4.1 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. We are committed to the key person approach which benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting. It encourages secure relationships which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy 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 our staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with our setting. We aim to make our 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 child must have a key person. These procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person during the settling process, taking into account who the child makes a connection with.
- The key person is responsible for:

  - Settling the child securely into The Woodland Nursery
  - Developing a good relationship with the child
  - Developing a strong partnership with the parents/carers
  - Caring for and meeting the child's needs
  - Observing and assessing children's individual learning and development
  - Where necessary, carrying out statutory assessments i.e. 2-year check
  - Planning challenging activities to extend the child's learning
  - Planning next steps to help children progress
  - Regularly liaising with parents/carers about their child's learning and development and suggesting ways

in which it can be supported at home
- Liaising with other professionals involved in the child's life i.e. health visitor, speech & language therapist, other settings etc.
- Supporting children during transitions i.e. transition to big school

- 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 adults and children.

Settling in

- Before a child starts to attend our setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies) and taster sessions, whereby parents can attend a session with their child, observe our daily practice and interactions with the children, chat to our staff and ask any questions they may have.
- 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 have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child; increasing this time as and when the child is able to cope.
- 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.
- 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, 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.
- We begin carrying out observations on Tapestry once he/she is settled, these observations, along with information provided on the 'All About Me' page help us to build a secure understanding of the child's starting points with us. This information helps us to plan balanced and flexible activities to extend their learning and development.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the guidance *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 us 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 to enhance their development at home.

This policy was adopted by	The Woodland Nursery
Date to be reviewed	October 2027
Signed on behalf of the provider	T Paskins
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Nursery Owner