

WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDHEHOGS NURSERY & SUNBEAMS CLUB



Attachment & Emotional Development Policy



Updated: July 2025
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Attachment and Emotional Development.

At Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery & Sunbeams Club (the school), we know that attachment and emotional development are crucial aspects of a baby/toddler's early years, particularly between the ages of 9 to 36 months. During this stage, babies begin to form strong bonds with their primary care givers, which provide them with a sense of safety, comfort, and trust. A secure attachment helps babies feel confident to explore their environment, knowing that a trusted adult is nearby for reassurance. Emotional development during this period includes expressing and recognising feelings, developing early empathy, and beginning to regulate emotions with adult support. Warm, responsive interactions and consistent routines play a key role in helping babies feel secure and supported as they grow.

The school understands that strong, secure attachments are essential for babies' emotional wellbeing and holistic development. In line with the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)*, this policy outlines how we support attachment and promote emotional development in our baby and toddler rooms for children aged 9 to 36 months.

Aims

- To provide a nurturing, safe, and emotionally responsive environment.
- To foster secure attachments between each child and a consistent key person.
- To support babies in developing confidence, resilience, and emotional regulation.
- To work in partnership with parents/carers to support each child's emotional needs.

Statutory Framework Context

This policy reflects the EYFS statutory guidance, specifically:

- Section 1.6: "Each child must be assigned a key person."
- Section 1.9: "Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests, and development of each child."
- Prime Area - Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED): Supporting children to develop a positive sense of self, form positive relationships, and manage their emotions.

The Role of the Key Person

- Each baby/toddler will be assigned a named key person responsible for their care, emotional wellbeing, and development.
- The key person builds a close, trusting relationship with the child and their family.
- The key person supports the child during transitions, such as settling in, moving rooms, or changes in routine.
- The key person observes and responds to each child's emotional cues, ensuring that the child feels safe, secure, and understood.

Settling-In and Transitions

- A gradual **settling-in process** is tailored to meet each baby/toddler's individual needs and attachment style.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to stay with their child during the initial visit and help establish a sense of trust.
- Transition plans are developed collaboratively with families when babies move from Hedgehogs to Squirrels, or Squirrels to Foxes rooms or if there is a change of key person.

Promoting Emotional Development

- Practitioners consistently offer warmth, comfort, and reassurance, particularly during moments of distress or separation.
- Staff model and support the development of emotional literacy, using age-appropriate language and facial expressions.
- Babies and toddlers are given time and space to express their emotions in a supportive environment.
- Positive behaviour is supported through gentle, responsive guidance, consistent routines, and calm, respectful interactions.

Environment and Daily Routines

- Both Hedgehogs and Squirrels rooms are designed to be calm, safe, and emotionally secure, with soft furnishings, familiar resources, and consistent staff.
- Routines are predictable and flexible, helping babies and toddlers feel in control and reducing anxiety.
- Emotional development is supported through music, books, sensory play, and responsive interaction.

Working with Families

- We recognise parents and carers as a child's first and most important attachment figures.
- Staff work closely with families to share information about each child's emotional wellbeing, routines, and milestones.
- We respect each family's values, culture, and approach to nurturing emotional development.

Supporting Individual Needs

- Practitioners respond sensitively to children with additional emotional or developmental needs.
- Where appropriate, we work with health visitors, SEND professionals, and other agencies to provide targeted support.
- All children are included, valued, and supported to thrive emotionally, socially, and developmentally.