LITTLE ACORNS MONTESSORI
Key Person, Settling-In & Transitions Policy

Ascot | Bracknell | Crowthorne

Document Control

Version	Date	Review Date	Author / Role
1.0	June 2026	June 2027	Jonathan Duffy - Director

Role	Name	Campus
Designated Officer / Nominated Individual	Jonathan Duffy	All Campuses
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Manager	Elaine Eastham	Ascot Campus
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Manager	Agata Payne	Bracknell Campus
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Manager	Emma Gray	Crowthorne Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and Deputy Manager	Jessica McGrath/Katy Cooley	Ascot Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and Deputy Manager	Joanne Broughton	Bracknell Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) and Deputy Manager	Martine Loveridge	Crowthorne Campus
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Kira King	Crowthorne Campus (in the absence of Emma/Martine)
Manager on Duty	As rostered	All Campuses
SENCO	Agata Payne	Bracknell Campus
SENCO	Elaine Eastham	Ascot Campus
SENCO	Martine Loverdige/Emma Gray	Crowthorne Campus

1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to providing a warm, inclusive, and nurturing environment in which every child feels safe, valued, and understood. We believe that secure attachments, sensitive transitions, and consistent, responsive care are the foundations upon which children's learning and wellbeing are built.

This policy sets out our approach to the Key Person system, the settling-in process, and the management of transitions — both within the nursery and between the nursery and other settings or schools. It applies to all three Little Acorns Montessori sites: Ascot, Bracknell, and Crowthorne.

We recognise that every child and family is unique. Our procedures are designed to be flexible and responsive, respecting individual circumstances whilst meeting statutory requirements at all times.

2. Statutory Framework & Compliance

This policy fulfils, and must be read in conjunction with, the following statutory and regulatory requirements:

EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (DfE, effective 1 September 2025)

- Section 3, Paragraph 3.34 — Every child must be assigned a key person. Providers must inform parents and/or carers of the name of their child's key person and explain the role.
- Section 3, Paragraph 3.34 — The key person must help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child, and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers.
- Section 1, Paragraph 1.19 — A key person helps children become familiar with the setting and supports their learning and development.
- Section 3 — Safeguarding and welfare requirements, including record-keeping, information sharing, and the promotion of children's health, welfare, and wellbeing.
- Annex C — Safeguarding Training Criteria (DfE, effective 1 September 2025).

Related Legislation and Statutory Guidance

- Childcare Act 2006 (Section 40) — places a duty on providers to meet EYFS learning and development and welfare requirements.
- Early Years Foundation Stage (Welfare Requirements) Regulations 2012.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government, 2026).
- Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (DfE, 2024).
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Nursery Manager

- Must ensure that every child on roll is assigned a named key person prior to, or on the day of, their first session.
- Must ensure key person assignments are recorded on the nursery management system (Famly) and are accessible to all relevant staff.
- Must ensure key person allocations are kept under review, particularly following staff changes, and that transitions between key persons are managed sensitively.
- Must ensure all staff understand the Key Person approach, shared key working, and the settling-in and transition procedures through induction, training, and regular supervision.
- Must ensure parents and carers are informed in writing of the name of their child's assigned key person before, or on the day of, their first settling-in visit, in line with EYFS Paragraph 3.34.
- Should review this policy annually, or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

3.2 The Key Person

- Must build a genuine, warm, and consistent relationship with their key children and families, ensuring each child feels secure and confident in the setting.
- Must gather and record relevant information about each key child's family, background, culture, routines, needs, and preferences — both at the pre-admission stage and on an ongoing basis — and share this appropriately on Famly.
- Must communicate regularly with parents and/or carers, sharing observations, developmental progress, and any concerns in a timely and sensitive manner via Famly and face-to-face conversation.
- Must complete and share the statutory two-year progress check with parents and/or carers for each key child between the ages of 24 and 36 months. The check should be completed in good time to allow parents to share it at their child's health visitor two-year review.
- Must identify any emerging welfare concerns and report these to the DSL in line with the nursery's Safeguarding Policy.
- Must plan and lead the settling-in process for their key children, following the graduated approach set out in Section 4 of this policy.
- Must support their key children through all internal and external transitions, following the procedures in Section 5 of this policy.
- Must encourage positive relationships between children and all staff across the setting, valuing the time children spend together during group activities with all practitioners.
- Must seek to understand and respond to the views and feelings of each key child during settling-in and transitions, using age-appropriate and child-led methods to ensure the child's voice is considered in planning.

3.3 All Practitioners — Shared Key Working

Little Acorns Montessori operates a model of shared key working. This means that whilst each child has a named key person who holds primary responsibility for their care, learning, and family communication, all practitioners share responsibility for knowing and responding to all children in the setting.

- All staff should feel confident to interact with, support, and respond to children who are not their own key children.
- All staff should feel confident to pass relevant observations, information, or concerns about any child to that child's key person promptly and accurately.
- If a key person is absent, another named member of staff must be available to provide continuity of care and to communicate with that child's family.
- At the Crowthorne site, children participate in group time activities with all practitioners and not necessarily their key worker. The key person will encourage positive relationships between children and all staff, valuing these shared experiences as an important part of building confidence and a sense of belonging across the whole setting.
- All staff must handle information about children and families with confidentiality, sharing only what is necessary and appropriate in line with UK GDPR and the nursery's Information Sharing Policy.

3.4 Parents and Carers

- Are asked to share relevant information about their child's needs, routines, family context, and background prior to their child starting, and to update this information as circumstances change.
- Are encouraged to engage actively in the settling-in process and to raise any concerns with their child's key person promptly.
- Will be informed of the name of their child's key person and what the role involves, in line with EYFS Paragraph 3.34.
- Will be asked for consent before home visit arrangements are made, and before information about their child is shared with external agencies or receiving settings.

4. Settling-In Procedure

Little Acorns Montessori recognises that the transition into nursery is one of the most significant steps in a young child's life. Our settling-in process is graduated, child-centred, and responsive to each individual child and family.

4.1 Pre-Admission: Information Gathering

- On confirmation of a place, the manager or key person will contact the family to introduce themselves and begin gathering information.
- Parents and carers must complete an All About Me form and registration documentation prior to the child's first session. This includes information about the child's daily routine, dietary needs, medical requirements, likes, dislikes, family composition, culture, and language.
- A minimum of two emergency contact details must be collected for each child at the pre-admission stage and reviewed annually. Settings should aim to hold more than two contacts where possible. These must be kept up to date on Famly and used in line with the nursery's Attendance Policy.

- Any existing professional involvement (e.g. health visitor, speech and language therapist, social worker) must be noted. Any information indicating a safeguarding concern must be referred to the DSL immediately.
- Parents and carers must be made aware of the nursery's Attendance Policy, which sets out how unexplained or prolonged absences will be followed up, in line with EYFS 2025 requirements. Any unexplained absence that cannot be accounted for following contact attempts with all emergency contacts must be escalated to the DSL and, where appropriate, to children's services or the police.

4.2 Pre-Admission: Home Visits

Where possible, home visits will be offered to parents and carers as an opportunity for the key person to meet the child in their own familiar environment, to build an initial relationship with the family, and to gather valuable context before the child's first day at nursery.

Little Acorns Montessori recognises that home visits are an aspiration for all settings; however, they may not always be possible in every circumstance. Where a home visit cannot be arranged, an alternative pre-admission visit or telephone conversation should be offered. All visits must be conducted by two members of staff and recorded on Famly.

4.3 Induction Visits

- Prior to the child's first full session, a programme of induction visits will be planned in partnership with the family. The number and duration of visits will be tailored to the individual child.
- Visit 1: Parent/carer and child visit together. The key person shows the family around the setting, introduces key routines, and begins relationship-building with the child.
- Visit 2: Parent/carer and child visit together for a longer session. The key person spends focused time with the child. The parent/carer may begin to move into the background.
- Visit 3 (and beyond, if required): The child remains without their parent/carer for a short period, with the key person or a trusted member of staff nearby. Duration is increased gradually as the child demonstrates confidence.
- The pace of this process must be led by the child. No child should be rushed through the settling-in process. Where a child requires additional visits or a more gradual approach, this must be accommodated and communicated to the family.

4.4 During the Settling-In Period

- The key person must be present and available to the child during settling-in sessions wherever possible.
- The key person should gather observations of the child's interests, learning style, and wellbeing to inform planning at the earliest opportunity.
- Staff must monitor children's emotional wellbeing and report any concerns — including signs of distress, poor attachment, or unusual behaviour — to the room leader and DSL as appropriate.
- Regular, informal feedback must be given to parents and carers at each collection and via Famly, celebrating positive steps and addressing any concerns sensitively.
- A comfort object from home may be brought in to support the child's sense of security.

4.5 After the Settling-In Period

- The key person must complete and share a baseline assessment of the child's developmental stage as soon as practicable after the settling-in period.
- A formal key person meeting with parents/carers should be offered within the first six weeks, in addition to ongoing daily communication on Famly.
- If a child is not settling satisfactorily after a reasonable period, the manager, key person, and family must meet to review and agree a revised approach. External support (e.g. from the Local Authority SENCO or health visitor) may be sought with parental consent.

5. Transitions Procedure

Transitions — whether between rooms within the nursery, between key persons, or to an external setting such as a school — require careful planning and sensitive management. Little Acorns Montessori is committed to ensuring that all transitions are positive experiences that promote continuity, security, and confidence for children and their families.

5.1 Internal Room Transitions (Moving Between Rooms)

- Room transitions are planned well in advance, with the manager, key person, and receiving room lead involved in the process from the outset.
- Parents and carers must be informed of any planned room move at least two weeks before the transition, and given the opportunity to ask questions and meet the new room team.
- A graduated transition programme should be offered, including visits to the new room with a familiar adult before the full move takes place.
- A comprehensive written handover record must be completed by the existing key person and shared with the receiving key person. This must include the child's developmental stage, routines, needs, key relationships, and any welfare or safeguarding information.
- Information must also be updated on Famly to ensure all relevant staff have access.
- The existing key person should, where possible, accompany the child to the new room during initial transition visits to aid the child's security.

5.2 Key Person Changes

- A change of key person should be avoided wherever possible. Where it is unavoidable (e.g. due to staff resignation or absence), it must be managed with sensitivity and in the best interests of the child.
- The manager must assign a new key person as promptly as possible and ensure a proper handover takes place, including a written record of the child's needs, progress, and relationships.
- Parents and carers must be informed of the change and introduced to the new key person at the earliest opportunity.
- The transition must be recorded on Famly.

5.3 Transitions to School or Another Setting

- Little Acorns Montessori is committed to working in partnership with receiving schools and settings to ensure smooth and positive transitions for all children.
- The key person, in consultation with the manager, must begin transition planning in good time before a child is due to leave the setting.
- The key person must prepare a written transition summary for each child, covering their developmental progress, individual strengths, interests, needs, and any relevant welfare information.
- With written parental consent, the transition summary and any relevant records must be shared with the receiving school or setting in line with UK GDPR and the nursery's Information Sharing Policy.
- Where children attend more than one setting, the key person must liaise with practitioners at the other setting to promote consistency and share relevant information, in line with EYFS requirements.
- Parents and carers must be supported to understand what information is being shared and with whom, and must provide written consent prior to any sharing.
- Children with SEND must have transition arrangements co-ordinated with the SENCO, relevant specialists, and parents/carers, with additional planning and support provided as required.

5.4 Transitions from Other Settings into Little Acorns Montessori

- Where a child joins Little Acorns Montessori from another early years setting, the key person must seek and review any transition information or records provided by the sending setting, with parental consent.
- The settling-in process outlined in Section 4 must still be followed, regardless of the child's prior experience of nursery.

6. Recording and Information Sharing

Little Acorns Montessori uses Famly as its primary nursery management and communication platform. All records relating to key person allocations, settling-in, transitions, and family information must be maintained on Famly in accordance with the procedures below.

6.1 What Must Be Recorded

- The name of each child's assigned key person, updated promptly whenever there is a change.
- All information gathered from families at the pre-admission stage, including All About Me forms, registration documentation, and information about the child's family, carers, and household circumstances.
- Records of home visit arrangements (where made), induction visits, and settling-in sessions, including dates, attendees, and any significant observations.
- All observations and assessments of children's learning, development, and wellbeing, shared with parents/carers via Famly on a regular basis.

- Written handover records for all internal room transitions and key person changes.
- Transition summaries prepared for children moving to school or another setting.
- Records of all communications with parents/carers regarding settling-in and transitions.
- Records of any concerns about a child's welfare or wellbeing, reported to the DSL in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

6.2 Information Sharing

- Information about a child and their family must be shared only on a need-to-know basis, in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and the DfE Information Sharing: Advice for Practitioners (2024).
- Appropriate information about the child's family and carers will be shared on Famly with relevant staff to ensure the child's needs are consistently met across the setting.
- Written parental consent must be obtained before sharing records with any external agency or receiving setting, except where there is a safeguarding concern — in which case the DSL must be consulted and the legal obligation to share information without consent may apply.
- Staff must never discuss confidential information about children or families in public areas or outside the setting.

6.3 Record Retention

- All records relating to individual children must be retained in accordance with the nursery's Records Retention Policy and applicable data protection legislation.
- Records relating to safeguarding concerns must be retained for a minimum of 25 years in accordance with statutory guidance.

7. Safeguarding Considerations

The settling-in, key person, and transition processes each present important opportunities to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns. In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Little Acorns Montessori recognises the particular vulnerability of babies and very young children, including those whose needs may be communicated non-verbally. Key persons must be especially attentive to changes in the presentation, behaviour, or physical condition of babies and toddlers, and must report any concerns to the DSL without delay. Where a family is already known to local children's services or is subject to a Family Help Plan, the key person must ensure that the nursery's role within the multi-agency team is clearly understood and that information is shared promptly and appropriately.

- The key person must remain alert to signs of abuse, neglect, or harm during settling-in visits, induction sessions, and day-to-day interactions with their key children.
- Any safeguarding concern — including concerns arising from information shared by a child, a parent, or a professional — must be reported to the DSL immediately.
- Information gathered during home visits, pre-admission meetings, or transitions that gives rise to a concern about a child's safety or welfare must be documented and referred to the DSL on the same day.
- This policy must be read alongside the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which sets out the full procedures for identifying, recording, and reporting concerns.

8. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to ensuring that every child and family receives equitable access to the Key Person approach, the settling-in process, and transition support, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, gender, disability, family structure, or socio-economic background.

- All settling-in and transition plans must be adapted to meet the individual needs of each child, including children with SEND, children who are looked after, and children for whom English is an additional language.
- Communication with families must be accessible and inclusive. Where translation, interpretation, or alternative communication methods are needed, these must be arranged by the manager.
- In line with Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, all staff are expected to actively identify, name, and challenge racism and discrimination — not merely be aware of it. Leaders must create an inclusive organisational culture that is visible in day-to-day practice, in family communications, in staff training, and in how the setting engages with external agencies. Staff must recognise how racism, trauma, and previous negative experiences with services may affect how families engage with the setting, and must adapt their approach accordingly.

9. Staff Training and Development

- All new staff must receive training on the Key Person approach, settling-in procedures, and transition planning as part of their induction.
- All staff should access ongoing professional development in attachment theory, trauma-informed practice, and transitions to support the quality of the key person relationship.
- The manager should identify and address training needs through regular supervision and performance review.
- Training records must be maintained on the secure online storage area or the staff personnel file.
- All safeguarding training must meet the minimum criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS Statutory Framework (2025), and the manager must document not only that training has taken place but how it is delivered and how staff are supported to apply their knowledge in practice.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and all Deputy DSLs must complete updated, formal safeguarding training at least every two years. Annual refresher updates are strongly recommended and should be recorded online storage area or the staff personnel file.
- All staff must be aware of the nursery's Whistleblowing Policy, including internal reporting routes and external channels such as the NSPCC whistleblowing advice line, Ofsted, and the LADO. This must be covered at induction and revisited annually.

For more detail please refer to our Staff Training and Qualifications policy.

10. Policy Review

This policy must be reviewed annually by the Nursery Manager, or sooner in the following circumstances:

- A change to the EYFS Statutory Framework or associated statutory guidance.
- A significant change to nursery staffing or structure.
- Following any incident, complaint, or Ofsted inspection that identifies a gap or concern in this area.
- A new edition of Working Together to Safeguard Children or any other statutory safeguarding guidance is published.

All staff must be informed of any updates to this policy. The current version must be available to all staff, parents, and carers on request and via the nursery's document management system.

Role	Name	Date
Owner/Director	Jonathan Duffy	June 2026