



Deerness Valley Nursery

Key Workers

At Deerness Valley Nursery we have a Key Worker system in place. This document outlines why we have one, how we assign a key worker, and what a key worker does.

EYFS Statutory Framework 2021

1.16 Each child must be assigned a key person (also a safeguarding and welfare requirement - see paragraph 3.27). Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting. The key person must help ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

3.27. 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 (in accordance with paragraph 1.16), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents.

Birth to 5 Matters 2021

Babies and children become attached to significant adults within reliable, respectful, warm and loving relationships which are essential in order to thrive. Babies and children experience wellbeing and contentment when their physical and emotional needs are met and their feelings are accepted. The key person approach, reflecting relationships within families, helps serve to meet these conditions. Early experiences of love and attachment have lifelong benefits.

The key person helps the child to feel known, understood, cared about, and safe. The key person helps the baby or child feel confident that they are "held in mind", thought about and loved. This experience of being cared for by reliable adults who meet their physical needs and remain attentive and playful, affectionate and thoughtful allows children to form secure attachments. Such a grounding provides a "secure base" from which children feel confident to explore the world and form other relationships.

The key person role involves a "triangle of trust" with the child and family. A key person approach is a way to ensure that all children and families have one or more persons within the setting with whom they have a special, nurturing relationship. The presence of a key person helps the child to feel emotionally secure when away from home and provides a reassuring point of contact for parents. There are different ways to ensure a key person is always available (e.g. shared and paired caring, or support partner or buddy).

At Deerness Valley Nursery we believe that children who have a strong attachment relationship with a caring, present, available adult can feel secure enough to play, learn,



Deerness Valley Nursery

make friends, and thrive. This belief is put into practice in the ways we welcome new children, work with individual children and families, support all children to learn and develop, plan sessions and arrange our staff rota.

This also impacts the way we work with children to support them develop self-regulation strategies in our Behaviour Policy, and our commitment to delivering a nurturing environment for all children.

We don't just implement a key worker system because it is statutory, but believe it is statutory because it is the best way to work.

1. Every child has a key worker. That person is a member of staff whose shifts and work pattern matches the booking pattern of a child to allow them to be at nursery at the same time as far as possible.
2. When new children are being welcomed in the nursery Hannah and Jenny will look at their booking pattern and make a "best fit" judgement about who their key worker initially will be. This person will work closely with the child to build a relationship with them and begin to allow the child to feel secure enough to remain at nursery when their primary caregiver (parent/carer) is not there.
3. Once a new child is settled at nursery a period of observation begins where all staff are encouraged to reflect whether the child's secure attachment is with their initial key worker or with another member of staff. Once the child is fully settled their key worker may change. In essence, children select their own key worker.
4. If a child's booking pattern changes, but it is not possible for the staff member's shifts to change to be a close match, a period of observation begins again to discover who the child will choose as their next key worker.
 - a. The current key worker will support this period of change and observation.
 - b. If this period is not successful then we will discuss further actions with the family such as – moving the child back to sessions where their key worker is, and moving the staff member's shift pattern to match the child.
 - c. Occasionally this change will unsettle a child to a previous stage of their transition, and nursery will accommodate a parent/carer coming in with the child again to support them to form a new relationship with a new key worker.

Key Worker's Role

Key workers will be Educators, Senior Educators or Lead Educators.

Educators will be supported to perform the role of a key worker by a more senior member of the team.

- Key workers will specifically focus on knowing a small group of children well, and being able to report on what they can and cannot do.



Deerness Valley Nursery

- Key workers will record using photos and observations the learning and development of all children, but will keep a specific eye on the narrative these collectively tell for their Key Worker children.
- As part of this overview, key workers will read observations others have written for their Key Worker children.
- Observations will be linked to relevant areas of the curriculum including Characteristics of Effective Learning.
- Key workers will assess learning and development in line with the Statutory requirements and the curriculum of Deerness Valley Nursery School and report on this according to the schedule of reporting.
- All children will have a secondary key worker who is either the head or deputy.

Key workers are expected to be familiar with the SEND policies and procedures and feed into discussions and paperwork detailed in these. Specifically, they are responsible for:

- Keeping in mind a holistic view of the child and family and discussing any concerns early with the Senco or other lead practitioners. Considering the family as a whole and the child's overall development and progress allows the key worker to identify needs or changes in a child early even if these are subtle.
- Ensure that initial concerns are logged using a short note form.
- Ensure that support plans are followed and reviewed regularly (every 6-8weeks) and discussed with parents and any further concerns discussed with the SENCO.

The Senco may lead this process and support a key worker with paperwork and day to day discussions with parents. Where a child has complex needs the Senco will usually lead more formal discussions with parents and other agencies but the key worker will also be involved in the process.

Latest review: June 2023