

Key Person Policy

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Our Values

At Young Friends, relationships come first. We believe in **real emotional attachment**, not key person by name only. Each child deserves someone who knows them deeply, tunes in with care, and walks alongside their journey with consistency and trust.

- **Sustainability** – Emotional stability helps children thrive and settle with confidence
 - **Respect** – Every child has the right to be deeply known and valued
 - **Authenticity** – Our approach is not tokenistic — it is lived and visible daily
 - **Supportive Leadership** – Key people are mentored, supervised and empowered
 - **Community** – Families, staff and children are all partners in secure relationships
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Policy Statement

This policy outlines our commitment to meaningful key person relationships. The key person ensures that every child feels emotionally safe, seen, heard and understood from the moment they join our community.

Key person practice at Young Friends is about:

- Emotional connection
 - Personal knowledge
 - Consistent presence
 - Secure transition
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Key Person Structure at Young Friends

We follow a simple, relationship-driven structure:

- **All children begin in the Hedgehogs Room (0–2 years)**
 - Each child is assigned a **key person** before they start
 - When they move to **Foxes (2–5 years)**, they **stay with the same key person** unless circumstances or wellbeing suggest a change
 - This enables **continuity of care and trust** throughout the early years journey
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What the Key Person Does

- Forms a warm, trusting bond with the child
 - Provides calm, consistent support at transitions and throughout the day
 - Helps the child feel safe in new experiences
 - Observes play, interests, and wellbeing to understand the whole child
 - Plans personalised learning based on strengths and needs
 - Maintains daily communication with families via Family and face-to-face
 - Supports emotional regulation, especially during moments of separation or conflict
 - Prepares and leads the **Progress Check at Age Two**
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Settling In and Transitions

- The key person will meet with parents before starting to gather information
- The child will have a **flexible settling plan** based on their pace
- They will build trust gradually, with short visits, familiar objects, and parent comfort •

When the child moves from Hedgehogs to Foxes:

- Their key person helps them to settle and provides all the information required to their new key person
- Families are supported with clear information and photos
- Families are introduced to the new key person
- The previous and new key people together sensitively bridge the new space and relationships
- This is the only key person change. We do not reassign key people at other times unless there is a specific need.

Buddies and Support

- Each child also has a **named buddy**
- Buddies help cover when the key person is away or unavailable
- Buddies are not a substitute but provide extra relational safety and continuity

Consistency and Change

We aim to **minimise changes** to key people wherever possible.

If change is needed:

- It will be handled **gradually and with full communication**
- Families and children will be involved in transition discussions
- The new key person will be introduced and slowly integrated
- The original key person will support handover and maintain sensitivity

Families as Partners

We believe parents and families are the child's **first and foremost educator**. We:

- Share daily updates, celebrations and concerns
- Work together to support transitions and challenges
- Respect family knowledge and culture
- Provide a space to raise concerns openly and respectfully

Training and Support for Staff

Key persons are trained in **attachment theory, emotional development and child-led planning**

- Regular supervision supports reflective practice and mental health
- Staff are encouraged to share ideas, concerns and successes
- Key people are celebrated as the heart of our pedagogy

Linked Policies

- Settling In and Transitions
- Listening to Children
- Learning and Development
- Behaviour and Relationships
- Progress Check at Age Two
- Partnership with Families

Authorisation

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