**Policy**

Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery believe that children settle best when they have a key person to relate to, who knows them and their parents well, and who can meet their individual needs.

We aim to make our setting a welcoming place where children settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of children and their families. We want children to feel safe, stimulated, and happy in the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with our staff.

**Procedure**

* Each child will be allocated a key person during the settling period.
* The key person is responsible for:
	+ Providing an induction for the family and for settling the child into our setting.
	+ Offering unconditional regard for the child and being non-judgemental.
	+ Working with the parents to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child’s well-being, care and learning.
	+ Acting as the key contact for the parents.
	+ Providing an effective handover daily to parents.
	+ Developmental records and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child’s parents to keep those records up-to-date, reflecting the full picture of the child in our setting and at home.
	+ Having links with all carers involved with the child and co-ordinating the sharing of appropriate information about the child’s development with those professionals.
	+ Encouraging positive relationships between children in their key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
	+ Attending to personal care routines including feeding, changing nappies and clothes, supporting children at sleep time.
	+ Comfort the child in times of upset or distress.
* We encourage the role of the key person as the child’s primary carer in our settings, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children. However, this does not mean the key person has to be with the child at all the times. One of the main roles of the key person is to support the child’s social and emotional development to enable them to socialise with other adults and peers.

**Settling-in**

The first few weeks when a child is settling into a nursery setting is a time of crucial importance to their later happiness in the setting. Both parents and early years practitioners can take steps to ensure that the transition goes as smoothly as possible:

* Open communication between parents and the nursery team is crucial, and our settling in procedure has been developed with this in mind. It allows time for the important sharing of information. Parents can give the key person information about the child and in turn the key person can talk to the parents about the child’s experiences in the setting.
* Before a child starts to attend, our setting uses a variety of ways to provide parents with information. These include written information (including our website and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days, visits and individual meetings with parents.
* When a child starts, we explain the process of settling-in with parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
* The key person welcomes and looks after the child and family at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
* At the first visit, the key person and parents complete the child's registration records together.
* Younger children may take longer to settle in, as will children who have not previously spent time away from home. Children who have had a period of absence may also require their parent to be on hand to re-settle them. Key person will work with the parents to determine how long the settling period will be.
* A child is deemed to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person for example, the child looks for the key person when they arrive, goes to them for comfort, and seems pleased to be with them. The child is also familiar with where things are and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities.
* We recognise that some children will settle more readily than others, but that some children who appear to settle rapidly are not ready to be left. Parents must honour the commitment to be available for the duration of the settling period and until their child can stay happily without them.
* We do not believe that leaving a child to cry will help them to settle any quicker and believe that a child's distress will prevent them from learning and gaining the best from the setting.
* We reserve the right not to accept a child into the setting without a parent or carer if the child finds it distressing to be left. This is especially the case with very young children.
* Within the first four to six weeks of starting we will discuss and work with the child's parents to begin to create their child's learning journey (paper based or electronically).
* During the settling period the key person and parents complete the starting documents together.

**Key person buddy system**

Ideally, the key person will be available for the majority of the time that the child attends but when this is not possible, we operate a buddy system, whereby each child has a nominated buddy key person who also has a strong bond and sound knowledge of the child and their family. The buddy system is implemented in the absence of the child’s key person.

In the unlikely event that both the key person and buddy are absent, the manager in charge will nominate another member of the nursery team who knows the child well to stand in for the key person, informing the parents and child as and when the changes occur.

With regards to bank / agency staff, where deemed suitable and on long term placement within the nursery these practitioners may be utilised as key persons by the nursery management team.

**Supporting Transitions**

Children experience many transitions in their early years, and the staff at Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery are sensitive to the difficulties children may have whilst going through these transitions.

Staff are trained to observe their key children and as such will be sensitive to any changes in their behaviour and personality. We work in partnership with parents to ensure we are best informed of any changes in a child’s life which may have an impact on the child and family.

**Moving rooms**

* If a child is due to transition between rooms, we will work with parents to ensure this is a seamless process in which the child is fully supported.
* Key person will arrange settling sessions for children transitioning to the next room, based on the child’s individual needs.
* Where possible the child’s key person will be present during the initial settling to ensure a familiar person is available until the child is comfortable in their new surroundings.
* Wherever possible groups of friends will be moved together to provide stability for the child.
* Parents will be kept informed of all visits and the outcomes of these sessions through effective communication.
* Only when the Keyperson and parent deems that the child has settled fully will the permanent room move take place. If a child requires additional settling sessions, this will be discussed between the key person and parent.

**Starting school**

As a child transitions to school, the nursery will endeavour to support a smooth move. Key people will use their knowledge of the child and work with parents as well as implementing the following where possible:

* The nursery will provide a variety of resources that relate to the school, e.g. uniform to dress up in, a role play area set up as a school classroom, photographs of all the schools the children may attend. This will help the children to become familiar with this new concept and will aid the transition
* Parents will be asked to provide information regarding the schools their child will be transferring to.
* The nursery will invite school representatives into the nursery to introduce them to the children. This will be reception class teams from the local schools’ children will be attending.
* The key person will initiate conversations with their key children who are due to move to school about the school and discuss what they think may be different and what may be the same. They will talk through any concerns the child may have and initiate activities or group discussions relating to any issues enabling these to be overcome.
* The nursery will ensure a comprehensive report is produced on each child starting school to enable teachers to have a good understanding of each child received. This will include their interests, strengths and level of understanding and development in key areas. This will support continuity of care and early learning.