

## St. James Key Person Policy

### **Principle:**

We believe that children learn to be independent from a base of loving, secure and trusting relationships with parents and/or a key person. We want children to feel safe, stimulated and happy in a respectful setting and to feel secure and comfortable with staff. We also want parents to have confidence in both their children's well-being and their role as active partners with the setting. We have a high adult:child ratio in our reception class allowing us to work as a team to support all children.

All members of staff see themselves as:

- someone to build relationship with the child and parents
- someone who helps the child become familiar with the provision
- someone who meets children's individual needs and care needs (e.g. dressing, toileting etc)
- someone who responds sensitively to children's feelings, ideas and behaviour
- the person who acts as a point of contact with parents.

In a smaller reception class, like at St. James the children do not have to cope with many different adults, we have a class teacher, one teaching assistant for 4 days and another teaching assistant on the fifth day. Therefore at certain points of the day, like lunchtime: the children in our EYFS are able to approach either the Class teacher or Class Teaching Assistant for extra help if they need it.

### **Settling new children into our Reception class:**

- In the Summer term children from the Pre-school adjoined are invited in each week for a shared story time with the current Reception class. Children from other settings are offered several dates from which they may choose to attend the class setting during the summer term.
- If the children are coming over from St. James' Pre-school staff from each setting liaise so that adults know about the children before they start transition.
- During the first week at school the children stay until lunchtime. The afternoons are planned parent teacher interviews, giving parents a chance to discuss their child. This also gives the adults around the child a chance to begin to get to know each other and to build a respectful relationship.
- The children need to feel secure when the time comes to say goodbye and stay in the reception class without the parent or carer. We ensure the children feel secure by positive encouragement and behaviour management. Parents are asked not to enter the classroom (unless absolutely necessary) so that the children have a clear boundary between school and home.
- Special planning for the first 3 days is based on settling in to a new environment.

- We have clear care routines for getting changed, bag management etc. These are delivered by both the class teacher and teaching assistant at the points of need. Any children needing extra support are offered it in a kind, personal manner.
- If children are distressed they may choose an adult for comfort. We also have a choice of a reflection corner or book corner where the children may have some quiet time if needed.
- Both the teacher and teaching assistant build trusting relationships with all our children and have an agreed approach so that if children's behaviour is challenging either can manage difficult incidents. Both adults in our setting get to know the children well and support them with interacting with others, in this way their confidence and well-being is supported.

### **Managing Feelings:**

Providing vocabulary for feelings supports children to become aware of their emotions. Both adults are aware of this and work with the children at the point of need to deal with and verbalise their emotions.

All adults will spend time with any child, sitting at the children's level and being involved in their play, this shows that we are available to them to come to as they need and, especially for new children, by drawing their attention to interesting things around them and smiling and nodding as they explore, providing a secure base. A termly timetable is set up and on display in the classroom to identify the children being observed in this way each week.

Being consistent in our reception class is important to us. As there are only 2 key members of staff we try to work as closely as possible allowing there to be good opportunities for children to experience consistent interactions and expectations.

### **Buddy System:**

Boundaries can often be overlooked in an organisation during play and lunchtime sessions, when suddenly children are expected to engage in very different routine activities with a different group of staff. Such changes in familiarity and routine can raise the stress levels of all children. The Reception Class children are therefore "buddied up" with a year 6 child. These pairs are allowed time during the week to share their learning and take part in a collective worship as is part of our school ethos. This allows the children to form strong friendships and gives a chance for the year 6's to be good role models.

### **Family Customs:**

By learning about and understanding each family's customs, the classroom staff talk to the children to extend their knowledge of the individual child and to provide effective care and learning opportunities. This means sharing information about children's:

- emotional needs, for example, any fears or worries the child has
- physical needs, for example, the degree to which the child can dress and use the toilet independently

- language and cultural heritage: with children with a different home life and culture to our own we learn to use important words in the child's home language and try to find out about significant events in the child's cultural and religious life.

Any issues are discussed at the initial parent teacher interviews and further discussed throughout the year via class communication methods. The staff also meets up and offers time at the end of the school day to discuss any ad-hoc small concerns or queries. Larger or more complex concerns/issues are dealt with by the class teacher meeting with the children's parents as necessary and regularly, sharing observations and information and gathering ideas for future plans.

**Emotional Well-being:**

Class adults are sensitive and responsive to all children and take pride in knowing all the children in the class. Weekly Forest School sessions, led by the class teacher, also enhance these relationships.