

Document No:	NU001
Issue No.	2
Issue Date:	2025-12-03
Review Date:	2028-12-03
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Responsibility:	Director of Student Services and Marketing

KEY PERSON ROLE, SETTLING IN PROCESS AND TRANSITION SUPPORT – COLLEGE NURSERIES

1. PURPOSE

Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework:

“Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their own learning over time.

Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

The EYFS promotes teaching and learning to ensure children’s ‘school readiness’ and gives children the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.”

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement:

3.41 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 and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

2. KEY PERSON ROLE, SETTLING IN PROCESS AND TRANSITION SUPPORT

2.1. Nursery Statements

Key Person

2.1.1. 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. At our nursery, each child is assigned a Key Person who plays a central role in supporting their emotional wellbeing, development, and sense of security. The Key Person builds a consistent and trusting relationship with the child and their family, acting as a primary contact and advocate for the child’s needs. This relationship underpins the child’s experience in the setting and supports their learning through meaningful interactions and continuity of care.

Settling-in

- 2.1.2. We recognise that starting nursery is a significant transition for both children and families. Our settling-in process is designed to be flexible and responsive to individual needs, ensuring that each child feels safe, welcomed, and gradually familiar with their new environment. Parents and carers are encouraged to be actively involved during this period, and the Key Person works closely with them to support a smooth and positive start to nursery life.

Transitions

- 2.1.3. Transitions within the nursery—such as moving between rooms or preparing for school—are carefully planned and supported to promote continuity and emotional security. We ensure that children are prepared for changes through gradual introductions, consistent routines, and collaborative communication between staff and families. The Key Person plays a vital role in easing transitions by maintaining familiarity and offering reassurance throughout the process.

3. PROCEDURES -*The Key Person*

- 3.1. We allocate a key person before the child starts.

3.2. The key person is responsible for:

- 3.2.1. Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our nursery.
- 3.2.2. Completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms.
- 3.2.3. Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- 3.2.4. Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
- 3.2.5. Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- 3.2.6. Acting as the key contact for the parents
- 3.2.7. Developing a secure and trusting relationship by learning key words in a child's first language, or acknowledge their sounds and gestures
- 3.2.8. 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 nursery and at home.
- 3.2.9. Planning 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.

- 3.2.10. Valuing the parent/carer's written or verbal contributions
- 3.2.11. 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.
- 3.2.12. Supporting a child through transitional periods when changing settings or starting school, and during key milestone periods
- 3.2.13. Encouraging positive relationships between all children
- 3.3. We provide a back-up key person (buddy) so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- 3.4. Assessments should be made to identify any risks that may be incurred due to a change in key person for children with SEND. The key person may be the first practitioner who notices that a child may not be making the expected progress. This should lead them to take some additional actions in order to try and understand the progress and development of this child.
- 3.5. Any temporary staff must be trained to proficiently and safely administer medication and medical procedures for individual children.

4. PROCEDURES - *Settling-in*

- 4.1. Before a child starts to attend the nursery, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written and verbal information (including our prospectus and information about our policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and individual meetings with parents.
- 4.2. During the weeks before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- 4.5. 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.
- 4.6. We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay with their child for as long as it takes for the child to settle without them.

- 4.7. 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.
- 4.8. 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.
- 4.9. When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- 4.10. 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.
- 4.11. 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 nursery.
- 4.12. 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.
- 4.13. Within the first four to six weeks of starting we discuss and work with the child's parents to start to create their child's record of achievement (Learning Journey).

5. PROCEDURES - *Transitions*

- We identify upcoming transitions early and plan them in collaboration with families and staff to ensure a smooth and supportive process.
- We accompany children during initial visits to their new room or setting, helping them explore the environment and meet new staff and peers at their own pace.
- We share key information about each child with receiving staff, including their interests, routines, developmental needs, and emotional wellbeing.
- We maintain familiar routines and comfort items during the transition period to provide consistency and reassurance.
- We use visual aids, stories, and play-based activities to help children understand and prepare for the changes ahead.
- We communicate regularly with parents/carers, keeping them informed and involved throughout the transition process.
- We observe and respond to each child's emotional cues, adjusting the transition plan as needed to meet individual needs.
- We follow up after the transition to ensure the child has settled well and continues to feel secure and supported in their new environment.

- We reflect on each transition as a team, identifying what worked well and where improvements can be made for future practice.

Transition to School

- We introduce school-related play activities such as role play with uniforms, lunch boxes, and school bags to prepare children emotionally and practically.
- We read stories about starting school and discuss feelings and expectations to help children understand the transition.
- Encourage independence in self-care tasks such as dressing, toileting, and managing belongings.
- Establish communication with local primary schools to share relevant information with parental consent.
- Invite reception teachers to visit the nursery and meet the children.
- Arrange visits to local schools where possible to help children become familiar with the environment.
- We encourage parents to share photographs of their child's school visits, which nursery staff can use to support group discussions and help children reflect on their experiences in a familiar and reassuring environment
- Key Persons complete a Transition to School Summary for each child, outlining strengths, interests, areas of development, support strategies, and any SEND or additional needs.
- Provide resources and tips for supporting children at home and encourage positive discussions about school.
- Identify children who may need additional support and create personalised transition plans with input from parents and professionals.
- Offer extra visits or small group sessions focused on school readiness.
- Create memory books or photo albums for children to take home.
- Encourage children to share their hopes and excitement about school.

6. COMMUNICATION AND REVIEW

- 6.1. This policy will be shared with parents, made available on Staff Net and the College website. It will be reviewed at least every 3 years.