



2.2 The Role of the Key Person and 'Settling-In'

Policy statement

The staff in Miss Delaney's believes that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents and the staff by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed, and our nursery is a happy place to attend or work in.

The Headteacher and staff at Miss Delaney's want the 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 the setting. Miss Delaney's aims to make the 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.

The Headteacher at Miss Delaney's assigns a teacher who is responsible for the class, the children will naturally gravitate to a member of staff whom they feel most comfortable with very quickly: this may be the class teacher or one of the nursery nurses. This person will become the key person for that child. The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

Procedures

- We allocate a teacher before the child starts. The Parent is notified when he/she/they visit our setting PRIOR to the child's first day. We currently offer one or two pre-start visits for each family prior to the agreed start date.
- After the parent meets with the Headteacher, each teacher is responsible for the induction of the family into the classroom and the key person for settling the child into our setting during the first part-time term. The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- Each key person/teacher at Miss Delaney's works with the Headteacher and parents to plan and deliver an EYFS personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning whilst in their teaching group.
- If the key worker is not the class teacher, he/she will feedback to the teacher who acts as the key contact for the parents and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with the Headteacher and those carers.
- The teacher is responsible for developmental records (individual Tapestry profile) and for sharing information on a regular basis (in writing in the Autumn and Summer term) with the child's parents and to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home on a regular basis.
- The teacher is required and expected to encourage positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We provide a back-up key person/teacher so the child and the parents have a key contact in the absence of the child's key person.

- We promote the role of the key person/teacher as the child's primary carer whilst in our setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other members of staff and children.

Settling-In

- Before a child starts to attend any of Miss Delaney's settings, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies and access to the school's website), booklets, individual visits and meetings with the Headteacher and teacher and/or open days to view the school as well as displays about activities available within the setting.
- We provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting prior to joining us.
- We allocate a teacher to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the Headteacher and teacher welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use pre-start visits to introduce new families to each other.
- Prior to a child starting with us, we explain the process of 'settling-in' with his/her parents both at time of registration and again nearer the start date. We also request and positively encourage carers to come as well so we can jointly decide on the best way to help the individual child to settle into our school setting.
- We recognise that our younger 'Duckling' children will take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. We operate a gradual entry for the first few weeks. Children attend 2 or 3 half an hour settle sessions at the start of the term; they then attend for 1.5 hours for the first full week, increasing to 2 hours the following week. By week three, we aim for the children to attend for the full session.
- 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/teacher; for example, the child looks for the key person/teacher 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 recognise that some children will settle more readily than others, but that some children who do not appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. It may be necessary to shorten the child's hours spent in Nursery, working towards slowly increasing such hours as we see the child grow in confidence.
- We do not believe that leaving a child to cry for long periods of time 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 reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children in our 'Duckling' class.
- Within the first six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's record of achievement and baseline evaluations, opening the individual profile.

The progress check at age two (24 months) onwards

- The teacher carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place.
- The progress check aims to review the child's development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of it.

- Within the progress check, the teacher 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 setting to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
- The key person/teacher 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.
- The key person/teacher will conduct on-going individual evaluations and observations of each child's EYFS development and keep profile information up-to-date, sharing this information with the parent. Evaluation reports and 'next steps' will be produced by the teacher at the end of each term and a copy sent to the parent and filed.

Name of signatory: *Lisa Murray*

Role of signatory: *Headteacher*

Reviewed by L. Murray July 2025. To be reviewed July 2026.