



# Key person/buddy and settling-in

This policy was adopted at of SKIPS on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Signed on behalf of the setting:**

**Name of signatory:** Jodie Mabbutt, Manager

**Signed on behalf of the committee:**

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## **Policies and Procedures: Partnership and Equality**

### **Policy statement**

SKIPS believe that children settle best when they have a key person, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs. We are committed to the key person approach as we believe it benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which support children to thrive, give parents confidence and make the setting a happy place to attend or work in.

SKIPS also runs a 'buddy system' to work alongside the Key Person approach. The 'buddy system' encourages staff to pair together within the room, to ensure communication and consistent high quality care is being offered to the child and family even in the Key Person's absence.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with in the setting. We aim to make SKIPS 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.

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### **Procedures**

- We allocate a key person before the child starts and parents will be informed via person, email or letter confirming their session child's session and start date.
- The key person responsible for:
  - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
  - The key person with help the parent go through and fill in the registrations form (including consent forms) if they haven't done so already.
  - Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
  - Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
  - The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers. We keep in contact with parents via verbal communications and through the child's online journal (Famly), 'chat book' if the parents doesn't have the internet, parents meetings and other written reports.
  - The key person is responsible for development records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents, to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting.
  - In the absence of the key person they buddy system will come into effect. The buddy will act as the key person and will communicate with parents if needed.
  - Having links with other carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
  - 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.

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### *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, policies and information sheet), displays about activities available within the setting, open days and evenings and if requested individual, meetings with parents.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/hers family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- 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 first session, 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 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 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 will discuss with the parent what is happening and how best we can help the child to settle.
- Parents will be told that when their child is still in the process of settling, they may be asked to remain close by and collect their child after an agreed amount of time. This means that the time the child is left on their own is gradually increased to build

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up to the whole session. This way the child knows that their parents return and can leave the session happily, and be more confident to return next time.

### *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 the key person 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 in order to enhance their development at home.

### *Buddy System*

- Due to the fact that some staff work part-time and that children will alter their sessions during their time at the setting, a buddy system will be adopted.
- Parents will be made aware of who their child's key person buddy will be so they can also form a relationship with them.
- If children are staying for the extended hours (Breakfast and Tea time Club) the supervisor will make sure a key person buddy is designated for these times.
- Information will be passed on about the child's day to the buddy to ensure a consistency of care.

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### **Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications**

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage: With non-statutory supporting documentation (2014)
- Being a Key Person in an Early Years Setting (2015)
- Creating a Learning Environment in the Home (2015)