



The Role of the Key Person and Settling-In in the EYFS

Please also refer to '**Policy for Parental Involvement in the EYFS**'

Policy Statement:

Cranford School's philosophy is very clear: we aim to develop happy, inquisitive individuals with a strong sense of self-belief, motivation, and kindness. In order to achieve this in the EYFS, we work with a Key Person system, enabling children to develop secure attachments, helping to promote independence, and encouraging children to access all seven areas of the 'Early Years Framework.' Emotional development, stability and well-being form an essential foundation for health, happiness, and the ability to learn.

We believe that children, particularly our youngest pupils, settle best when they have a Key Person to relate to, who knows them and their parents or carers well, and who can meet their individual needs. Research shows that a Key Person approach benefits the child, the parents, the staff, and the setting by providing secure relationships in which children thrive, parents have confidence, staff are committed, and the setting is a happy and dedicated place to attend or in which to work.

The EYFS at Cranford aims to ensure that children feel safe, stimulated, and happy at the Pre-School and in Reception and feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also aim to ensure that parents have confidence in their children's well-being and their role as active partners with staff. Above all, our Pre-School and Reception classes at Cranford are welcoming and friendly environments, enabling children to settle quickly and easily because consideration has been given to the individual needs and circumstances of all children and their families.

Staff encourage children to develop a sense of autonomy and independence and we enable children to have the self-confidence and the vocabulary to resist inappropriate approaches. We help children to establish and sustain satisfying relationships within their families, with peers and with other adults. Staff work in partnership with parents and carers to build their understanding of, and commitment to, the principles of safeguarding all children. The Key Person also supports each child's transition into Reception and then on to Key Stage 1 at Cranford School or other chosen schools.

This policy has regard to the '*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*' *Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Key Person* (3.34 '*Each child must be assigned a Key Person. Their role is to help to ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs...*').

This document is available in the Cranford School Policies section of the Whole School Staff Teams area on Microsoft Teams for all staff to read. It is also available to parents and interested parties on the School website. This policy is reviewed annually, and when events or legislation requires, by the Headmaster, Head of EYFS and Governors. The next review date is May 2024.

Key Personnel:

The Key Person or Head of EYFS should be contacted should you have any questions or concerns regarding this document.

EYFS Key Themes and Commitments:

This policy corresponds with the following 'EYFS Key Themes and Commitments':

- A Unique Child (1.2 Inclusive Practice, 1.3 Keeping Safe, 1.4 Health and Well-being)
- Positive Relationships (2.2 Parents as Partners, 2.4 Key Person)
- Enabling Environments (3.2 Supporting Every Child, 3.3 The Learning Environment)
- Learning and Development (4.4 Personal, Social and Emotional Development)

Procedures:

The Key Person:

The procedures set out a model for developing a Key Person approach which promotes effective and positive relationships for children in the EYFS:

- Each child starting in the EYFS is allocated a Key Person prior to the child's start date;
- The Key Person is responsible for the induction of the family and for settling the child into the setting;
- It is the responsibility of the Key Person to offer unconditional regard for children in their care and to be non-judgmental;
- The Key Person works in partnership with the parent and carers to plan and deliver a personalised plan for the well-being, care and learning and development of the child;
- The Key Person acts as the key contact for the parents and has links, where appropriate, with other carers involved with the child, such as a childminder or nanny. He or she co-ordinates the sharing of appropriate information about the child's development with those carers in accordance with the wishes of the parents;
- The Key Person is responsible for creating and maintaining developmental records, such as the child's profile and for sharing information on a regular basis with the child's parents to keep the records up-dated, thus reflecting the full picture of the child at the setting and at home;
- The Key Person encourages positive relationships between children in his/her Family Group, spending time with them as a group on a regular basis.
- Every child has a Key Person who is then supported by another member of staff who will act as 'back-up' in the Key Person's absence.
- Cranford promotes the role of the Key Person as the child's primary carer in the EYFS and as the basis for establishing relationships with other staff and children.

Settling-In:

- Before a child starts to attend the Pre-School or Reception, we use a variety of ways to provide his/her parents with information. These include written information (including our prospectus and EYFS Handbook), Open Mornings and Show Rounds.

- In Pre-School, Parents are given an 'All About Me' form so that the Key Person is aware of the child's interests, special people etc.
- Throughout the year, children are invited to transition sessions with their parents to meet staff and get to know the setting.
- We organise transition events for pupils moving into Reception from the Pre-School and those pupils who are new to Cranford School. The last transition event prior to starting in EYFS, children are invited to a move up session with a parent. The aim is to familiarise themselves with the environment and meet the staff and children they will be joining. When staff and parents are confident that the child is ready, and upon receipt of a completed medical form, acceptance form and deposit, parents will be encouraged to leave their child/ren to experience a short period of separation;
- The Key Person for each child is allocated prior to the child starting at the setting. The Key Person welcomes and looks after the child and his/her parents at the first session and during the settling-in process. The process of settling-in is explained to all parents and, should it be necessary, a decision is made regarding the best way to assist the child to settle into the environment;
- We understand that younger children and those who have not previously spent time away from home can take longer to settle in. Those who have had a period of absence, for example, due to ill health or a holiday, may also need their parent/s to be on hand to re-settle them into the Pre-School /Reception setting;
- Staff judge a child to be settled when they have formed a relationship with their Key Person; for example, the child looks for their Key Person when he/she arrives each day, goes to them for comfort and appears pleased to be with them. A settled child is also familiar with the location of key facilities and activities in the setting and is pleased to see other children and participate in activities;
- Parents are encouraged to start the session at Pre-School or Reception by helping their child/ren find their peg, unpacking their bags and greeting their Key Person. Whilst parents are welcome to come into the rooms, staff believe it is not beneficial to stay for too long and encourage parents to say a clear and confident goodbye. Most children settle quickly after their parents have gone. All staff are able to settle children with ease and will contact parents in the event that a child remains upset.
- Staff recognise that some children will settle more readily than others. However, some children who appear to settle rapidly might not be ready to be left by their parents. In this instance, we work with parents to ensure that the child is supported in their separation and can stay happily without them.
- We also hold Parent Information Evenings, Reception taster sessions and New Pupils'/Move-up Morning to assist the settling of new pupils and those moving into Reception from the Pre-School.

Reviewed: May 2025

Head of EYFS and Pre-Prep

Review due: August 2026

Head of EYFS and Pre-Prep