

2.Suitable People

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1. Key Person Policy

Policy Statement

We 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. Research shows that a key person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed, and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or work in.

We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in our settings and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in their children's well-being and their role as active partners in the settings. We aim to make Woodentots and Woodland Wanderers 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.

The key person role is set out in the Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must offer a key person for each child. The procedures set out a model for developing a key person approach that promotes effective and positive relationships for children who are in settings.

Procedures

- We allocate a key person before the child starts.
- A home visit may also be offered to a family.
- The key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our settings.
- The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
- The key person works with the parent to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the child's well-being, care and learning.
- The key person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder, and co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers.
- A key person is responsible for developmental records and for sharing information regularly 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.
- The key person encourages positive relationships between children in her/his key group, spending time with them as a group each day.
- We promote the role of the key person as the child's primary carer in our settings, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-in

- Before a child starts to attend Woodentots or Woodland Wanderers, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), displays about activities available within the setting, information days and evenings and individual meetings with parents.
- We allocate a key person to each child and his/her family before she/he starts to attend; the key person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the child's first session and during the settling-in process.
- We use pre-start visits and the first session at which a child attends to explain and complete with his/her parents the child's registration records.
- When a child starts to attend, we explain the process of settling in with his/her parents and jointly decide on the best way to help the child to settle into the setting.
- We expect that the parent, carer or close relative, will stay for most of the session during the first week, gradually taking time away from their child, increasing this as and when the child can cope.
- Younger children will 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 need their parents to be on hand to resettle them.
- We judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their key person; for example, the child looks for the key person when he/she arrives, 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.
- When parents leave, we ask them to say goodbye to their child and explain that they will be coming back, and when.
- 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. We expect that the parent will honour the commitment to stay for at least the first week, or possibly longer 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. We 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 discuss and work with the child's parents to start to create their child's to gather information towards their 3-year-old check.

2. Safer Recruitment

At **Woodland Wanderers** we are vigilant in our recruitment procedures aiming to ensure that all people working and looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements of their role. We have effective systems in place to ensure that practitioners and any other person who may have regular contact with children are suitable. We follow this procedure each and every time we recruit a new member of staff to join our team.

Legal Requirements

- We abide by all legal requirements relating to safe recruitment set out in the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and accompanying regulations including our legal responsibilities under the Equality Act 2021 (updated 2024).
- We also follow any requirements or guidance given by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in relation to carrying out checks; and abide by the employer's responsibilities relating to informing the DBS of any changes to the suitability of their staff, whether this member of staff has left the nursery or is still under investigation. Please refer to the child protection/safeguarding policy for further information.

Advertising

- We use *reputable sites, job sites, social media sites* to advertise for any vacancies and recruitment agencies.

Interview stage

- We shortlist all suitable candidates against a pre-set specification and ensure all applicants receive correspondence regardless of whether they are successful in reaching the interview stage or not
- All shortlisted candidates receive a job description
- The owner/manager decides the most appropriate people for the interview
- At the start of each interview all candidates' identities are checked using, for example, their passport and/or photo card driving licence. All candidates are required to prove they are eligible to work in the UK. The interview will also cover any gaps in the candidate's employment history
- All candidates reaching the interview stage are questioned which cover specific areas of childcare, including safeguarding the children in their care, planning suitable activities to enhance the child's development and their understanding of the legal frameworks applied to childcare and used in the nursery. The questions are value-based and will ensure the candidate has the same values as the nursery with regards to the safety and welfare of the children in their care

- Every shortlisted candidate will be asked to take part in a supervised practical exercise which will involve spending time in a particular age group in the nursery interacting with the children, staff and where appropriate parents
- The manager and deputy will then select the most suitable person for this position based on these scores and their knowledge and understanding of the early years' framework as well as the needs of the nursery
- Every candidate will receive communication from the nursery stating whether they have been successful or not. Unsuccessful candidates are offered feedback.

Starting work

- The successful candidate will be offered the position subject to at least 2 references that are directly addressed to the setting. Ideally, one is from previous employment or, in the case of a newly qualified student, their tutor and a personal or professional reference. These references will be taken up before employment commences. This may be verbal initially and then followed up with a written reference which will form part of their personnel file. If a candidate's most recent job was not in Early Years, but was at some point previously, a reference will be required from the previous Early Years Provider. In no circumstances, can a family member give a reference.
- The successful candidate will be asked to provide proof of their qualifications, where applicable. All qualifications will be checked and copies taken for their personnel files where applicable.
- Prior to employment a childcare suitability declaration will be given to the employee and its results will be taken into account in making an overall decision about suitability. Suitability declarations are ongoing, and are renewed termly. Staff have a duty too disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings that may affect their suitability to work with children. The nursery reserves the right to take any further advice necessary in relation to a person's physical and mental fitness to carry out their role. Please see the absence management policy for more details about how the nursery manages health problems including access to medical records.
- All new starters, other than those who have registered for the continuous updating service (see below), will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. This will be initiated before the member of staff commences work in the nursery and they will not have unsupervised access to any child or their records before this check comes back clear. Further to this, the new starter will not be allowed to take photographs of any child, look at their learning and development log or change the nappy of any child without an up-to-date enhanced DBS check (whether supervised or not).
- An additional criminal records check (or checks if more than one country) should also be made for anyone who has lived or worked abroad
- The nursery will record and retain details about the individual including staff qualifications, identity checks carried out and the vetting process completed. This will include the disclosure and barring service reference number, the date the disclosure was obtained and details of who obtained it. The nursery will not retain copies of the disclosure itself once the employment decision is taken

- There may be occasions when a DBS check is not clear, but the individual is still suitable to work with children. This will be treated on an individual case basis and at the manager's/owner's discretion considering the following:
 - seriousness of the offence or other information
 - accuracy of the person's self-disclosure on the application form
 - nature of the appointment including levels of supervision
 - age of the individual at the time of the offence or other information
 - the length of time that has elapsed since the offence or other information
 - relevance of the offence or information to working or being in regular contact with children.
- If the individual has registered on the DBS system since 17 July 2013, managers can use the update service with the candidate's permission instead of carrying out an enhanced DBS check consider that the original physical certificate of their current DBS Disclosure is provided.
- New starters are required to sign (either application form, contract or separate form) to state that they have no criminal convictions, court orders or any other reasons that disqualify them from working with children or unsuitable to do so
- All new members of staff will undergo an intensive induction period during which time they will read and discuss the nursery policies and procedures and be assigned a 'mentor/ buddy' who will introduce them to the way in which the nursery operates
- During their induction period all new staff will receive training on how to safeguard children in their care and follow the Safeguarding Children/Child Protection policy and procedure, emergency evacuation procedures, equality policy and health and safety issues
- The new member of staff will have regular meetings with the manager and their 'mentor/buddy' during their induction period to discuss their progress, support required and/or further training and professional development opportunities.

Ongoing support and checks

- All staff are responsible for notifying the manager in person if there are any changes to their circumstances that may affect their suitability to work with children. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager **immediately if anything that affects their suitability to work with children.**
- The nursery management team will review any significant changes to an individual's circumstances that may suggest they are no longer suitable to work with children and take appropriate action to ensure any unsuitable or potentially unsuitable employee does not have unsupervised contact with children until the matter is resolved. Please see the Disciplinary Policy for further details
- Every member of staff will have two meetings a year with the manager: a formal appraisal and a more informal review. This will provide an opportunity for the manager and member of staff to discuss training needs for the following six months as well as evaluate and discuss their performance in the previous six months

- The manager, deputy and room leaders will be responsible for any support the staff team may have between these reviews. This includes mentor support, one-to-one training sessions, ongoing supervision, work-based observations and constructive feedback
- The nursery will provide appropriate opportunities for all staff to undertake professional development and training to help improve the quality of experiences provided for children.

END.