



KEY PERSON AND SETTLING IN POLICY

Last reviewed:	January 2025
Next review due:	January 2026

The Little Firefly Forest School is strongly committed to carefully implementing the role of the key person due to current research on the importance of the key person role.

It is the role of every staff member, not only the child's key person, to ensure that within the day-to-day demands of the setting, each child feels individual, cherished and thought about by someone in particular while they are away from home.

Every child at The Little Firefly Forest School will have a primary key person appointed to them within six weeks of commencing. With ratios of 1:4 and a maximum of 12 children on site at any one site, the staff team knows each child well and are able to equally share the responsibility of each child.

What is a key person?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for group-based providers (effective from September 2025) requires that:

3.41 'Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.'

Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting.

The key person should meet the needs of each child in their care and respond sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour, talking to parents to make sure that the child is being cared for appropriately for each family.

Management

All new staff will receive a full induction and training on their role as a key person and what is expected of them.

Within six weeks of commencing at The Little Firefly Forest School, a key person(s) will have been chosen for the child, based upon who the child has formed a bond with thus far, and the staff and children's working and attending days. The child may have more than one key worker, depending on what days they attend. Your child's key person(s) will be shared with you by Tapestry and in person/by phone.

Parents will be introduced to their child's key person(s) and will be advised this key person will be their initial point of contact at the nursery and will be responsible for updating the children's records and updating parents about their child's progress within the play environment.

We will have a buddy system for our key person programme, to ensure in the event of staff sickness, training and holiday that we make sure there is a familiar and trusted person who also knows the child well. We are a small team and parents will have the opportunity to become familiar with all staff members so they are comfortable with their child's secondary key person.

Our managers will provide support and time for their staff to talk through any difficult issues and feelings that may arise as part of the key person role.

Practitioners' responsibilities

Relationships with key children

- The key person provides a secure attachment for their key children in the nursery.
- They help their key children settle in and become familiar with the setting.
- The key person meets the needs of their key children responding sensitively to their feelings, ideas and behaviour.
- The key person provides a 'secure base' for the children by being there to support them and allowing them to explore at their own pace.
- Observing your child's play and providing suitable resources and activities.
- Encouraging your child to develop independent skills.
- They are primarily responsible for their key child's care routines.

Relationships with parents/carers

- Key persons should develop a good relationship with parents / carers, ensuring that the child is cared for appropriately at nursery and accommodating their individual needs within the daily routine.
- The key person needs to develop a two-way flow of information between themselves and the parent/carer to help them become aware of any significant aspects of family life that may be important to the child.
- The key person has responsibility for completing regular observations of the child and sharing these with the child's parent/carer.

Records

- The key person is responsible for observational records of their key children, using these to inform next steps and individualised planning. These will be shared with you.
- Where a child is supported by another member of staff who is not their key person e.g. SEN support record keeping then becomes a joint responsibility.

Welfare and safeguarding

Key persons are responsible for the welfare of the children in their care, monitoring patterns of absence, injury and development referring them where necessary. However, it is important to note that ALL staff share an equal responsibility for the safeguarding and welfare of our learners.

Settling in of new children

We aim to make our setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly because careful consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of both the child and their family.

As such we will provide flexible settling in procedures to meet the needs of the individual child and their family. Our settling in process involves an orientation (parents can come into the setting to help settle their child before leaving) and a two-week settling period where families do not have to commit to a full term at our setting before they are satisfied with the level of learning and care provided.

We recognise that in some circumstances, such as with younger children or those that have not previously been cared for by those other than their families, children may take longer to settle. The educators will reassure parents whose children are taking longer to settle than may be expected and will work with them to ease the separation process for their child. This could include offering shorter days at the start of a child's settling in process.

Parents/guardians will be encouraged to provide their child with familiar items, such as a favourite teddy, as a means of reassurance during the settling in period.

Transition

- The key person plays an integral role in the transition, aiding this by introducing the children and their parents/carers to their new key person and helping them to become familiar with their new environment.
- It is the responsibility of the key person to pass on records during transition and to ensure that these records are all up to date.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

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External references:

- [EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)