**Dean Field Community Primary School**

# EYFS: Nursery: The Role of the Key Person and Settling-in Policy

| Name of Policy Writer/Amendments | Date Written/Amended | Next Review Date |
|---|---|---|
| KFudge | July 2020 | July 2021 |
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| L Brambani | July 2026 | July 2027 |

**Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person**

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.

At Dean Field, we believe children settle best when they have a named key person who knows them and their family, understands their individual needs and helps them develop secure relationships. The key person approach promotes wellbeing, learning and development, and positive partnerships with

parents and carers. Our Nursery practitioners work closely with the EYFS Lead and SENCO to provide inclusive, responsive support.

We aim for every child to feel safe, valued and confident in Nursery. Our team, led in day-to-day practice by Samantha Mullen and supported by Faye Baker, works with families to plan a welcoming transition that reflects each child's circumstances, communication, development and additional needs.

The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each child must have a key person. 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. Miss Fitzpatrick is introduced to all children prior to them starting in Nursery.

**Procedures**
A named key person is allocated to each child before they start wherever possible. The key person and Nursery team are introduced to the child and family during transition arrangements.

- **The Key Person (allocated from the Nursery team, including Mrs Mullen Mrs Baker and Mrs Robertshaw) is responsible for:**
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  - Settling the child into our setting.
  - Participating in an optional home visit or alternative introductory meeting, where agreed with the family.
  - Supporting the completion of relevant forms with parents, including consent forms.
  - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
  - Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
  - Acting as one of the key contact for the parents.
  - Contributing to developmental records (including Sonar and Seesaw) and sharing relevant information with parents, the Nursery lead and EYFS Lead, in line with confidentiality and safeguarding procedures.
  - Working with the Nursery lead to keep assessment and developmental information accurate and up to date.
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- **The Nursery Lead (Mrs Mullen), working with the EYFS Lead, is responsible for:**
  - Coordinating induction for children and families, including offering a home visit or an alternative meeting with the allocated key person where appropriate.
  - Overseeing and working with key persons and parents to ensure a plan is in place to deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
  - To oversee the completion/collection of consent forms.
  - Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
  - Overseeing developmental records (including Sonar and Seesaw) and appropriate communication with parents and the EYFS Lead.
  - 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.
  - Liaising with outside agencies and professionals such as Portage and EYST who have children with SEND on their caseloads.

**Settling-in**

- Before a child starts to attend Dean Field Nursery, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- Before entry, families are offered opportunities to visit Nursery and meet staff, including stay-and-play sessions. Where an in-person visit is not possible, an alternative meeting or telephone discussion can be arranged.
- The allocated key person and Nursery team welcome each child and family at their first session and support them throughout settling-in.
- Home visits may be offered by the Nursery team where appropriate and agreed with parents. Alternative introductory meetings are available. Relevant information is gathered sensitively and shared only where appropriate. Where possible, Mrs Stansfield (Dean Field's pastoral manager) attends too.
- We use 'stay and play' visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records.
- 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 some of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time 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 their key person when they arrive, 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 children settle into Nursery at different rates. Settling-in arrangements are agreed individually with parents and carers, taking account of each child's needs, previous experiences and emotional wellbeing. Parents and carers may be invited to stay for part of a session where this would support their child's transition. The length and frequency of these visits will be agreed with families and reviewed as the child becomes more confident and secure in the setting.
- 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.
- Where a child experiences significant distress during settling-in, staff work closely with parents and carers to identify appropriate strategies and support. Individual arrangements may be adapted, including shorter sessions, additional visits or increased key-person support, where appropriate and agreed with parents. Where a child has additional needs or SEND, the Nursery team works with the EYFS Lead, SENCO, parents and relevant professionals to ensure appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are in place.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it overly distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's record of achievement.
- Parents are added to Seesaw to start the communication and relationships with parents and a two-week timetable is created to stagger the intake of children.