential time for the child and their keyworker to bond through play and the various activities available. During this session, if the child is settled, the parents are likely to be encouraged by the keyworker to leave Little Cherries and return to collect them at an agreed time before the end of their one-hour visit.

First full session - the intention will be that your child will attend for the 3 hour session. At the beginning of this, parents are welcome to help settle their child, play for a short period and talk with the staff. Once everyone is satisfied that the child is settled, parents will be able to leave them in our expert care and return at the end of the session.

Staff recognise that each child is an individual and has different needs. Therefore the settling in process is flexible and, in discussion with the child's keyworker, may be adapted to suit the child.

- Younger children or children who have not spent time away from home may take longer to settle in. Children who have had a period of absence from the setting may also need their parent to be on hand to re-settle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when the child has formed a relationship with their key person. Evidence of this could be found in the following:
 - a) the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them.
 - b) the child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participates 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 do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker. We believe that a child's distress can prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting. However, we also recognise that some children will settle once their parent/carer has left and we are happy to work with the parents/carers to build an individual transition plan.
- 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.
- Times are planned during the settling in period and throughout the academic year to discuss with parents their child's progress and to further develop our knowledge of the child.

There may be occasions when your child's key person is not available; however, it is the responsibility of all staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children in the group.

We acknowledge every child as an individual. Little Cherries is aware that children may find comfort in staff members who are not the child's allocated keyworker. We endeavour to allow each child a voice to share their preferences and will allow flexibility regarding emotional attachments between staff and children.

We also recognise that although each child has been allocated a designated key person, it is in the child's best interest to encounter some flexibility amongst staff members who work with them, ensuring that a high dependency on one particular staff member does not occur. This could cause unnecessary distress to a child if that particular staff member is absent.

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 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 the setting 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.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Little Cherries

Held on: 6th November 2018

Date to be reviewed: May 2020

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee

Jennie Peacock

Chairperson