



Key Person

Policy Links

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (DfE, September 2025)
- Development Matters (DfE)
- Birth to Five Matters
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- SEND Code of Practice

Policy Statement

At Clare House Nursery we recognise that warm, responsive and consistent relationships are at the heart of children's emotional wellbeing, learning and development.

Every child will be assigned a named Key Person who will build a secure, trusting relationship with both the child and their family. The Key Person plays a central role in helping children feel safe, valued and confident within the nursery, enabling them to develop secure attachments, become independent learners and thrive.

We understand that children learn best when they feel emotionally secure and have trusted adults who know them well. Our Key Person approach supports every child to develop a strong sense of belonging and ensures that their individual needs are understood and met.

Aims

Our Key Person system aims to:

- Build secure, nurturing relationships with every child.
- Help children settle happily into nursery.
- Promote children's emotional wellbeing.
- Support children's learning and development.
- Develop strong partnerships with parents and carers.
- Ensure every child feels safe, valued and included.
- Support smooth transitions throughout the nursery.
- Promote consistency of care.

Allocation of a Key Person

Every child will be allocated a Key Person before or during their settling-in period.

When allocating a Key Person we will consider:

- Staff working patterns.
- The child's attendance pattern.
- The child's individual needs.
- Existing relationships where appropriate.

- Staff experience and knowledge.

Continuity of Care

- As a small, friendly nursery, we do not operate a formal Buddy Key Person system. Instead, we pride ourselves on the strong relationships that all members of our team build with every child. Our practitioners work closely together across each room, ensuring that every child is well known as an individual, including their interests, routines, care needs and stage of development.
- This team approach means that, should a child's Key Person be absent due to annual leave, illness or training, the child continues to be cared for by familiar adults with whom they have already developed secure, trusting relationships. We believe this provides children with consistency, emotional security and reassurance, helping them to feel safe, confident and settled even in the absence of their named Key Person.
- Our staff share information regularly through daily handovers, room meetings, observations and planning, ensuring continuity of care and maintaining the high standard of support that every child and family receives.
- This collaborative approach reflects our nurturing ethos and ensures that every child experiences a true sense of belonging within the Clare House Nursery family.

The Role of the Key Person

The Key Person is responsible for:

- Developing a warm, secure and trusting relationship with their key children.
- Helping children become familiar with the nursery environment.
- Supporting children during settling-in sessions.
- Helping children feel emotionally secure and confident.
- Responding sensitively to children's feelings, interests and behaviour.
- Supporting children's emotional regulation.
- Building positive relationships with parents and carers.
- Sharing information regularly with families.
- Completing observations and assessments.
- Planning experiences based on children's interests and individual needs.
- Monitoring children's progress.
- Identifying any concerns regarding development or wellbeing.
- Working with the SENCO and outside agencies where appropriate.
- Supporting transitions both within the nursery and on to school.
- Ensuring children's individual care routines are understood and followed.
- Acting as the main point of contact for parents.

Building Secure Attachments

At Clare House Nursery, all Room Supervisors have undertaken specialist training in neuroscience and early brain development. This provides them with a deeper understanding of how children's brains develop during the crucial early years and how experiences, relationships and interactions shape lifelong learning, behaviour and emotional wellbeing. This knowledge enables our Room Supervisors to confidently lead and support their staff teams, ensuring that practice is informed by current research and that every child receives responsive, nurturing and developmentally appropriate care. By understanding the unique way in which each child's brain develops, our leaders are able to guide

practitioners in planning meaningful experiences, promoting secure attachments, supporting emotional regulation and meeting each child's individual needs, enabling every child to thrive.

Our practitioners:

- Respond warmly and consistently to children.
- Follow children's individual routines.
- Offer comfort and reassurance when needed.
- Respect children's individual personalities.
- Support children through times of change.
- Build trusting relationships through responsive interactions.
- Help children develop confidence and resilience.

Children who develop secure attachments are more likely to:

- Feel safe and confident.
- Explore their environment.
- Develop independence.
- Build positive relationships.
- Regulate their emotions.
- Develop resilience.
- Engage in learning.
- Communicate confidently.

Working in Partnership with Parents

Parents are children's first and most important educators.

The Key Person will:

- Welcome families into the nursery.
- Share information during settling-in sessions.
- Maintain regular communication.
- Celebrate children's achievements.
- Share learning experiences.
- Encourage parents to contribute to children's learning.
- Work collaboratively to support children's individual needs.
- Respect family values, beliefs and cultures.

Settling In

The Key Person will support each child through a carefully planned settling-in process by:

- Getting to know the child and family.
- Introduction to all appropriate staff.
- Learning about home routines.
- Providing reassurance.
- Supporting gradual separation where appropriate.
- Adapting the settling process to meet individual needs.

Settling-in arrangements will remain flexible, recognising that every child settles at their own pace.

Observation, Assessment and Planning

In line with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2026**, the Key Person plays an important role in ensuring that every child's care, learning, development and wellbeing are understood and supported.

The Key Person is responsible for:

- Building a warm, secure and responsive relationship with each key child, helping them to feel safe, settled and confident within the nursery.
- Knowing each child as an individual, including their interests, strengths, routines, family circumstances, culture, communication and individual needs.
- Supporting children's emotional wellbeing, recognising when a child needs reassurance, connection, co-regulation or additional support.
- Understanding each child's learning and development through everyday interactions, play, conversations and experiences.
- Observing children purposefully, using professional knowledge rather than creating unnecessary paperwork.
- Monitoring children's progress across the EYFS areas of learning and development and recognising what is typical for the child's age and stage.
- Identifying what the child needs to learn or experience next and using this knowledge to support their individual curriculum.
- Planning meaningful experiences and interactions based on what the child already knows, can do and is interested in.
- Using everyday interactions to extend learning, including modelling language, introducing new vocabulary, asking appropriate questions and giving children time to think and respond.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers, recognising them as the people who know their child best and sharing information about learning, development, routines and wellbeing.
- Encouraging parents to contribute their knowledge of what their child is learning, experiencing and achieving at home.
- Supporting children's communication and language, recognising that strong language development underpins learning across the curriculum.
- Promoting independence, confidence and positive relationships, while providing appropriate support and encouragement.
- Recognising emerging concerns early and discussing these promptly with the Room Supervisor, SENDCo and/or DSL where appropriate.
- Contributing to the progress check at age two and other developmental reviews, ensuring that parents are involved and children's strengths and areas requiring support are clearly identified.
- Supporting children with SEND or additional needs, working with parents, the SENDCo and other professionals to ensure appropriate support is put in place.
- Being alert to safeguarding concerns, recording and reporting concerns in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding procedures.
- Supporting continuity of care, including sharing relevant information with colleagues so that children's individual needs are consistently met.
- Supporting transitions, including starting nursery, moving between rooms and preparing for school or another setting.
- Celebrating each child's individuality and achievements, ensuring that every child feels valued, included and capable.

Inclusion

The Key Person ensures that every child feels included and valued regardless of their:

- Age
- Ability
- Culture
- Religion
- Language
- Gender
- Family background
- Additional needs

Where additional support is required, the Key Person will work closely with the nursery SENCO, parents and external professionals.

Transitions

The Key Person plays an important role in supporting transitions by:

- Preparing children emotionally and helping them feel safe, secure and confident about change.
- Talking positively about the new room, Key Person, setting or school and responding sensitively to children's individual feelings and needs.
- Introducing children gradually to new environments, routines, adults and expectations, allowing time for relationships to develop.
- Sharing relevant information with the child's new Key Person, room team, school or receiving setting to support continuity of care and learning.
- Working closely with families, listening to their views and keeping them informed throughout the transition process.
- Ensuring that children's individual routines, interests, strengths, communication needs, SEND requirements and any relevant care or safeguarding information are appropriately shared.
- Supporting transitions to school through visits, information sharing and collaborative working with families, schools and other professionals.
- Recognising that transition is a shared responsibility. At every transition, whether room to room within the nursery or from nursery to school or another setting, all relevant Key Persons and staff will be part of the supporting process.
- Where a child moves between rooms, the current and new Key Person will work together, alongside the room teams and family, to provide a gradual and consistent transition.
- Continuing to monitor the child's wellbeing, involvement and emotional security following a transition and providing additional support where required.

Our Transition Principle

Our aim is for every child to experience transitions that are carefully planned, individual to them and supported by the adults who know them best, reflecting the EYFS principle that children learn and develop best through secure relationships and effective partnership with parents and other professionals.

Confidentiality

Information shared with the Key Person is treated confidentially and managed in accordance with the nursery's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies.

Information will only be shared where necessary to safeguard children or support their welfare.

Monitoring

The Manager will monitor the effectiveness of the Key Person system through:

- Regular supervision meetings and staff appraisals.
- Quality assurance observations of practice and interactions.
- Monitoring children's emotional wellbeing, involvement and sense of security.
- Reviewing the quality of relationships between children and their Key Person.
- Ensuring practitioners have a strong knowledge and understanding of their individual key children.
- Reviewing learning and development records to ensure assessment is purposeful and supports children's individual development.
- Seeking and responding to parent and carer feedback.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of partnership working with families.
- Reviewing how effectively children are supported during transitions, including between nursery rooms and on to school or another setting.
- Ensuring the early identification of SEND or additional needs and appropriate support is put in place.
- Monitoring safeguarding knowledge and practice.
- Ensuring continuity and consistency of care when a child's usual Key Person is absent.
- Considering relevant Ofsted findings and recommendations, statutory requirements and recognised good practice.
- Using ongoing reflection and evaluation to identify areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of the Key Person system will ultimately be demonstrated through children who feel safe, secure and understood, families who feel valued and involved, and practitioners who confidently understand and respond to each child's individual needs.

