



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents

4.1 The Role of the Key Person and Settling-In

Policy statement

At **Impact Montessori Nursery**, we recognise that children settle best when they have a secure and trusting relationship with a consistent key person who knows them well and understands their individual needs.

Every child is allocated a key person who develops a positive relationship with the child and their family. The key person approach supports children's emotional security, wellbeing, learning and development and provides parents with a consistent point of contact.

We recognise that every child is unique. Some children settle quickly, while others need more time, reassurance and support. Our settling-in arrangements are therefore flexible and tailored to the individual child and family.

We work in partnership with parents and carers from the beginning, sharing information and working together to ensure that each child feels safe, welcomed, valued and confident in the nursery environment.

The key person

A key person is allocated to each child before they start at the nursery.

The key person:

- develops a warm, responsive and respectful relationship with the child;
- gets to know the child, their interests, routines, preferences, communication style and individual needs;
- works in partnership with parents and carers to understand the child's experiences at home and in the nursery;
- provides reassurance, comfort and emotional support;
- supports the child's personal, social and emotional development;
- supports the child's learning and development and contributes to their individual learning records;
- acts as the main point of contact for parents and carers;
- shares information with parents about their child's experiences, learning, progress and wellbeing;
- works with parents to identify and respond to any concerns about the child's development or wellbeing;
- supports the child during transitions, including starting nursery, moving rooms or preparing for school;
- ensures relevant information about the child is shared appropriately with other staff who work with the child;

- works with other professionals where appropriate and with parental involvement and consent, or where information sharing is required to safeguard the child;
- supports positive relationships between children within their key group; and
- ensures that children receive consistent and responsive care throughout the day.

Although each child has a named key person, **all staff have a responsibility for the care, safety, wellbeing and development of every child.**

A suitable back-up person will be identified so that children continue to receive consistent care when their key person is absent.

Before the child starts

Before a child starts at Impact Montessori Nursery, we aim to:

- offer families an opportunity to visit the nursery;
- introduce the child and family to their key person;
- provide parents/carers with information about the nursery, including relevant policies and procedures;
- gather information about the child's routines, interests, communication, development, dietary requirements, medical needs and any additional support needs;
- discuss the child's previous experiences of childcare or being away from their parents/carers;
- explain our safeguarding procedures and responsibilities;
- complete registration, consent and relevant medical information; and
- agree an individual settling-in approach with the family.

Where appropriate, additional visits or meetings may be arranged for children who require additional support with their transition.

Settling-in

We recognise that settling-in is an individual process and there is no fixed length of time that is appropriate for every child.

The nursery will work with parents/carers to agree an approach based on the child's needs.

This may include:

- short introductory visits;
- parents/carers staying with their child initially;
- gradually increasing the length of time the child spends at nursery;
- parents/carers leaving for short periods before building up to a full session;
- using familiar objects or comfort items where appropriate;
- sharing information about the child's home routines and interests;
- maintaining consistent staffing where possible; and
- providing additional support for children who find separation particularly difficult.

The settling-in arrangements will be reviewed regularly and adjusted according to how the child is responding.

Supporting separation

When a parent or carer leaves, we encourage them to:

- say goodbye calmly and confidently;
- reassure the child that they will return;
- avoid leaving without saying goodbye;
- provide the nursery with information about when they expect to return; and
- contact the nursery if there is an unavoidable delay.

Staff will respond sensitively to children's emotions and provide reassurance and comfort.

We do not believe that leaving a child distressed for prolonged periods is an appropriate settling-in strategy. Staff will work with the child and family to identify approaches that support the child's emotional wellbeing.

If a child is experiencing significant or persistent distress, we will discuss this with the parent/carers and agree an appropriate plan. This may include additional settling-in sessions or temporarily shortening sessions.

When a child is considered settled

A child may be considered settled when they:

- develop a trusting relationship with their key person and other familiar staff;
- seek comfort or reassurance from familiar adults;
- show interest in their surroundings and activities;
- begin to develop relationships with other children;
- participate in play and learning;
- appear increasingly comfortable with nursery routines; and
- are able to separate from their parent/carers with appropriate support.

We recognise that children may have good and difficult days and that settling-in is not necessarily a linear process. Changes at home, illness, holidays or other significant events may temporarily affect a child's confidence.

Children requiring additional support

We recognise that some children may require additional support when settling into nursery, including children who:

- have additional needs or disabilities;
- have experienced significant changes or disruption;
- have previously found separation difficult;
- have limited experience of group settings;
- have communication or language needs; or
- require additional emotional or behavioural support.

Where additional support is required, we will work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant professionals to develop an appropriate plan.

We will make reasonable adjustments to support children's participation, inclusion and wellbeing.

Communication with parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information with their child's key person and nursery staff.

We will communicate regularly about:

- the child's wellbeing;
- settling-in;
- routines;
- learning and development;
- friendships and relationships;
- interests and achievements;
- any concerns; and
- any changes that may affect the child.

Parents and carers are encouraged to ask questions, share observations from home and contribute to their child's learning and development.

Records and children's learning

The key person is responsible for contributing to the child's records and ensuring that observations and assessments reflect the child's individual development.

Information from parents and carers will be considered alongside observations and professional knowledge to build a holistic picture of the child.

Parents will be given appropriate opportunities to contribute to and discuss their child's learning and development.

Progress check at age two

Where the child is between two and three years old, the nursery will complete the statutory **two-year progress check** in accordance with the current EYFS requirements.

The progress check:

- provides a summary of the child's development;
- identifies the child's strengths and interests;
- identifies any areas where additional support may be beneficial;
- considers the child's development across the relevant areas of learning;
- is discussed with the child's parents/carers; and
- identifies appropriate next steps where necessary.

Where there are concerns about a child's development, we will work in partnership with parents/carers to identify appropriate support and, where necessary, involve relevant professionals.

The progress check will take account of information from parents/carers and other professionals involved with the child, where appropriate.

Transitions

We recognise that children may experience several transitions during their time at nursery.

These may include:

- starting nursery;
- moving between rooms;
- changes to their key person;
- returning following an extended absence; and
- preparing to move to school.

We will plan transitions sensitively and provide children and families with appropriate information and support.

Where a key person changes, we will aim to introduce the new key person gradually and share relevant information to ensure continuity of care.

Confidentiality and information sharing

Information about children and families will be handled confidentially and shared appropriately in accordance with our safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection procedures.

Information will be shared where there is a legitimate reason to do so, including where necessary to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and updated to reflect current EYFS requirements, safeguarding guidance and the needs of children and families attending Impact Montessori Nursery.

Policy approval

This policy was adopted by: Impact Montessori Nursery

Date adopted: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed on behalf of the provider: _____

Name of signatory: _____

Role: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This version is deliberately **less prescriptive about settling-in**. Rather than requiring every parent to stay for a week, it allows Impact Montessori to agree a suitable transition based on each child's needs while still demonstrating a clear, consistent procedure.