**The Childcare Practice**  

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

Policy statement

At Mayfield Preschool we believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, 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.
* The key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023).

**Procedures**

* We allocate a key person for your child when they begin preschool – this person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting and will work closely with you throughout your child’s time with us.
* The key person works with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child’s well-being, care and learning.
* 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.
* The 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, of updating Famly regularly and creating meaningful and purposeful ‘next steps’ to challenge the child’s learning.
* The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
* We provide a back-up key person so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child’s key person.

*Settling-in*

* Before a child starts to attend the setting, 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 meetings.
* Before a child starts we hold an open morning which can be attended by the whole family, giving a chance to meet other new starters and families and all the key people.
* 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.
* 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 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 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. We will endeavour to work with parents to review a child’s emotional development and build upon their confidence to be left for a short time.
* 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 – informing of Next Steps via Famly and putting up observations.

*The progress check at age 27 months*

* The review will initially be carried out by a child’s Health Visiting Team and passed to us at Preschool.
* The key person will work with parents, review ‘red book’ and establish appropriate ‘starting points’ for children’s progress to be monitored. Key people will fill in EY Page in ‘red book’ and sign and date, retaining yellow copy for our records.
* 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.
* Regular observations of a child’s learning and next steps, based upon prior learning will be communicated via Famly.

*Summatives*

* Key people are responsible for completing key children’s summative assessments prior to the children starting school.
* All staff will attend regularly moderating sessions with the eyfs team from preschool and the primary school.
* The manager and deputy will check over all summatives before parents voice and meetings are held.