

Key Person Policy

At Grantham Farm Montessori School, we recognise the importance of the role of the key person as required by the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021): *Each child must be assigned a key person (also a safeguarding and welfare requirement - see paragraph 3.27). 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. (EYFS 2021 1.16)*

'Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs (in accordance with paragraph 1.16), to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents' (EYFS 2021, Section 3.27).

We employ our own unique way of fulfilling this principle in line with Montessori philosophy. With our family-style grouping, where all of the children are in 'free flow' choosing their friends, teachers and activities, we support the positive aspects of this principle by allotting a group of key children to each key person. When a child first starts at the school, we aim to support each child by ensuring the same member(s) of staff works with the child and parents to aid their integration and to ensure a sense of trust and security is in place. A key person is allocated to each child, depending upon two core factors: the child's days of attendance (to coincide with those of the key person where possible), and to whom the child most naturally gravitates and begins to show a developing bond.

Research shows that having just one carer responsible for them is not as necessary for older children (DCSF Research Report RR444 ('Birth to Three Matters', 2003):

As children get older [once they turn three], sustained individual attention is more difficult but becomes less necessary for most children. (Effective Practice: Key Person, p7)

Our older children, nevertheless, have an assigned key worker. However, as a Montessori school, the teachers interact with all of the children on a daily basis and not just with their allotted group. Teachers focus specifically on their key children for observation, assessment and planning purposes so that every child has a member of staff responsible for monitoring their individual needs, well-being, learning and development.

Observations, planning and assessment are recorded on iPads and are processed through the school’s digital system, *My Montessori Child* (MMC). Pastoral care information is recorded and shared between teachers using an annotated pastoral care recording system. This information is available to the whole team and ensures that each child has the best possible opportunities and is comprehensively known to all. In this way, the child is granted the principle right of ‘individual freedom’, whilst receiving consistent, secure care, emotional support and education.

Parents and carers are encouraged to take an active part in their child’s learning through the MMC parent portal. They are also encouraged to guide their child’s learning at home; this is communicated through face-to-face discussions, parent/teacher meetings and the MMC at home page.

During the first weeks of attendance, parents are met by their child’s key worker when they collect their child, so that a reassuring dialogue can take place. Parents also receive a ‘What I did today’ form with a brief description of their child’s daily activities.

This policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the school	Date for review
<i>August 2021</i>	<i>E. Wetherley</i>	<i>August 2022</i>