



9.0 Early Years Practice policy

Aim

Children are safe, happy, and eager to participate and to learn.

Objectives

- Young children need to form a secure attachment to their key person when they join the setting to feel safe, happy and eager to participate and learn. It is their *entitlement* to be settled comfortably into a new environment.
- Introductions and induction of the parent is carried out before children start.
- There is a procedure for when children do not settle and for prolonged absences.
- *Prime times* of the day make the very best of routine opportunities to promote 'tuning-in' to the child emotionally and create opportunities for learning. We actively promote British values, inclusion, equality of opportunity and the valuing of diversity.

We operate a positive behaviour management approach. Behaviour management procedures cover how staff should respond to all aspects of behaviour, including children who exhibit challenging behaviour towards other children. These procedures build on our curriculum outcomes that all children will:

- be independent and self-motivated
 - understand their own emotions and the emotions of others
 - have a sense of community
 - show a can-do attitude
 - thrive to achieve and
 - become effective learners.
- We provide a wide range of interesting child-chosen/initiated and adult-initiated activities which:
 - give children opportunities to use all their senses

- help children of different ages and stages to play together
- help children be the directors of their own learning
- help children develop an inquiring and questioning attitude to the world around them

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children from two to five years need to form attachments with adults who care for them, primarily to a key person, but with other adults and children too. In this way children feel part of a community of learners; they can contribute to that community and receive from it. The three-stage model referred to in procedure 9.4 is applicable, but with some differences in the procedures for children moving up into the next group and for older children.

Waiting list

Our provision is accessible to children and families from all sections of the local and wider community. We aim to ensure that all sections of the community receive accessible information and that our admissions procedures are fair, clear, and open to all parents who apply for places. The availability of a place at the setting considers staff/child ratios, the age of the child and registration requirements.

- We endeavour to operate in an inclusive manner which enables all children and families to access our services.
- We also have regard for the needs of parents who are:
 - looking to take up work, remain in work or extend their hours of work
 - looking to commence training or education
- We work in partnership with the local authority and other agencies to ensure that our provision is accessible to all sections of the community.
- Services are widely advertised and information is accessible to all sections of the community.
- Where the number of children wanting places exceeds the number of places available a waiting list is operated using clear criteria for allocation of places.
- The waiting list is arranged in birth order and in addition may consider the following:
 - the age of the child with priority being given to children eligible for the free entitlement
 - length of time on the waiting list
 - the vicinity of the home to the setting
 - siblings already attending the setting

- the capacity of the setting to meet the individual needs of the child
- Where it is financially viable to do so, a place is kept vacant for an emergency admission.
- The setting and its practices are welcoming and make it clear that fathers, mothers, other relations and carers and childminders are all welcome.
- The setting and its practices operate in a way that encourages positive regard for and understanding of difference and ability, whether gender, family structure, class, background, religion, ethnicity or competence in spoken English.
- The needs and individual circumstances of children joining the setting are monitored on the registration form, to ensure that no accidental or unintentional discrimination is taking place and that reasonable adjustments are made as required.
- Places are provided in accordance with our terms and conditions issued to every parent when the child takes up their place. Failure to comply may result in the provision of a place being withdrawn.

Funded places – free entitlement

All 3- and 4-year-olds in England are entitled to 15 hours funded childcare and early education each week for 38 weeks of the year. Some eligible two-year-olds are also entitled. Funded places are offered in accordance with national and local codes of practice and adherence to the relevant Provider Agreement with Surrey County Council.

Admissions

- Once an early education place has been offered the relevant paperwork is completed by the setting manager or deputy before the child starts and filed on the child's personal file. Forms completed include:
 - Privacy notice - explains what personal data we collect, why we collect it, how we use it, the control parent/carers have over their personal data and the procedures we have in place to protect it.
 - Our terms and conditions - govern the basis by which we provide childcare.
 - Registration form - contains personal information about the child and family that must be completed in full prior to the child commencing.

Children with SEND

- The manager must seek to determine an accurate assessment of a child's needs at registration. If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core budget, then an application for SEN inclusion

funding must be made immediately.

- Children with identified SEND must be offered a place when one becomes available as with any other child. However, the start date for children with more complex SEND will be determined by the preparations made to ensure the child's safety, well-being and accessibility in the setting. If a child's needs determine that adjustments need to be made, the manager must outline a realistic timeframe for completion, detailing the nature of adjustments e.g. risk assessment, staff training, health care plan and all other adjustments required. The child's safety at all times is paramount.
- At the time of registration, the manager must check to see if a child's family is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, if so, the manager must ask for evidence to enable them to claim the Disability Access Fund directly from the local authority. If the family is eligible but not in receipt of the allowance, the setting manager will support the family in their application. More information can be found at www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/how-to-claim.
- Preparation for admitting a child with SEND must be made in a reasonable amount of time and any delay in the child starting is scrutinized by the setting manager to avoid discrimination and negative impact on the child and family. During a preparation period the family and relevant agencies and the local authority must be regularly updated on the progress of the preparations.

Safeguarding/child protection

If information is provided by the parents that a child who is starting at the setting is currently, or has had involvement with social care, the designated person will contact the agency to seek further clarification.

Parents are advised on how to access the setting's policies and procedures.

Further guidance

Early Years Entitlements: September 2024 early education and childcare entitlements expansion – Local authority system guidance September 2024 early education and childcare entitlements expansion

The Role of the Keyperson

'Each child must be assigned a key person' (EYFS 2025)

The keyperson role

- A keyperson builds an on-going relationship with the child and his/her parents and is committed to that child's well-being while in the setting.
- Every child that attends is allocated a keyperson before they begin settling in - it is not the responsibility of the child to choose their own keyperson.
- The keyperson conducts the progress check at age two for their key children.

- The role is fully explained to parents on induction and the name of the child's keyperson is recorded on the child's registration form.
- The keyperson is central to settling a child into the setting. The setting manager and keyperson explain the need for a settling in process and agree a plan with the parents.
- The number of children for each keyperson takes into account the individual needs of children and the capacity of the keyperson to manage their cohort; it is also influenced by part-time places and part time staff. The setting manager should aim for consistency i.e. matching part-time staff to part-time children; full-time children should not be divided between key persons during the week.
- Photographs of keypersons and their key children are displayed clearly.

Parents

- Keypersons are the first point of contact for parents with regard to matters concerning their child and any concerns parents may have are addressed with the keyperson in the first instance.
- Keypersons support parents in their role as the child's first and most enduring educators.
- The keyperson is responsible for the child's developmental records, completing the progress check at age two, and for sharing information about progress with the child's parents.

Learning and development

- The keyperson helps to ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. This is achieved through regular observation and assessment of children, using information gathered about their achievements, interests and learning styles to plan for each individual child's learning and development.
- If a child's progress in any of the prime areas gives cause for concern, the keyperson must discuss this with the manager or SENCO and the child's parents.

Safeguarding children

- The keyperson has a responsibility towards their key children to report any concern about their development, welfare or child protection matter to the manager and to follow the procedures in this respect.
- Regular supervision with the setting manager provides further opportunities to discuss the progress and welfare of key children.

Settling in and transitions

To feel securely settled and ready to learn, children need to form attachments with the adults who care for them, primarily a keyperson, but others too. It is the entitlement of all children to be settled comfortably into a new environment.

We follow a three-stage model of settling in based on three key needs:

1. *Proximity* - young children feel safest when a familiar adult, such as a parent, is present when they are getting used to a new career and new surroundings. In this way they can become confident in engaging with those experiences independently later on.
2. *Secure base* – Because the initial need for proximity of the parent has been met, young children gradually begin to feel secure with a keyperson in a new surrounding so that they are able to participate independently for small periods of time.
3. *Dependency* – young children are able to separate from parents' and main carers when they have formed a secure attachment to their keyperson who knows and understands them best and on whom they can depend for their needs to be met.

Settling-in for children with SEND

- If a child has been identified as having SEND then the keyperson/SENCO and parents will need to identify and address potential barriers to settling in e.g. timings of medication and invasive procedures, specific routines and levels of support.

Settling in

- We complete home visits where the keyperson will play with the child alongside the parent.
- We offer 'stay and play' sessions for new children, where the parent and keyperson can play with the child.
-
- The keyperson / manager always greets the parent and child. (Shift patterns may need to be adjusted when settling in.)
- We follow the parent's thoughts on how the child will settle and the individual's needs of each child. A settling in plan is made together.
- When the parent leaves, they always say goodbye and say they are coming back. Parents should never slip away without the child noticing; this leads to greater distress.
- A settling in review takes place for the key person and parent to discuss how well the child.
- If a child has English as an additional language (EAL) it may be useful to make a list of key words in the child's home language with the parent; sometimes it is useful to write the word as you would pronounce it.

- The three-stage approach involving *Proximity*, *Secure Base* and *Dependency/Independence* is applied.

Establishing children's starting points

When children start at the setting they arrive at different levels of learning and development. In order to help them to settle and make rapid progress it is important that they are provided with care and learning opportunities that are suited to their needs, interests and abilities. This means establishing and understanding their starting points and whether there are any obstacles to their learning, so that teaching can be tailored to the 'unique child'.

- The aim of establishing a child's starting points is to ensure that the most appropriate care and learning is provided from the outset.
- Starting points are established by gathering information from the first contact with the child's parents at home visits and during the 'settling in' period. Staff do not 'wait and see' how the child is settling before they begin to gather information.
- The keyperson is responsible for establishing their key children's starting points by gathering information in the following ways:
 - observation of the child during settling in visits
 - discussion with the child's parents
 - building on information that has been gathered during registration by referring to the registration form

The information gathered is recorded within two weeks of the child's official start date.

- The keyperson must make a 'best fit' judgment about the age band the child is working in, referring to Birth to Five Matters.

If the initial assessment raises any concerns that extra support may be required procedure Identification, assessment and support for children with SEND is followed.

Arrivals and departures

Arrivals

- The manager/deputy manager/senior practitioner always greet the children.

- If a child who is expected fails to arrive, this is recorded on the child's personal file and the setting manager is immediately notified so that they can contact the child's parents to find out why the child is absent.
- The manager/deputy manager/senior practitioner greets the parents and takes time to hear information the parents need to share. Any consent forms are signed.
- Always ensure that the parents say goodbye to their child and say when they are coming back.
- The manager/deputy manager will hand over any information shared by the parents to the key person.
- A register is completed of the children. If a child arrives late, the time is noted on the register.

Injuries noted on arrival

- If a child is noted to have visible injuries when they arrive at the setting, an existing injury form will be completed and parents are asked to sign.

Departures

- Children are prepared for home.
- Only persons aged over 16 years should normally collect children.
- Practitioners verbally exchange information with parents.
- The key person should pass general information to the manager/deputy or write a note to pass on to the parents. Confidential information should be shared with the setting manager to pass on.
- The register is updated when a child leaves, stating the time when the child leaves.

Snack-times and mealtimes

Children are supervised during snack and mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff.

Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared from approx. 9.30am to 11.00am.
- Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of drink to encourage children to pour their own drinks.
- Children wash their hands before snack-time.
- Children are provided semi-skimmed milk or water as a drink.
- Fruit or raw vegetables are offered and cut up to minimise choking hazards.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.

- Crackers and cheese are also offered.
- Children arrive as they want refreshment and leave when they have had enough. Children are not made to leave their play if they do not want to have a snack.
- Staff join in conversation and encourage children's independence by allowing them to pour drinks, put unwanted food in the bin and wash up.
- Practitioners are aware of children's allergies and review the list daily.

Mealtimes

- Children help staff set tables.
- Children wash their hands, collect their lunch boxes and sit down.
- Children are encouraged to eat their savoury items first such as sandwich, pasta etc.
- Staff have their lunch with children and role-model healthy eating and best practice at all times.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried.
- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults.

Intimate care and nappy changing

Nappy changing times are key times in the day for being close and promoting security as well as for communication, exploration and learning. Children's privacy is maintained during nappy changing and toileting, whilst balanced with safeguarding considerations.

Nappy Changing

- Young children are usually changed within sight or hearing of other staff whilst maintaining their dignity and privacy at all times.
- Keypersons undertake changing children in their key groups wherever possible; back up members of staff change them if the key person is absent.
- Members of staff put on aprons before changing starts and the area is prepared, gloves are always worn for soiled nappies.
- All members of staff are familiar with the hygiene procedures and carry these out when changing nappies.
- Keypersons ensure that nappy changing is relaxed and a happy time for babies.
- Keypersons never turn their back on a child or leave them unattended on a changing mat.

- Keypersons are gentle when changing; they allow time for communicating with the child, talking, and responding to the child.
- Keypersons avoid pulling faces and making negative comment about the nappy contents.
- Keypersons do not make inappropriate comments about the child's genitals, nor attempt to pull back a boy's foreskin to clean unless there is a genuine need to do so for hygiene purposes.
- If children refuse to lie down for nappy change, they can be changed whilst standing up, providing it is still possible to clean them effectively.

Toileting and Intimate Care

- Young children are encouraged to take an interest in using the toilet; they may just want to sit on it and talk to a friend who is also using the toilet.
- They are encouraged to wash their hands and have soap and paper towels to hand.
- Wipes or cotton wool and water are used to clean the child.
- Older children use the toilet when needed and are encouraged to be independent.
- Members of staffs can help wipe older children's bottoms, who have used the toilet, if needed and/or the child has asked for help.
- Parents are encouraged to provide enough changes of clothes for 'accidents when children are potty training.
- Spare clothes are kept by the setting, and are clean, in good condition and are usually in a range of appropriate sizes.

Nappy changing is always done in an appropriate/designated area. Children are not changed in play areas.

Nappy changing and Intimate Care records.

- The keyperson/practitioner record when they changed the child and whether the nappy was wet or soiled.
- Very soft, watery stools are signs of diarrhoea; strict hygiene needs to be carried out in cleaning the changing area to prevent spread of infection. The parent should be called to inform them, and that if any further symptoms occur they may be required to collect their child.
- If a child has a sore bottom nappy cream may be used if consent has been given on the registration forms.
- A record is made when a keyperson/practitioner wipes a child after toileting.
- A record is made when a keyperson/practitioner changes a child's clothes and the reason why they have been changed.

Sleeping Children

- If children fall asleep in-situ it may be necessary to move or wake them to make sure they are comfortable.
- Sleeping children are regularly checked at least every ten minutes and are within sight and/or hearing of staff

Progress check at age two

- A template for completing the two-year-old progress check is provided.
- The keyperson must be the person completing the two-year-old progress check.
- If the child is aged between 24 and 26 months, then the keyperson completes the two-year-old progress check during the time the child is between 24 and 26 months.
- If the child is between 27 and 35 months, then the keyperson completes the two-year-old progress check within six weeks of the child starting at our setting.
- Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress at a mutually convenient time in person.
- We seek to engage both parents and make allowance for parents who do not live with their child to be involved.

Completing the progress check at age two

- On-going observational assessment informs the progress check and must be referred to.
- Children's contributions are included in the report. Staff must be 'tuned in' to the ways in which very young children, or those with speech or other developmental delay or disability, communicate.
- Where any concerns about a child's learning and development are raised these are discussed with the parents, the SENCo and the setting manager.
- If concerns arise about a child's welfare, they must be addressed through safeguarding procedures.
- The keyperson must be clear about the aims of the progress check as follows:

- to review a child's development in the three prime areas of the EYFS
- to ensure that parents have a clear picture of their child's development
- to enable practitioners to understand the child's needs and, with support from practitioners, enhance development at home
- note areas where a child is progressing well and identify any areas where progress is less than expected
- describe actions the provider intends to take to address any developmental concerns (working with other professionals as appropriate)

Transition to school

We recognise that moving on to school is a major transition in a child's life involving separation from familiar adults and children. They need preparation if they are to approach transition to school with confidence and an awareness of what to expect.

Partnership with schools

- Details of the school that a child will be attending are recorded.
- Every effort is made to forge and maintain strong links with all schools that children may attend. The setting manager will approach schools in order to open lines of communication where these have not previously existed.
- If possible, details of the school's transition or settling in procedures are kept by the setting and are referred to so that members of staff are familiar with them and can develop a consistent approach to transition with teachers, parents and children.
- Teachers are welcomed into the setting and sufficient time is made for them to spend both with the child, and with the key person, to discuss and share information that will support the child's transition to school.
- A child's EYFS profile tracker and transition form is forwarded to the school along with other information that will aid transition and settling in.
- Any action plans relating to a child's additional needs are also shared, where this is in place.
- Other formal documentation such as safeguarding information is prepared in line with our Transfer of records procedure.

Partnership with parents

- Key persons discuss transition to school with parents and set aside time to discuss learning and development.
- Key persons will discuss with parents how they are preparing their child for school and will share information about how the setting is working in partnership with the school to aid transition.
- Key persons will make clear to parents the information that will be shared with the school, for example, information regarding child protection and work that has taken place to ensure the child's welfare.

Increasing familiarity for children

- There will be opportunities for children to become familiar with Shawfield staff and school premises due to use of the school hall and transition visits.
- Familiarisation of other schools will be through videos, photographs or other information about the school that can be shown within the setting. Staff may borrow resources from the schools and will use these with the children.

Preparing children for leaving

- Children and parents form bonds with adults and children in the setting and will need preparation for separating from the relationships they have formed.
- We mark children leaving for school with a special celebration/party.
- Parents are not be discouraged from bringing the child for the occasional brief visit, after they have left, as separations often take time to complete.

This policy was updated on 23rd July 2025 by Susannah Townley (Manager).

This policy is due to be reviewed the 23rd July 2025.