Settling in Policy

Policy statement

Bunyan preschool 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 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

- Each child is assigned a key person from the start of their attendance at Bunyan Preschool. We take into account the child's individual needs and, during the settling-in period (6 weeks), observe how the child responds to different members of staff. We aim to establish a positive and secure relationship between the child, their key person and their family. The key person arrangement may be reviewed and adjusted if necessary to support the child's needs.

The key person is responsible for:

- Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
- Working with parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- Acting as the main point of contact for parents.
- Maintaining developmental records and sharing information regularly with the child's parents to keep those records up to date, reflecting the full picture of the child's experiences and development in the setting and at home.
- Establishing links with other carers involved with the child and coordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.

- Encouraging positive relationships between children in their key group and spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer within our setting and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts attending our setting, we provide parents with information in a variety of ways. These include written information, such as our prospectus and policies, and displays about the activities available within the setting.
- Before admission is finalised, we provide opportunities for the child and their parents to visit the setting. To help us understand and meet each child's individual needs, children are invited to attend a play session before starting preschool. Attendance at this play session is mandatory.
- The manager or deputy manager, together with other members of staff, supports the child throughout the settling-in process, helping them become familiar with the setting and develop secure relationships with staff.
- We may offer a home visit before the child starts preschool. The visit provides an opportunity to meet the child and their family in a familiar environment, begin building positive relationships and gather information about the child's interests, routines, communication and individual needs. The visit may be carried out by the manager and another member of staff. The proposed key person may attend where appropriate. Home visits are arranged in advance and are voluntary. All visits are carried out in accordance with our safeguarding procedures and staff code of conduct.
- When a child starts attending, we explain the settling-in process to their parents and work together to agree the best way to help the child settle into the setting.
- Younger children may take longer to settle in, as may 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 available to help them settle back into the setting.
- We consider a child to be settled when they have formed a positive relationship with their key person. For example, the child may look for their key person when they arrive, go to them for comfort and appear happy and secure in their company. The child also becomes familiar with the setting and where things are, shows an interest in other children and begins to participate in activities.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, using language and explanations appropriate to the child's age and understanding.
- We recognise that some children settle more readily than others. However, some children who appear to settle quickly may not yet be ready to be left. We work in partnership with parents to agree a settling-in arrangement that meets the individual needs of the child. Parents may be asked to remain with their child for an initial period, and the length of the settling-in process will depend on how the child responds.

Home Visits

- As part of our settling-in process, we offer families a home visit before their child starts preschool. Home visits provide an opportunity to meet the child and their family in a familiar environment, begin building positive relationships and gain a better understanding of the child's interests, routines, communication and individual needs.
- Home visits are arranged in advance with the parents or carers and are voluntary. They help us work in partnership with families to ensure that each child feels safe, secure and supported when starting preschool.
- All home visits are carried out in accordance with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and staff code of conduct. Staff must follow the setting's procedures for recording visits, maintaining professional boundaries and reporting any safeguarding concerns in line with our safeguarding procedures.

The progress check at age two

- The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with the EYFS requirements and any relevant local procedures, using current guidance on the EYFS progress check at age two.
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensure that parents have a clear picture of their child's development.
- Within the progress check, the key person will identify areas where the child is progressing well and any 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 child's parents.
- The key person will plan activities to meet the child's needs within the setting and support parents in understanding their child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.