17. THE ROLE OF THE KEY PERSON AND SETTLING IN

Policy statement

At ASK, we 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 ASK and to feel secure and comfortable with our members of staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with ASK. We aim to make ASK 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.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- The key person is responsible for:
  - Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into ASK.
  - Completing relevant forms with parents, including consent forms.
  - 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.
  - Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
  - Acting as the key contact for the parents.
  - 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 ASK and at home.
  - 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.

- Encouraging positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.

- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer at ASK, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend ASK, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our Parent Handbook and policies), displays about activities available within ASK, routines, photos of key staff members, and individual meetings with parents.
- During the half-term before a child is enrolled, we provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit ASK and join in with activities.
- 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.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete, with his/her parents, the child's registration records.
- 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 ASK.
- We have an expectation that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child and 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 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 use visual timetables so children can see what happens first, next, and then when their parent will return).
- We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others, but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. We expect that the parent will honour the

commitment to stay for at least the first week, or possibly longer, until their child can stay happily without them.

- 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 ASK.
- We reserve the right not to accept a child into ASK without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
- Within the first four to six weeks of starting, we discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's record of achievement and plan for their next steps in their learning.

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 *The progress check at age two* – non statutory guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- 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 us 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 ASK and will support parents to understand the child's needs in order to enhance their development at home.

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Signatory:	Mark Stewart
Role of Signatory:	Owner & Ofsted Registered Provider