

Written February 2022

Key Worker (“Key Person”) Policy

At Humming Bees Day Nursery we understand how important the relationship is between the children in our care and the adults that look after them. Every child needs that one special adult in the setting to respond to their needs. The relationship between the young child and their parent/guardian is the most important, however when the parent/guardian is not present there must be another adult that the child can rely on for care, love, attention and learning.

With this in mind the following will be adhered to:

- Every child will be paired with a practitioner that will be responsible for the child’s individual well-being and education. Each child will also have a second key person. This is known as the buddy system. Room leaders may take on this role when small numbers of children are involved. However with larger groups of children the room leader will organise her team to make sure that all the children have a second key carer (buddy). This means that the child always has an adult that is familiar to them while in the setting. The “buddy” will be available for the child when the key person is on annual leave, attending training sessions or unwell.
- Children often select their own “special adult” in a childcare setting, therefore at Humming Bees we embrace and support this if, and when it happens. This means that the key person allocated before the child joins us will change depending on the needs of that child. Our staff understand that this is not personal and our emphasis is on respecting the child as an individual and meeting their needs at all times. The parents will be kept fully informed of changes so that the relationship between key person, child and parents continues to flourish.
- The child’s parents will be informed in advance of their child starting at the setting who the key person and “buddy” will be.
- Parents will meet with the key person during the first settling in session. The key person will be supernumerary for this hour. During the meeting information will be shared, this will allow the key person to gain knowledge about the child and their parents. It will also help the parent to gain information about how the key person will support their child during the settling in period and about the daily routines for the children.
- The key carer will be responsible for planning activities and experiences for the child to enable them to feel secure and happy in the setting. She/he will work in partnership with parents to support the child in building up a trusting relationship with the key person and “buddy”.
- The key person will support the child during risky activities to gain understanding of the child’s developmental levels and understanding.
- The key person will be the first point of contact for the child’s parents and extended family and wherever possible will be present for drop off & pick up. However the room leader and manager will be accessible to speak with parents too.
- The key person will always respect the parent’s wishes and address any concerns they may have. Parents are valued as the first educators for their child. Key persons will offer support to parents and children in order to get the best outcomes for all concerned. They will help the parents to access outside agencies where necessary such as specialist support personnel or health visitors.

- The key person will engage with parents to offer support at home as well as in the setting. This could involve working together to improve sleeping patterns, food concerns or behavioural issues amongst others.
- Key persons will support the child through changes both at the setting and at home. Building trusting relationships with parents, will allow key carers to support children in order to get the best outcomes. We understand that a house move, a new baby arriving, a close bereavement, parent's separating, a parent working away from home and even something as simple as a child's bedroom being re-decorated can impact on a child's emotional wellbeing. At these times, key person's behaviour will remain consistent towards the child throughout. They will plan activities and experiences that will allow the child to express their feelings and anxieties during any transition period.
- Key persons will implement and support positive transitions for the children. When a child is deemed ready to move rooms within the setting, the parents have the opportunity to view the room and to be introduced to the room leader and her/his team. Next, the key person will accompany the child on regular visits to the room to help the child familiarise themselves with the environment, staff team and their peers. Gradually she/he will remove themselves for longer periods to allow the child to settle without them being present. However children will not be left distressed for long periods and if necessary the first key person will return to support them. The child will be "introduced" to their next key person and buddy in that room. The "new" key person and buddy will also visit the child in their current room where they will spend time getting to know them. Both key persons will work together helping the child to settle successfully. There is not a particular time scale about how many times the child will visit before they make the actual move. The first key carer will produce a transition form that will include any dietary requirements and/or allergies that the child may have. The form will also advise of the child's current development stage and needs. The parents will read and sign the form before it is passed onto the next key person. The last key person that cares for the child will produce a transition form for school or any other setting that the child moves to. Key persons will make decisions based on the child's needs. Parent's wishes will be respected, however the needs of the child will always be paramount and key persons will work together with parents to make sure that room moves are implemented with sensitivity and care.

It is our intention that each child in our care will continually be viewed as a unique little person with individual needs. Parents will be encouraged and supported in voicing their views and requests about the care and education of their child. Family cultures will be respected and valued at all times. Staff recognise the importance of a secure attachment for the child. However they will also work with the parents and their colleagues to make sure that any child is never totally dependent on "one person". With gentle care and sensitivity, routines, planned activities and experiences, the children will be supported and encouraged to become confident and independent learners. Key persons will always respond to their needs, however our emphasis will be on helping the children to feel loved and secure in order to support them in becoming willing to try new experiences and engage with different adults and children as required by the EYFS and SEYT.