**44: Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Person**

Willows are committed to delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) which became a legal requirement in September 2008 for all early years’ childcare providers. EYFS covers children from birth to the end of their reception year.

EYFS is based upon four principles:

**A Unique Child:** We recognise that every child is a competent learner who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured. Children develop in individual ways, at varying rates. Children’s attitudes and dispositions to learning are influenced by feedback from others; we use praise and encouragement to motivate children.

**Positive Relationships:** We recognise that children learn to be strong and independent from secure relationships. We aim to develop caring, respectful, professional relationships with the children and their families.

**Enabling Environments:** We recognise that the environment plays a key role in supporting and extending the children’s development. We observe the children and assess their interests and development, before planning challenging but achievable activities and experiences to extend their learning.

**Learning and Development**: We recognise that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We value all areas of learning and development equally and understand that they are inter- connected.

The designated EYFS coordinator at Willows is Sara Pinch, who is responsible for:

Identifying EYFS children upon joining a setting and informing the other staff

* Determining the principal EYFS provider for each child
* Assign a key worker for each EYFS child
* Ensuring that staff receive relevant EYFS training
* Gaining parental consent for information sharing, where necessary
* Implementing a communication book, for parents, the Club and the principal EYFS provider
* Agreeing information sharing policies with the principal EYFS provider
* Meeting regularly with the principal EYFS provider to agree next steps for development

All staff will:

* Undertake observations and assessments in order to plan for each child’s individual needs.
* Plan and provide opportunities which are appropriate to each child’s stage of development.

Willows will provide a balance of adult led and child initiated activities. We will always follow play principles, allowing children to choose how they occupy their time, and never forces them to participate in a given activity.

**Key Person**

Willows are committed to ensuring that the care and learning of every child is tailored to meet their individual needs. As a safeguarding and welfare requirement, the key person is only required for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The key person will be the main point of contact with the child and parents/carers and will record their key children’s progress.

**Aims of the key person system for parents/carers**

* To enable the parent/carer to feel confident that they have made the right decision in placing their child in one of our settings.
* To help the parent/carer know who to ask about their child, and enable them to receive regular and detailed information about their child’s progress – reducing, in some extent, their feelings of having ‘lost’ and ‘missed out’ on being with their child

**Aims for the child**

* To offer the child a consistent and settled relationship with the key person so that he/she can sense (at the moment of ‘handing over’) that it is approved by the parent/carer – aiming to reduce any inexplicable feelings of abandonment, in being left in the hands of others.
* In receiving care by their key person whenever possible, the child is assured of regular contact with her/him just as she/he is from the parent/carer at home. The aim is to reduce the number of different handlings (touch, smell, voice) by different people, and so limit the number of people a child has to get used to during the day.

**Aims for the key person**

* To create meaningful relationships with a consistent group of children
* To reduce stress levels caused by relating equally to large numbers of children at once
* To enable sensitive observation and developmental record keeping of a small number of children over a period of time
* To encourage good relationships with parents/carers of key children

The key person will be assigned before a parent/carer’s initial visit, and will spend time with a new child and their parent/carer during introductory visits, so that they will get to know each other in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere. The key person will find out children’s routines, feeding, sleeping patterns, likes and dislikes and explain settling in policies and procedures. They will ‘settle in’ their new child, in partnership with their parents/carers, and review their progress with parents/carers at regular intervals.

Staff are encouraged to ‘pair’ as key person with another member of staff at their setting, so that each half of the pair can act as back-up to cover key staff sickness and holidays with each other’s key children, and to act as mutual support.

Every effort is made in a consistent way by the proprietor and/or manager to:

* Support the key person through regular supervision as part of the personal/professional development of each worker
* Ensure that ‘cover’ and support staff, students and others, are fully aware of the role and responsibilities of the key person toward her/his children
* Ease the transfer of child (and parent) from one group to another, when necessary, with mutual understanding and preparation

**Learning Journals**

Every child at Little Ladybirds Pre-school will have a special book, these are known as their Learning Journals. In their journals we will put photos of your child taking part in activities during the session, we will also make observations of your child and these will be written up in their book. We will put any special work that they do in the books and the book will go home regularly for you to add pictures of your child taking part in family life. You will also be invited to write in the book about anything you feel you want to share with us about your child.

The Learning Journals will be kept in a safe and secure place at all times, if they are taken off site by the key person or the parent/carer of the child, they will be signed out. As with all sensitive documentation, Learning Journals will never be left unattended in cars, public transport or public places.

**The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage items 3.26 states that:**

*‘Each child must be assigned a key person.’*

*‘Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of the key person, and explain their role, when a child starts attending a setting. The key person must help ensure that every child’s learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs. The key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child’s development at home. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.’*

This policy has been written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the EYFS welfare requirement: *Organisation.*