

## Key Person and Settling In

### Policy Statement

The Square Nursery School 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. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive. Parents have confidence, staff are committed and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy at the Square Nursery School 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 of The Square Nursery School.

We aim to make The Square Nursery School 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 procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children in the Square Nursery School.

### Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- A home visit is carried out by the child's key person (where appropriate).
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into The Square Nursery School.
- The key person supports the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised schedule for the child's well-being, care and learning.

- The key person gains an understanding of their key children's individual needs and supports them whilst they are in the nursery.
- The key person acts as the primary contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a nanny, childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- The key person is responsible for developmental 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 at the Square Nursery School and at home.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them each day.
- We provide a back-up key person so the child and the parents have an alternative contact in the absence of the child's key person.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our nursery, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

### Settling-In

- Before a child starts to attend The Square Nursery School, we share information in a variety of ways. The manager will explain the process of settling-in with his/her parents, agree settling in sessions (if required) and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the nursery.
- A parent pack is sent to parents requesting them to complete various information regarding their child. This information supports us in meeting the individual needs of each child and is required from all parents before their child is left in our care. Information regarding our policies, activities within the setting, meetings with parents and other useful information is included. (See parent pack).
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her 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.

- The home visit is to ensure all relevant information about the child can be made known. The child also has an opportunity to meet / spend one on one time with their key person in the comfort of their own home.
- Before a child is fully enrolled, we provide optional settling-in sessions for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting together and spend time in the nursery (the parent pack is completed and returned to us before the child is left in our care). These sessions provide time for the parent, carer or close relative to stay for some of the session during the first week(s), gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child is able to cope.
- Younger children may 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 reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it too distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children. At this point, settling in sessions can be extended and the child's start date moved to accommodate further settling-in sessions.
- The key person and parent will communicate in writing for the first 3 weeks of a child's journey with us. This supports the process of getting to know a new family and 'ironing out' any teething issues with care routines etc. that may occur during the first weeks. Parents are encouraged to express their honest views during this time and the key person will respond accordingly.
- The manager is available throughout each child's settling in period to support the parents & key person, should assistance be required.

## Planning cycle Summary

**On Entry** – All about me completed in conjunction with parents

Settling in period – First 3 weeks of child starting at the Square School  
(This can and will be extended, if necessary, based on the child's individual needs)

**Week 1** – Settling in week 1 completed in conjunction with parents

**Week 2** – Settling in week 2 completed in conjunction with parents

**Week 3** – Settling in week 3 completed in conjunction with parents

**Within Settling in period** – Starting points completed

**Week 4 and ongoing** – observation sheets with photos

**Once a Year** – Summative reports

2 Year progress check (completed once per child, between the ages of 2 – 3 years)

**Once per term** – Complete tracking on the computer for every child

The settling in period is considered the first 3 weeks from the child's start date.

During this time the child's key person will provide additional support and guidance helping each child to feel secure, understand and enjoy our routines and begin building relationships.

Examples of additional support for children during their settling in period:

- ✓ Introducing the child to their new environment including coat peg & space for personal belongings
- ✓ Regular one to one / small group attention
- ✓ Regular updates with parents to build links and discuss progress
- ✓ Shorter days offered where necessary
- ✓ Regular phone calls / emails throughout the day where appropriate
- ✓ Parents / carers to attend setting for additional support

Additional support can and will be continued following the settling in period based on each child's individual needs.

| This policy was adopted on      | Signed on behalf of the nursery | Date for review |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 | <i>Zoey Gordon</i>              | September 2026  |

This policy has been read and understood by the following staff members:

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