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Wolfson College Day Nursery

Key Person Policy

Key Person Guidance:

What is the Key Person Approach?

At Wolfson College Day Nursery we believe that every child deserves to be special to someone and the key person Approach recognises this.

The Key Person Approach is one of the vital principals in the Early Years Foundation Stage and now a statutory requirement of the framework. It is a reciprocal relationship between a member of staff, individual child and their family. It provides your child/ren with a sense of security so that they feel confident to explore their world and form further relationships.

Key Person – The named member of staff with whom a child has more contact than other adults. This adult shows a special interest in the child through close personal interaction on a day-to-day basis. The key person has an attachment to their key child, holding them in mind throughout their time at nursery. It does not mean that they 'shadow' or cling to the child or that they have to manage on their own.

What is the role of the Key Person?

The role of the key person is to know their individual child and to support their sense of identity and individuality. They need to be aware of their individual child's and family's needs preferences and development.

The key person will usually be the person who welcomes the child and carer to the nursery and helps to settle the child into the session. They would also be the main person providing the child's intimate care such as nappy changing, putting to sleep and physical closeness. Any information shared with the parents is also done mainly through the key person.

Building an Attachment

The key person meets any physical needs, such as changing nappies, feeding or cuddling at nap time, and in this way they begin to build a secure attachment with the young child. Lindon emphasises the importance of physical contact when comforting and playing with a child: 'Touch is a powerful non-verbal message, reassuring children that they are liked and welcome'. The practitioner reminds the child that they are 'kept in mind' by their parents and siblings by talking about these significant people and what they did with them yesterday, or will do later. The key person shares life's wonders and celebrates achievements as the child develops in confidence and independence. They need to be aware that they are the secure base from which the child can explore the setting, other children and other adults. Elfer explains that 'the role is not about limiting the child's activities with other children and other adults. The key person approach is about facilitating other relationships through allowing a close relationship'

What happens when the Key Person is absent?

Each key person is paired with a 'buddy' who takes on the role of the key person in their absence with the support of the other staff. It is part of the key person's role to ensure that the buddy and other staff are aware of their child's needs. Each child belongs to their key person's family group, their buddy's extended family and the further extended group of the whole room.

What is Attachment?

*"The building blocks of children's development. Through a positive reciprocal relationship children learn to modulate affect, soothe themselves and to relate to others. Attachment is the base from which children explore.....their early attachment experiences form their concepts of **Self, Others and the World.***
John Bowlby.

Key Person Approach Policy

Wolfson College Day Nursery is committed to the key person approach of childcare and our deployment of staff is centered on enabling close attachments to be made between individual children, their families and individual staff.

The nursery places the child's needs at the Centre of the approach but also recognises the entitlements and expectations for others involved i.e. the Families, Key Staff, Buddies and Managers.

These are recognised as follows:

The Child

- To have the key person available during settling-in visits and as much as possible during ongoing sessions
- To have a supported induction period that looks at their individual needs
- The key person meets any intimate and physical needs, such as changing nappies, feeding or cuddling at nap time, and in this way they begin to build a secure attachment with the young child.
- To be 'held in mind' by their key person (or buddy) during their time at nursery
- To have a key person who fosters their sense of belonging within the key group and the nursery as a whole
- To have a key person who really gets to know them and their family and celebrates and facilitates their individual needs, interests and development
- To know what happens when their key person is away, to still feel special to someone and not have their care compromised
- To have the opportunity to make a secure attachment with their key person which will support their security, independence and overall well being

The Family

- To be provided with information and literature about the key person approach and the reasons for its implementation
- To understand the reciprocal relationship between themselves and the key person/buddy and ways in which this is fostered e.g. daily communication, shared observations, meetings etc.
- To have their culture, heritage and family values respected and actively represented to develop their own sense of belonging in the nursery
- To be kept continually updated about information regarding their child
- To be informed in advance, when possible, if the key person will be away so that they can prepare their child and to understand what will happen in the key person's absence

The Key Person

- To receive information/training in the KPA and for new key people to have an induction into their role, with the support of a mentor
- To feel supported by their buddy, particularly during times of settling-in new children
- To receive on-going support from their senior and manager and to have opportunities to discuss and problem solve the challenges of their role
- To be allocated time to complete paperwork
- To have regular contributions from the parents on the children's interests and learning at home to help inform their planning

The Buddy (in addition to key person entitlements)

- To be provided with adequate information by the key person to ensure continuation of a high standard of care for the children in the absence of their special person
- To have the support of other team members if necessary when carrying out both a key person and buddy role and to be able to ask for help if needed
- To be introduced to their buddy's new key child and their parent/s on the first visit to aid the start of the buddy relationship

The Manager

- To have staff who are motivated and committed to the KPA and willing to attend on-going support and training
- To receive personal guidance and on-going support from other professionals e.g. Early Years Team
- To work in partnership with families and have their support in making the KPA successful

The nursery recognises the challenges involved in ensuring the KPA works as effectively as possible and that it requires a whole team approach to achieve this. Wherever possible the key person and/or buddy are available for the child but there may be times when this is not able to happen. During these times

ratios will always be maintained and other staff who the child is familiar with will take on the key person role.

The nursery is committed to continually evaluating its KPA practice, managing changes and transitions as sensitively as possible and ensuring each child feels special and has the opportunity to develop an attachment.

In May 2006 Wolfson College Day Nursery joined in with a project run by Dorothy Selleck and Oxfordshire County Council "Are you listening to me"

| This policy was adopted on | Signed on behalf of the nursery | Date for review |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| 26/7/19 | <i>Barry Coote</i> | July 2020 |