St Augustine's Nursery

The Role of the Key Person and Settling In

Policy statement

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. Each setting must assign a key person for each child.

The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.

- The key person and the manager are 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 parent 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 childminder, 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, in line with EYFS requirements and nursery procedures, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in their key group and with other children at the setting.
- We provide a back-up key person (manager) so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- 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

- Before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and their parents to visit the setting.
- Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide their parents with information. These include written information (including our nursery information sheet and policies and settling in process).
- We allocate a key person to each child and their family before they attend; 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 use the first session for the parent to complete the child's registration records (i.e. consent agreement, funding agreement, provide original statutory documents).

- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for the first session at nursery, gradually taking time away from their child during the settling in period, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.

- Some will take longer to settle in, in particular children who have not previously spent time away from 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 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 expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week if needed, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.

- 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. Reasonable adjustments will be considered for children with SEND or other identified needs.

- The key person will maintain an appropriate record of the child's learning and development from the settling in period, which the parents will have access to after a short period of time. The key person will prepare a Settling In Review to share with the parents after a period of 6 to 8 weeks at the setting.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two, for children between 24 and 36 months this is in accordance with Islington EYFS procedures that are in place and referring to the supporting guidance to the EYFS *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.

Legal framework

- Childcare Act 2006
- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2026)
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018

Policy adopted: June 2026
Review date: June 2027
Policy lead: Nursery Manager

Signed on behalf of the Management Committee: 

Name: ABIGAIL WHITE

Role: CHAIR

Date: 30.06.26