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**Beaumont Community Preschool & Childcare Groups**

**4.1 The role of the key person and settling-in**

**Policy statement**

At Beaumont Community Preschool & Childcare Groups 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 the setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting.

We aim to make the 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.

They key person role is set out in the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Each setting must assign 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**

* For currently attending children during the COVID-19 outbreak it is likely that some children will not have their usual key person. Where this is the case, the principles of the key person role are followed as closely as possible.
* For new children we aim to allocate a key person before the child starts.
* Where there is the requirement for any temporary staff must be trained to administer medication and medical procedures proficiently and safely for individual children. They must also adhere to the guidelines and procedures on caring for the individual needs of children with SEND, as detailed in their Health Care Plans. Where necessary a Prioritised Place Risk Assessmentshould be used to identify any risks that may be incurred due to a change in key person for such children.
* Where possible the key person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into our setting. Explaining our policies and procedures to parents with particular focus on policies such as safeguarding and our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
* The key person offers unconditional regard for the child and is non-judgemental.
* Working with the parents 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.
* The key person is responsible for 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.
* 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 setting, and as the basis for establishing relationships with other adults and children.

***Settling-in***

***During the current Covid-19 pandemic there will be temporary changes to settling in of children.***

* ***Currently parents will be unable to stay with their child during settling in periods, if children become too distressed the parents will be contacted to collect their child and settling in will be reviewed.***
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* Before a child starts to attend the setting, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and policies), information days and/or evenings and individual meetings with parents.
* We provide opportunities for the child and his/her parents to visit the setting for settling in.
* We aim to 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.
* 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 have an expectation 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 is able to 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 parent to be on hand to re-settle 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 begin to create their child's record of learning and development.
* The settling in times will occur one week prior to your child officially starting within the setting, and are as follows for children starting in the preschool room, these are flexible dependant on situation, age, stage and ability and the child’s individual needs, we strongly encourage parents to settle in their child, this helps to give your child the best start within a strange environment by making them feel safe and secure.

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|  | **Visit 1** | **Visit 2** | **Visit 3** | **Visit 4** | **Visit 5** |
| **Morning Children** | **10.00am until 11.30am****Parent to stay for the whole visit** | **10am-10:30am parent stays****10:30am-11am****without parent** | **9.15am-9:30am****with parent****9:30-11am without parent** | **9:15am-12:15pm Without Parent** | **9:15am-12:15pm Without Parent** |
| **Afternoon Children** | **1pm until 2.30pm****Parent to stay for the whole visit** | **12.45pm-1.15pm****parent stays****1.15pm-1.45pm****without parent** | **12.15pm-12:30pm****with parent****12:30-2pm without parent** | **12:15pm-3:15pm****Without Parent** | **12:15pm-3:15pm****Without Parent** |

* If your child is due to start at the setting after a school holiday, these settling in visits will occur during the first week of term. If you feel that your child needs more settling in sessions, this will be discussed and reviewed. We will phone the parents/carers if your child is not settling, and parents/carers may also phone the setting to see how their child is doing.
* For the Under 3s, settling in times will be discussed with the parent according to individual needs of the child. Frequent short visits with parents/carers will help your child to feel safe and secure, and to form a bond with the child’s key person before being left for short periods prior to their start date.
* If your child is to move from the Under 3’s room into the main pre-school room, parents’ presence is not essential, but they are welcome to visit with their child and view the preschool facilities offered.

***The progress check at age two***

* The key person carries out the progress check at age two in accordance with any local procedures that are in place and referring to the guidance *A Know How Guide:* *The EYFS progress check at age two.*
* If your child is new to the setting the progress check will not be carried out until your child has settled in and the child’s keyperson is aware of where their learning development is at through observation and assessment.
* The progress check aims to review the child’s development and ensures that parents have a clear picture of their child’s development.
* Within the progress check, the key person will note areas where the child is progressing well and identify areas where progress is less than expected.
* The progress check will describe the actions that will be taken by the setting to address any developmental concerns (including working with other professionals where appropriate) as agreed with the parent(s).
* The key person will plan activities to meet the child’s needs within the setting and will support parents to understand the child’s needs in order to enhance their development at home.

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| This policy was adopted at a meeting of | **Beaumont Community Preschool & Childcare Groups** | (name of provider) |
| Held on |  | (date) |
| Date to be reviewed |  | (date) |
| Signed on behalf of the management committee |  |
| Name of signatory |  |
| Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner) |  |