Key Person Policy

Applies to: *All employees*

Policy Statement

At Dots & Tots Day Nursery, every child is assigned a Key Person who is responsible for developing a secure, trusting relationship with the child and their family. The Key Person system supports children to feel safe, valued and emotionally secure, enabling them to develop confidence to explore, learn and build positive relationships.

We recognise that strong partnerships with families are fundamental to children's wellbeing, learning and development, and our Key Person approach ensures consistency, continuity of care and open communication throughout a child's time at nursery.

Allocation of a Key Person

Each child will be allocated a Key Person before their settling sessions begin, allowing the child and family to start building a relationship from their very first visit.

Where it becomes evident that a child has naturally developed a stronger attachment with another practitioner within the room, the nursery may reallocate the Key Person role to ensure the child's emotional wellbeing remains at the centre of our practice. Parents/carers will always be informed of any changes.

When a child is ready to transition into a new room, their current Key Person will support the transition process by accompanying them during their settling sessions within the new room wherever possible. A comprehensive handover will be provided to the child's newly allocated Key Person, ensuring information relating to the child's routines, interests, development, wellbeing, individual needs, next steps and any support plans is shared to promote continuity of care and a smooth transition.

Buddy System

Every Key Person will have an identified Buddy Key Person.

The Buddy Key Person will provide consistency of care whenever the child's Key Person is absent due to annual leave, illness, training or other unavoidable circumstances, ensuring children's routines, care needs and learning continue uninterrupted.

Role of the Key Person

The Key Person is responsible for:

- Building a warm, trusting and secure relationship with their key children.
- Supporting children to settle into nursery and feel safe, valued and included.
- Developing strong partnerships with parents and carers through regular communication.
- Recording and monitoring each child's learning, development and wellbeing.
- Planning appropriate next steps that reflect each child's individual stage of development.
- Identifying children who may require additional support and sharing concerns promptly with the Room Leader, SENDCo or Designated Safeguarding Lead where appropriate.
- Working collaboratively with parents, carers and external professionals to ensure children receive appropriate support.
- Contributing to reviews, meetings and support plans where required.
- Promoting each child's independence, confidence and emotional wellbeing.
- Ensuring records relating to their key children remain accurate and up to date.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

The Key Person acts as the main point of contact between home and nursery, developing positive relationships built on trust, openness and mutual respect.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to share information about their child's interests, routines, achievements and any concerns to ensure that care and learning are tailored to meet each child's individual needs.

Monitoring Children's Progress

Key Persons will observe, assess and monitor each child's progress in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Observations and assessments will be informed by the Development Matters non-statutory guidance, recognising that it is a tool to support practitioners in understanding and promoting children's learning and development, rather than a means of judging or labelling children's abilities.

Assessment information will be used to:

- Celebrate children's achievements.
- Identify appropriate next steps in learning and development.
- Ensure learning experiences remain appropriately challenging and enjoyable.
- Identify children who may benefit from additional support or further assessment.

Where appropriate, and under the guidance of the SENDCo, Key Persons will contribute to our complete Portage assessments and other agreed assessment tools to support children with identified or emerging additional needs. They will also work collaboratively with SENDCo to develop, implement and review SMART targets, individual support plans and any other assessment tools or intervention programmes required to meet the child's individual needs. These will be regularly monitored and reviewed in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, external professionals.

Where concerns are identified regarding a child's development, wellbeing or safeguarding, the Key Person will follow the nursery's relevant policies and procedures and seek support from the appropriate professionals.

System and Policy Review

The Nursery Manager and Room Leaders will regularly monitor the effectiveness of the Key Person system to ensure every child receives consistent, high-quality care and support.

Monitoring will include:

- Observing staff interactions and relationships with children.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of Key Person allocations within each room.
- Ensuring children's routines, interests, preferences and individual needs continue to be understood and supported.
- Reviewing the quality of communication and partnerships with parents and carers.
- Ensuring effective handovers take place during staff absence, annual leave and room transitions.
- Gathering feedback from children, families and staff where appropriate.
- Identifying any additional training, coaching or support required.
- Reviewing any concerns relating to safeguarding, SEND, communication or continuity of care.

Staff supervision sessions will be used to discuss the progress and next steps of each practitioner's key children, review the effectiveness of support strategies, identify any emerging concerns and determine whether any additional guidance, training or professional development is required.

The Nursery Manager will ensure that every child has access to a consistent, responsive and trusted adult who promotes their wellbeing, learning, development and sense of belonging throughout their time at Dots & Tots Day Nursery.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are:

- Changes to legislation or statutory guidance.
- Updates to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Changes to recognised best practice or local authority guidance.
- Learning identified through safeguarding concerns, complaints or significant incidents.

Any amendments will be communicated to all staff, who will receive any additional training or guidance required to ensure the policy is implemented consistently.

Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside the following Dots & Tots Day Nursery policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Observation, Assessment and Planning Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Settling In Policy
- Transition Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Staff Supervision and Appraisal Policy
- Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy

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Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner