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The Strawberry Patch Nursery and Pre-school

Key person and settling in policy

Policy statement

At The Strawberry Patch we believe that a child settles best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well and 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.

At The Strawberry Patch we want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff; we also want the parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active parents 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 welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting should offer 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 the setting.

Procedure

- We allocate a key person before the child starts
- If a home visit takes place before the child starts, this will be carried out by the Manager and the Key person.
- The Key person is responsible for the settling in of the key child
- The key person acts as the key contact point for parents.
- The key person is responsible for the child's learning story, developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the parent/carer and keeping those records up to date so it reflects a full picture of the child.

- We have a key person / key buddy system in place so the child and parents have another contact if the main key person is absent.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our setting, and a basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children

Settling in

- Before a child starts at the nursery, we provide information in a variety of ways to the parents/carers. Including Web site, written information (prospectus, policies and parental involvement agreement), displays and photographs about activities available within the setting.
- The parents/carers are asked to fully complete and sign, (if applicable both parents are required to sign forms with regards parental rights and responsibilities), an enrolment form so we are able to contact them, a relative or a friend at any time whilst their child is at the setting. This will be done on their first visit so we have all details available to us.
- Parents are asked to state clearly the name of the person who will be collecting their child each day, even if you ask a friend or another parent from the nursery to collect your child we will require confirmation from you ideally in writing, otherwise we will not be able to allow your child to leave. Identification must be brought in if the adult is unknown.
- We provide opportunities for parents, with their children to visit our setting on a number of occasions, getting used to the environment, staff and other children, it also gives parents an opportunity to learn about the nursery, what we do and to get to know the staff.
- To help with their child's transition into the nursery environment the parents will be given a booklet called '**My special book**' to fill in with their child at home. This will be returned to their key person when they settle so they have a good understanding of the child in their care and be able to meet their needs, making the transition from home to nursery as smooth as possible. We also do an electronic version of this on tapestry our learning story system for children who are starting in the transition or main room.
- We will allocate a key person to each child and his/her parents before they start, the key person welcomes and looks after the child

and their parents at the child's first session and during the settling process.

- We may also offer home visits to be arranged where needed with the child's key person and the Manager to ensure all relevant information about the child is known.
- We explain the process of settling their child into our setting with the parents; this is generally four one hour sessions incorporating a lunch. We then jointly decide the best way to help the child settle in ensuring the individual needs of the child and family are being met at all times.
- We encourage parents to stay with their child on the first couple of pre-start sessions, gradually taking time away from their child until they feel confident their child has settled and no longer needs them to stay.
- If a child is doing school or full day sessions with us over two days or more we will start with reduced sessions e.g. **school days** wk 1, 8-1 wk 2, 9-3.30, **Full days** wk 1, 8-1 wk 2, 9-3.30 wk 3 8-6, this will support an easier transition into nursery.
- Reassure parents who are anxious about their child by giving them information about their child's activities and welfare while attending the nursery, this can be done through conversations, observations, photographs, learning stories phone calls, email and support from child's designated key person.
- Once the child has started we still have a planned period of time, generally six weeks, to allow each child the time and support they need to settle and get to know their key person.
- The key person role within the setting is to support the child and family throughout their time in the nursery.

Signed: Emma Marsh

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