

Safe Sleep Policy

Safe Sleep Policy – Baby Room

Applies to: All staff, students, volunteers, and children in the Baby Room (birth to approximately 24 months)

Review Date: Annually or following updates to national guidance

Purpose

Our nursery is committed to providing a safe sleeping environment that reduces the risk of sleep-related incidents while supporting each child's individual sleep needs. We follow current safe sleep guidance and work in partnership with families to ensure babies sleep safely during their time in our care.

Policy Statement

The safety and wellbeing of every child is our highest priority. All babies will be placed to sleep in a safe environment that follows national guidance and reflects best practice in early years settings. Staff will receive regular safe sleep training and will consistently implement this policy.

Safe Sleep Procedures

1. Sleep Position

- Babies will always be placed **on their back** to sleep.
- Babies who can roll independently will be placed on their back initially but may remain in the position they move into naturally.
- Babies will never be placed to sleep on their side or stomach unless there is written medical advice from a healthcare professional.

2. Sleep Environment

Each baby will sleep in an individual cot or approved sleep space that:

- Meets current safety standards.
- Has a firm, flat mattress that fits securely.
- Uses a waterproof mattress cover where appropriate.
- Is kept clean and sanitised regularly.
- Is free from hazards.

The following are **not permitted** in the sleep space:

- Pillows
- Duvets
- Quilts
- Cot bumpers
- Cushions
- Loose blankets
- Soft toys
- Positioning devices
- Sleep nests unless medically prescribed

3. Bedding

Where bedding is used:

- Lightweight blankets will be tucked securely below shoulder height.
- Babies' feet will be positioned at the foot of the cot ("Feet to Foot").
- Sleep bags are encouraged if correctly fitted for the baby's weight and size.
- Sleep bags supplied by parents must be appropriate for room temperature.

4. Clothing

Staff will ensure babies are:

- Dressed appropriately for room temperature.
- Not overdressed.
- Not wearing hats while sleeping indoors.
- Checked regularly for signs of overheating.

The nursery aims to maintain sleeping areas between **16°C and 20°C**, where reasonably practicable.

5. Monitoring Sleeping Babies

Sleeping babies will be:

- Checked visually at least every **10 minutes**, or more frequently for younger babies or those with additional needs.
- Monitored for:
 - Breathing
 - Skin colour
 - Body temperature
 - Sleeping position
 - General wellbeing

Sleep checks will be documented, including:

- Time asleep
- Observation times
- Name/signature of staff member
- Wake time

Staff will never rely solely on electronic monitoring devices.

6. Responsive Sleep Practices

Staff will:

- Respond promptly to babies who wake or become distressed.
- Respect individual sleep routines agreed with parents.
- Encourage self-settling where appropriate without leaving babies distressed for prolonged periods.
- Never use sleep as a form of behaviour management.

7. Parent Partnership

Parents will provide information regarding:

- Home sleep routines
- Medical needs
- Sleep preferences
- Changes to routines

Parents will be informed of:

- Daily sleep times
- Any concerns during sleep
- Any significant changes observed

8. Health Considerations

Children with:

- Reflux
- Respiratory conditions
- Medical needs
- Prematurity
- Additional needs

will have an individual care plan developed with parents and healthcare professionals where required. Medical instructions must be provided in writing.

9. Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Complete safe sleep training during induction.
- Refresh training annually.
- Follow this policy consistently.
- Report any concerns immediately to management.
- Record sleep checks accurately.

Managers will audit sleep records regularly.

10. Risk Assessment

The sleep environment will be checked daily for:

- Safe cot condition
- Mattress fit
- Temperature
- Ventilation
- Hygiene
- Hazards

Any damaged equipment will be removed immediately.

11. Smoking

The nursery maintains a **strict no-smoking and no-vaping policy** across the premises and grounds.

12. Emergency Procedures

If a sleeping child appears unresponsive or shows signs of breathing difficulty:

1. Call for assistance immediately.
2. Begin appropriate first aid if trained.
3. Call emergency services.
4. Inform the nursery manager.
5. Contact parents immediately.
6. Complete accident and safeguarding procedures following the incident.

Appendix A

Safe Rest Policy for Toddlers (Approximately 2–3 Years)

As children become more mobile and independent, their sleep needs change. The nursery provides a safe, calm environment for rest while respecting each child's individual routine.

Rest Environment

Toddlers will:

- Sleep on individual sleep mats.
- Have their own clean bedding.
- Be positioned safely away from walkways.
- Sleep in a well-ventilated room.

Bedding

Only appropriate bedding will be used.

Children will not sleep with:

- Pillows (unless developmentally appropriate and agreed by the nursery)
- Heavy quilts
- Comfort items

Supervision

Sleeping toddlers will:

- Be checked at least every **10 minutes**.
- Remain within hearing and visual supervision.
- Have sleep times recorded.

Independence

Staff will support children to:

- Settle calmly.
- Develop healthy sleep habits.
- Wake naturally where possible.

Children will never be forced to sleep.

Appendix B

Safe Rest Policy for Preschool Children (Approximately 3–5 Years)

Many preschool children no longer require daily sleep but may benefit from quiet rest.

Quiet Rest

Children may choose to:

- Rest quietly.
- Read books.
- Listen to calming stories.
- Participate in quiet activities.

Sleep will not be compulsory.

Sleeping Children

If a preschool child falls asleep:

- Staff will monitor wellbeing.
- Sleeping arrangements will remain safe and supervised.
- Parents will be informed where sleep differs from the child's usual routine.

Environment

The rest area will:

- Be calm.
- Maintain comfortable room temperature.
- Be free from hazards.
- Allow appropriate staff supervision.

Appendix C

Safe Sleep Risk Assessment Checklist

Staff should check before each sleep period:

- ☐ Cot or sleep mat is clean and safe.
- ☐ Mattress fits correctly.
- ☐ No pillows or soft toys (babies).
- ☐ No loose blankets (babies).
- ☐ Baby placed on back.
- ☐ Feet to foot of cot (if blanket used).
- ☐ Sleep bag correctly fitted.
- ☐ Child appropriately dressed.
- ☐ Room temperature comfortable.
- ☐ Observation schedule in place.
- ☐ Sleep record available.
- ☐ Any medical care plan followed.

Appendix D

School Nursery and Reception Safe Rest and Sleep Procedures

This appendix applies to children attending school nursery and Reception provision within the Trust.

Children of nursery and Reception age would not normally have a planned daily sleep as part of the school day. However, we recognise that individual children may occasionally become tired and require a period of rest or may fall asleep, particularly when they are newly starting school, attending longer days, recovering from illness or have additional or medical needs.

The child's wellbeing will always be the priority, and staff will respond sensitively to their individual needs.

Rest and Sleep

Children will never be forced to sleep or prevented from sleeping when they are clearly tired.

Where a child requires rest, staff will provide a calm, comfortable and appropriately supervised space.

If a child falls asleep:

- They will be allowed to sleep in a safe and appropriate place.
- Staff will ensure the child is positioned safely and is not sleeping on furniture or equipment that presents a risk of falling, entrapment or suffocation.
- The area around the child will be kept clear of hazards.
- Staff will remain aware of the sleeping child and include them within normal supervision arrangements.
- The child's wellbeing, breathing, colour and position will be checked regularly while they are asleep.
- The child will not be left alone or in an area where staff cannot appropriately supervise them.
- Staff will not place anything over the child's face or use heavy bedding, pillows or other items that could restrict breathing.

Individual Needs

Where a child regularly requires sleep during the school day, staff will discuss this with parents/carers to understand the child's usual routine and whether there are any underlying health, developmental or additional needs.

Where appropriate, an individual care plan or risk assessment will be completed.

Any specific medical advice relating to sleep or rest must be shared with the school and followed by staff.

Partnership with Parents

Parents/carers will be informed if their child has slept during the school day, particularly where this is unusual for the child.

Where a child is regularly falling asleep during the school day, staff will discuss this with parents/carers so that the child's needs can be considered together.

Staff should also be mindful that a significant or unexplained change in a child's sleep pattern may indicate that the child is unwell or that there has been a change in their wellbeing. Any concerns should be shared with the appropriate senior member of staff and safeguarding procedures followed where necessary.

Children Who Are Unwell

Sleep should not be used as an alternative to responding to a child who appears unwell.

If a child is unusually sleepy, difficult to wake, appears unwell or staff have concerns about their breathing, colour or responsiveness, staff must seek support immediately and follow the school's first aid and emergency procedures.

Parents/carers should be contacted where appropriate in accordance with the school's procedures.

Reception Children

Reception children remain within the Early Years Foundation Stage, and their individual care and wellbeing needs must continue to be appropriately supported.

Although routine sleep is not expected within Reception, staff should recognise that children develop at different rates and some children may occasionally need additional rest.

The same principles of safe positioning, appropriate supervision, regular observation and communication with parents/carers apply whenever a Reception child falls asleep.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff working within school nursery and Reception provision are responsible for:

- Being aware of these safe rest and sleep procedures.
- Ensuring any child who falls asleep is safe and appropriately supervised.
- Responding to individual needs rather than routinely waking or preventing a tired child from sleeping.
- Sharing unusual or recurring sleep needs with the class teacher/EYFS lead and parents/carers.
- Following individual healthcare plans and risk assessments where these are in place.
- Reporting any concerns about a child's health, wellbeing or responsiveness immediately.

These procedures should be read alongside the school's safeguarding, first aid, health and safety, medical needs and EYFS procedures.

References

This policy is informed by recognised safe sleep guidance and early years best practice, including recommendations from The Lullaby Trust, the National Health Service (NHS), and the UK statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). It should be read alongside the Trust safeguarding, health and safety, first aid, intimate care, and risk assessment policies.

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V1	24/09/2026	HoS Nursery	New Policy

Approval

This policy will be reviewed annually by Head of Service Nursery or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Education & Learning Committee.

The policy was last approved by the Trust Board on 15/10/2026.

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