

## Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

### The role of the key person and settling-in

#### Policy statement

At Ready Steady Grow Pre-School we recognise that secure, trusting relationships are the foundation for children's emotional wellbeing, learning and development. We implement the statutory Key Person approach as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026 to ensure every child has a named adult who builds a strong attachment, understands their needs and works in genuine partnership with parents.

Our key person system:

- promotes emotional security, confidence and belonging
- ensures children's individual needs, interests and cultural identities are understood
- supports smooth and well-planned transitions
- facilitates effective communication with families, other professionals and external agencies
- ensures children's needs inform the curriculum and learning environment

All staff understand that relationships drive progress, and that a stable and responsive key person supports safeguarding, learning, SEND identification, communication and wellbeing.

#### September 2026 update

This policy reflects the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers effective from 1 September 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, current Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and the London Child Safeguarding Procedures.

The key person remains a statutory EYFS requirement. The key person must help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child, and build a relationship with parents/carers.

#### Procedures

##### **1. Allocation of Key Person**

- Every child is allocated a **named key person** before or on their first day.
- Allocations consider **continuity, work patterns**, families' needs, additional needs, and where possible, parental preference.
- Children with **SEND**, emerging needs or multi-agency involvement may be allocated a key person with additional experience or training.

##### **2. Responsibilities of the Key Person**

The key person will:

##### **Relationships & Emotional Security**

- Build a warm, nurturing relationship with the child through consistent, responsive interactions.
- Provide a safe base that supports emotional regulation and confidence.

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- Offer unconditional positive regard, being non-judgemental, respectful and sensitive to the child's background, culture, identity and experiences.

### **Partnership with Parents/Carers**

- Act as the main point of contact for parents.
- Share information daily and maintain open, respectful communication.
- Work collaboratively with parents to develop a clear understanding of children's routines, preferences, needs and home learning experiences.
- Hold regular meetings with parents to share progress, next steps and any concerns.

### **Learning & Development**

- • Observe, assess and plan for each child's needs in line with the current EYFS 2026 framework, using professional knowledge of the child rather than unnecessary paperwork or excessive evidence collection.
- Maintain accurate, timely and meaningful developmental records.
- Provide targeted planning, including early identification of emerging SEND needs.
- Work alongside the SENCO when additional support or referrals may be required.

### **Safeguarding & Welfare**

- Ensure that children's welfare, safety and wellbeing are central to all decision-making.
- • Immediately share any safeguarding concern with the DSL and follow the setting's Child Protection Policy, current BSCP procedures and London Child Safeguarding Procedures. The key person must remain alert to changes in behaviour, presentation, attendance, family circumstances and patterns that may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation or other harm.
- Safeguarding information must be shared lawfully, proportionately and promptly. Consent is not required where seeking it would place a child at risk or where information sharing is necessary to safeguard or protect a child.
- Where a child or family may benefit from additional help, the key person works with the DSL/SENCO and relevant professionals so that support is coordinated and relationships with the child and family remain consistent, in line with Working Together 2026.
  - Maintain confidentiality in line with data protection and safeguarding legislation.

### **Working with Other Agencies**

- Link with any other professionals involved with the child (e.g., health visitor, speech and language therapist).
- Support multi-agency meetings, reports and transition documentation where required.

### **3. Key Buddy System**

- Every child also has a key buddy who knows their needs, routines and interests.
- The buddy provides continuity during staff absence, supporting secure relationships and consistent care.
- Parents are introduced to both the key person and buddy during the settling-in period.

### **Settling-In Procedures**

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### **1. Pre-Start Arrangements**

To support a positive transition, we will:

- Provide families with information about the setting, routines, curriculum and policies.
- Offer opportunities for the child and parent to visit the setting prior to the start date.
- Gather information through registration forms, "All About Me" profiles and parent discussion to understand the child's background, routines, languages, SEND needs, allergies, culture and family preferences.
- Confirm parental responsibility, collection arrangements and current emergency contact details; where possible the setting holds more than two emergency contact numbers for each child, in line with the current EYFS.
- Identify the child's home language and communication needs, including any need for interpreting, visual support or reasonable adjustments, so that the child and family can participate fully in settling-in and ongoing provision.

### **2. First Sessions & Early Settling**

- The key person welcomes the child and family, supporting them through the first sessions.
- Parents are expected to stay for part of the sessions initially, gradually withdrawing as the child develops confidence.
- We take a flexible, child-centred approach—there is no fixed timeframe.
- If a child is not emotionally ready to separate, the key person will support a slower transition.
- If a child remains significantly distressed or their wellbeing is compromised, the key person and parent/carer will agree a revised settling plan. This may include shorter sessions, a parent/carer remaining for part of the session, or other individualised arrangements, with safeguarding and the child's best interests taking priority.

Children returning after an extended absence may also require a re-settling period.

### **3. Partnership and Review**

Within the first 4-6 weeks, the key person meets parents to:

- Review how the child has settled
- Discuss wellbeing, routines, strengths and emerging interests
- Share initial observations
- Agree next steps for learning and development
- Check whether any early intervention or additional support may be needed

### **The progress check at age two**

In line with the EYFS statutory framework effective from 1 September 2026 and current Bromley arrangements, the key person, working with the Manager/Deputy, will:

- Complete the statutory progress check when the child is aged between two and three, reviewing development in the three prime areas of learning.
- Provide parents with a clear summary of the child's development in the prime areas
- Identify strengths, emerging needs and areas where progress is less than expected
- Agree targeted strategies to support development
- Liaise with other professionals where required
- Ensure parents understand the findings and how to support development at home

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- Encourage parents/carers to share the progress check with the child's health visitor and support integrated working where appropriate; information may also be shared without consent where necessary to safeguard a child or where another lawful basis applies.

Children with SEND or emerging needs may require additional assessments or multidisciplinary involvement.

- Where the progress check identifies significant emerging concerns or a suspected special educational need or disability, the setting will discuss this with parents/carers and, with appropriate information sharing, involve the SENCO and relevant health, education or family-help professionals without unnecessary delay.

### **Transitions Beyond Ready Steady Grow**

The key person plays a central role in transition to school or another setting by:

- Preparing transition documents and developmental summaries
- Holding transition meetings (where appropriate)
- Supporting emotional readiness and resilience
- Ensuring relevant information is shared securely, accurately and in a timely way with the receiving setting/school, with safeguarding information transferred in accordance with the setting's Child Protection Policy and lawful information-sharing requirements.
- Working with parents to promote a smooth, confident start

### **Further information**

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Bromley Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures and London Child Safeguarding Procedures
- Development Matters (2023 update)
- Ofsted early years inspection toolkit and operating guidance in use from September 2026

### **Policy Review**

This policy is reviewed annually and sooner if the EYFS, Working Together, Ofsted requirements or Bromley safeguarding procedures change.