



Preschool Key Person
Policy

Gainsborough Primary
School

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What is a Key Person?

A key person is a member of staff in an Early Years Centre who has special responsibility for the education and welfare of a particular group of children during their time at the centre. Every child attending an Early Years Centre must be assigned a key person.

Important aspects of a key person relationship are:

- Developing secure trusting relationships with key children and their parents.
- Interacting with key children at a developmentally appropriate level (e.g. when working with young babies using reciprocal sounds, facial expressions and gestures.)
- Providing a secure base for your key children by being physically and emotionally available to them to come back to, by sitting at their level and in close proximity to them.
- Using body language, eye contact and voice tone to indicate that you are available and interested, gauging these according to the child's temperament and culture.
- Understanding and containing children's difficult feelings by gentle holding, providing words for feelings and empathy in a way suited to each individual child.
- Comforting distressed children by acknowledging their feelings, offering explanations and reassurances calmly and gently.
- Acknowledging and allowing children to express a range of feelings, for example anger, joy, distress, excitement, jealousy, love.

Settling new key children into the setting gradually.

- Whenever possible settling your key children as they arrive each day.
- Eating with your key children in small key groups.
- Holding key children who are bottle-fed on your laps to feed, maintaining eye contact and conversation.

- Changing and other personal care of your key child using sensitive handling and words that are familiar to them.
- Dressing and washing your key children, offering help as needed but also supporting their growing skills
- Having regular opportunities to reflect on the emotional aspects of being a key person, with a skilled, knowledgeable manager or colleague.

Together these elements constitute key working.

Key Working Responsibilities

The primary aim of the key person system is to provide close relationships between the practitioner and the child for whom the key person is responsible, and the parents/carers of those children in order to assist the development of the children. It is important to distinguish between the administrative aspects of a key person system and the development of an appropriate key person relationship and to recognise the value of both aspects of the key person role.

Keeping records of your key children's developmental progress, contributing observations to records kept by colleagues and sharing records with parents (settling in book/initial assessment/previous reviews/records and reports).

Observations

Observing your key children and analysing the information gathered through observations is a key part of the role of a key worker.

- Planning experiences for individual children based on your observations of their interests and developmental stages (weekly planning sheets).
- Writing individual education plans for your key children with special educational needs.
- Writing report for parents and holding regular meetings to discuss progress.

- Communicating with parents on a daily basis in person and through daily log books.
- Communicating with colleagues and other professionals.
- Planning key group times – these may include:
 - Eating times
 - Sharing stories
 - Singing and rhymes
 - Music and movement
- Organising a back-up key person who is known to the parent and child.
- Ensuring smooth and planned transition when a child moves rooms and the key person changes, including the passing on of information on development and progress kept in key person files.
- Follow up absences in consultation with the Preschool Leader.

The role of the Preschool Leader

The Preschool Leader should ensure that there is a high standard of opportunities for developing close relationships between children and key adults as follows:

- Staff cover is provided by those who are already familiar to the children.
- A secondary key person who is already known to the child is able to step in when the key person is absent.
- Practitioners have regular opportunities to reflect on their own emotional responses to the children and to their working as well as thinking about the children' progress and planning play experiences.
- Admissions are phased so that only one or two new children start in a group room at a time.

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The Federated Governing Body have reviewed this policy with careful consideration of our approach to equalities as outlined in the Equalities Policy, January 2020.

We would like to acknowledge the work of other colleagues in drafting this policy. We have drawn on a range of sources including policies from other schools, good practice guides, published schemes and LA and Statutory guidelines where appropriate.

