



Cocoon Key Person Policy

1. Purpose

At Cocoon, we recognise that secure, trusting relationships are fundamental to children's emotional well-being, development, learning and sense of belonging.

Our Key Person system is designed and implemented in accordance with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework**. We ensure that every child has consistent adults who know them well, understand their individual needs and interests, support their emotional well-being and work in partnership with their family.

Cocoon has developed a whole-team approach to the Key Person system. While every child is allocated a **Primary Key Person** and a **Secondary Key Person**, we intentionally support children to develop warm, secure and trusting relationships with all members of the Cocoon team.

This approach reflects our Montessori ethos and our belief that children benefit from feeling safe, confident and connected with the whole community rather than being dependent on one individual adult.

2. Cocoon's Key Person Approach

All children are allocated:

- a **Primary Key Person**; and
- a **Secondary Key Person**.

The Primary and Secondary Key Persons have specific responsibilities for the child and their family, including settling-in, communication, observations and developmental records.

At the same time, all members of the Cocoon team have an important role in caring for, supporting and building relationships with every child.

Our approach means that a child should feel able to seek comfort, reassurance, support and connection from any familiar member of the team. The Primary and Secondary Key Persons provide additional consistency and oversight, while the wider team provides a secure network of familiar adults around the child.

3. Secure and Responsive Relationships

We understand that young children need responsive and emotionally available adults who know them well and respond sensitively to their individual needs.

All members of staff are expected to:

- build warm, respectful and responsive relationships with children;
- listen to and respond to children's communication, including non-verbal communication;
- recognise children's individual personalities, interests, needs and emotions;
- provide reassurance and emotional support when children need it;
- encourage children's independence and confidence;
- support children to express their feelings and emotions safely;
- respect each child's individuality and developing sense of identity; and
- provide consistent care and clear boundaries within Cocoon's ethos and Montessori approach.

Our aim is for every child to feel safe, valued, understood and confident within the setting.

4. Primary Key Person

The Primary Key Person has specific responsibility for supporting the child and maintaining continuity between Cocoon and the child's family.

The Primary Key Person:

- leads the child's settling-in process;
- carries out the settling-in home visits in accordance with Cocoon's Settling-In Policy;
- is present during the child's setting visits alongside the Secondary Key Person;
- takes an active and caring role throughout the settling-in process;
- develops a detailed understanding of the child's individual needs, interests, routines and development;
- maintains regular communication with the child's family;
- contributes to and maintains the child's observations and journal records;
- supports the planning of experiences appropriate to the child's individual development and interests;
- works closely with the Secondary Key Person and wider team;
- shares relevant information with colleagues to support continuity of care; and
- supports the child's transitions within the setting.

The Primary Key Person is therefore an important point of consistency for the child and family, while not being the child's only source of emotional security or support.

5. Secondary Key Person

The Secondary Key Person provides an equally important layer of continuity and support.

The Secondary Key Person:

- is involved in the settling-in process alongside the Primary Key Person;
- is present during the child's setting visits;
- develops a strong and trusting relationship with the child;
- shares responsibility for the child's emotional well-being and care;
- maintains knowledge of the child's development, interests, routines and individual needs;
- communicates with the child's family as appropriate;
- contributes to observations and journal records;
- works closely with the Primary Key Person and wider team; and
- provides continuity of care when the Primary Key Person is unavailable.

The Secondary Key Person is not simply a replacement for the Primary Key Person. They are an active part of the child's support network and are familiar with the child and their family.

6. The Wider Cocoon Team

A central part of Cocoon's approach is that children develop relationships with **all members of the team**, including assistants.

Our staff rotate between the two areas of the setting, while remaining within the same overall environment. This gives children regular opportunities to interact with different members of staff and allows staff to develop a genuine understanding of the children they care for.

This is intentional and forms an important part of our approach to continuity of care.

By developing relationships with the whole team:

- children become familiar and comfortable with different adults;
- children are supported to develop confidence and independence;
- children have several trusted adults they can approach for support;
- staff develop a broader understanding of each child's individual needs;
- children are less reliant on one particular adult; and
- the impact of staff absence is reduced because children already have established relationships with other members of the team.

This whole-team approach complements the Primary and Secondary Key Person system and does not remove the specific responsibilities assigned to those Key Persons.

7. Settling-In

Cocoon's Key Person approach begins before a child's first regular session.

The Primary Key Person carries out the home visits in accordance with our Settling-In Policy. The Primary and Secondary Key Persons are present during the setting visits and both take an active role in supporting the child and family.

The settling-in process provides an opportunity for the child to become familiar with the adults, environment and routines of Cocoon in a gradual and supportive way.

The wider team also plays an important role during this period. Children are given opportunities to interact with different members of staff, helping them to build familiarity and confidence across the whole team from the beginning.

Where a child requires additional support during settling-in, the team will work with the family to consider the child's individual needs and agree appropriate next steps.

8. Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise parents and carers as key partners in supporting children's learning, development and well-being.

The Primary and Secondary Key Persons are responsible for maintaining communication with families and sharing relevant information about the child's experiences, development and well-being.

We encourage families to share information with us about their child, including changes in circumstances, interests, routines, experiences or anything that may affect their emotional well-being.

Communication should be respectful, open and supportive, with the child's best interests at the centre.

9. Continuity of Care and Staff Absence

We recognise that staff absence is an inevitable part of operating an early years setting. Our Key Person system is therefore designed to provide continuity even when a particular member of staff is unavailable.

Because children are supported to develop relationships with both Key Persons and the wider Cocoon team, they have familiar adults available to support them when their Primary or Secondary Key Person is absent.

Staff communicate relevant information about children's needs and routines to ensure that care remains consistent.

The Primary and Secondary Key Persons will continue to share responsibility for ensuring that relevant information is communicated to the wider team.

10. Transitions

Children's transitions are supported sensitively and in accordance with their individual development and needs.

Where a child moves between areas (Infant Community and Children's House) of the setting, the Primary and Secondary Key Persons work with the wider team to support continuity and ensure that relevant information about the child is shared.

As a Montessori setting, we recognise that children develop at different rates. Transitions are therefore considered in relation to the individual child rather than being based solely on age.

11. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to children and families is handled in accordance with Cocoon's confidentiality, safeguarding, data protection and information-sharing procedures.

Information is shared with relevant members of the team where this is necessary to support the child's safety, well-being, learning and development.

All staff have a responsibility to maintain professional confidentiality and to follow Cocoon's safeguarding and information-sharing procedures.

12. EYFS Compliance

Cocoon's Key Person system operates within the requirements of the **Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework**.

Our Primary and Secondary Key Person structure provides clear responsibility for each child while our whole-team approach supports the development of secure, responsive relationships across the setting.

We recognise the statutory importance of the Key Person approach and ensure that the relevant requirements are reflected in our practice, records and procedures.

Our Montessori philosophy and Cocoon's individual ethos inform **how we implement these requirements**, while the statutory EYFS framework remains the foundation for our practice.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to reflect:

- the EYFS statutory framework;
- current Cocoon practice;
- children's individual needs;
- feedback from families and staff; and
- our Montessori ethos and values.

Any necessary changes will be communicated to staff and families where appropriate.

Policy written by: Management

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This policy is due for review on the following date:	01/09/2027