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Key person Policy

Effective from: 1 July 2025
Next Review Due: 1 July 2026

Policy Statement

At St Mark's Preschool, we believe that strong, nurturing relationships are the foundation of effective Early Years education. Our Key Person system is designed to ensure every child receives personalised care and support, enabling them to feel safe, secure, and ready to learn.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of Key Persons in supporting children's welfare, emotional wellbeing, learning and development, and any specific medical needs.

Aims of the Key Person System

- To provide children with a consistent and trusted adult in the setting.
- To ensure that each child's individual needs are recognised and met.
- To build strong, positive relationships with parents and carers.
- To monitor each child's progress and ensure no child is left behind academically, socially, or emotionally.
- To ensure the Key Person approach supports statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), particularly in fostering strong attachments, supporting learning and development, and promoting positive outcomes for all children.

Responsibilities of the Key Person

Each Key Person will:

a) Welfare and Emotional Support

- Develop a secure and trusting relationship with their key children.
- Offer emotional reassurance, especially during transitions such as settling-in and separation from parents.

- Act as a consistent point of contact for the child, providing comfort, stability, and encouragement.

b) Learning and Development

- Take responsibility for observing, assessing, and supporting the learning of each key child in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Plan and implement activities tailored to the child's interests and next steps.
- Maintain an up-to-date record of observations and assessments using our designated system (Tapestry).
- Set clear, achievable objectives for each child and regularly review progress.
- Meet regularly with the setting's manager or Room Leader to discuss progress and next steps for each child, and be prepared to share the progress of certain children during whole Staff Meetings.
- Ensure learning goals are embedded in daily practice, not simply noted in paperwork.

c) Medical and Additional Needs

- Be aware of any health or medical conditions and ensure plans (e.g. Health Care Plans, allergy protocols) are followed. Share medical information sensitively, as required, with other practitioners in the room.
- Liaise with the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) where additional learning support is needed.
- Work closely with external professionals where appropriate (e.g. speech and language therapists, health visitors).

d) Partnership with Parents and Carers

- Build open, respectful relationships with families, recognising parents as the child's first educators.
- Communicate regularly about their child's wellbeing, progress, and learning goals.
- Encourage parental involvement in their child's learning at home and at preschool.
- Conduct a parent phonecall, Home Visit and settling sessions with the family in advance of the child starting at Preschool.

🔹 Buddy System: Each child will also be assigned a *Buddy Key Person* —another member of staff who will step in to support the child when their main Key Person is not on site. The Buddy Key Person will be familiar with the child's individual needs, interests, and next steps, ensuring continuity of care and consistency in learning and emotional support.

Accountability and Practice

- Key Person are expected to review their children's progress regularly and ensure learning objectives are up to date and followed through in practice.

- It is the responsibility of the Key Person to ensure their children's IEPs are up to date and reviewed in a timely manner.
- Time will be allocated during staff meetings and planning time to allow for Key Person duties to be completed thoroughly.
- The management team will monitor each child's developmental progress to ensure all children are progressing and receiving tailored support.
- Any concerns about a child's lack of progress, disengagement, or barriers to learning must be flagged promptly with the manager/SENCO.

Preventing Children "Falling Through the Net"

We are committed to ensuring that each child is given the opportunity to thrive across all areas of development. This requires:

- Focused attention on learning outcomes, not only behaviour and safety.
- Follow-up and reflection on each child's next steps.
- Clear communication between staff and families.
- Shared responsibility, with Key Persons as lead advocates for their children.

No child should be overlooked due to staffing pressures or behaviour-focused interventions. This policy is a tool to help prioritise each child's learning journey.

Assessment

Key Persons play a central role in assessing and tracking each child's progress throughout their time at St Mark's Preschool, in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements.

Key responsibilities include:

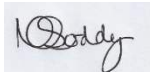
- Ongoing Observations: Key Persons are responsible for collecting regular observations of their key children's learning and development. These are recorded using Tapestry, our online Learning Journal, and should include a balance of spontaneous moments and planned activities.
- Parent Chats: Key Persons will conduct 10-minute Parent Chats three times per year (autumn, spring, and summer terms). These informal meetings are an opportunity to share progress, celebrate achievements, and discuss any concerns or next steps.
- Summative Assessment (End-of-Year Report): In the summer term, Key Workers will collate all evidence and insights into a Summative Assessment Report. This provides a rounded picture of the child's development across all areas of the EYFS and supports transition either to school or the next setting.
- Learning and Development Tracker: Each Room will have a Key Child Learning and Development Tracker, updated by Room Leaders and the Manager following supervision. This working document serves as a tool for continuous assessment and includes:

- Key developmental skills and milestones
- Individual next steps
- Suggested games, activities, and resources

The Tracker also acts as a handover document for the child's Buddy Key Person and for future Key Persons should there be any staff changes. It ensures continuity, supports early identification of any emerging needs, and helps keep each child's development on track.

Review and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually and in line with any updates to the EYFS statutory framework or Ofsted requirements.

Signed:  (Manager, St Mark's Preschool)

Date: 1/7/25