

## NAIT Two Key Adults Guidance

### Context

Getting it right child planning processes provide a framework for the team around a child or young person (including parents, school staff and relevant partners) to create an individualised plan that takes account of their strengths and needs. To ensure that this plan is carried out and support is consistent, it is essential that key elements are then communicated to the right people.

Effective support requires continuous and coordinated communication between all involved in meeting a child or young person's needs. This is particularly important in the context of a return to school during COVID-19.

### Where?

The size and complexity of many secondary school settings mean that a learner is likely to come into contact with a large number of adults across the school week. It is therefore essential to have well planned, clear channels of communication to ensure that support is consistent and any concerns arising are quickly identified and addressed.

Two Key Adults may also be a valuable support in Early Learning and Childcare, Primary and Specialist settings.

### What?

Two Key Adults provides:

- A direct and consistent point of contact between parents/ carers and school staff
- A direct and consistent point of contact in school for the child or young person
- A support which takes account of the '24 Hour Child' – parents can alert the school to any changes at home and can share any information that might prevent minor confusions or concerns from escalating

### What is it not?

Every local authority and school context will have a range of structures and procedures in place to support all learners. Having Two Key Adults should complement these structures; it is intended that this role works within existing procedures.

Having Two Key Adults does not imply any additional rights or responsibilities and Key Adults are not expected to be available at all times.

It is recognised that a similar model may already exist in some schools and that making minor adjustments to these to meet the needs of autistic learners may be appropriate rather than adding an additional layer of communication.

It is not expected that Two Key Adults will manage or solve all of the issues that could arise for a learner. Rather they should be viewed as a first point of contact who might signpost to the appropriate person or ensure that relevant information reaches the right people.

As with all children and young people in a school, it is hoped that an autistic learner will build and develop positive relationships with all of their teachers and with a range of other adults working in the school. The Two Key Adults are not the only people that a child may wish to, or indeed should, talk with about their learning and wellbeing.

Parents/ carers retain the same rights as all parents within the school community and are equally able to communicate with other staff within the school, in the usual ways.

## Who?

It is recommended that all autistic learners, and those with related needs, have Two Key Adults who are:

- One member of the school leadership team and one teacher (e.g. class/ subject/ Support for Learning/ Pastoral Support, etc.)
- Consistent
- Known and trusted by the learner and parents

## Why?

Clear and consistent communication supports autistic learners by:

- Providing reassurance that help is there for them should they need it
- Ensuring that important information from school reaches parents/ carers
- Providing reassurance to parents/ carers about who they can contact and how
- Enabling parents/carers to pass any concerns to school at an early stage
- Providing anticipatory support so that it is there should needs arise and the team does not wait until something goes wrong
- Acknowledging the importance of supporting communication through adapting the social environment at school

Having two consistent identified link people for a learner is helpful because:

- It is likely that one will be available if the other is not
- They can support one other
- Lines of communication are clear to all
- Parents and learner can build trust and confidence
- An overview of the learner's needs can be built up over time
- Any new concerns arising can be addressed quickly and consistently
- Patterns can be identified and consistent responses provided (e.g. homework issues do not need to be discussed with each individual subject teacher)
- Support can draw on previously successful approaches
- Partner agencies have a clear point of contact
- Transition can be supported by changing only one Key Person at a time
- Creating predictable physical and social environments is key to providing high quality support for learners

## When?

It is recommended that Two Key Adults are in place at all times but this is particularly important during:

- Primary to secondary transition
- Transitioning between year groups
- Times of change in the child or young person's life (e.g. moving school, bereavement)
- Returning to school during COVID-19

## How?

Introducing Two Key Adults:

- Parents/ carers and young person should be invited to meet the Two Key Adults (ideally prior to any point of transition)
- Two Key adults and parents/ carers should agree mode and frequency of any planned communication and guidance of how to make contact outwith this, if required
- Written guidance about how and when contact can be made should be shared with parents/carers
- Guidance on communicating with Two Key Adults should be shared with the child or young person in a visual form appropriate to their level of communication (e.g. words, words with symbols)

On-going role:

- Two Key Adults should provide an on-going first point of contact with the school for parents/ carers
- Any emails between school and family should copy in both Key Adults
- Two Key Adults should plan to communicate with the child/ young person in a predictable way
- Any relevant information or concerns arising should be addressed through the Getting it right child planning process

Creating a planned and regular communication system:

- See NAIT Home-School Communication Guidance [www.thirdspace.scot/NAIT](http://www.thirdspace.scot/NAIT)