Childcare for children,
Childcare for you!

Safe Sleep Policy Autumn 2026

As a nursery we have a duty of care to all children and sleep is an essential requirement for good health. Babies and young children often require day time naps to ensure they get enough rest to support growth, physical and mental development. Regular naps also prevent children from becoming overtired which can affect their mood, behaviour and ability to learn.

We will never prevent a child from falling asleep. However, where a parent or carer has requested that their child does not sleep, we will avoid activities or environments that may encourage the child to fall asleep. Children who have a set sleep limit but are resistant to waking will be allowed a few additional minutes of sleep before being gently disturbed again at the next sleep check to allow them to wake gently.

Without a regular routine children's sleep patterns can be disrupted making it harder for them to fall asleep at night, eventually resulting in exhausted children, parents and carers.

Staff will discuss the individual needs and requirements of each child to ensure their rest routine, where possible, mirrors that of home-life.

Safe Sleeping Guidance:

- Staff must be aware when a child starts at the setting if they were born prematurely or low birth weight as this can increase risk of SIDS and SUDC and a sleep risk assessment will be carried out for the child.
- All sleeping children must be within sight and hearing of staff at all times. This can be via a supervised video monitor.
- All children's mouths are checked before going to sleep to reduce any risk of choking in their sleep.
- All hair accessories, jewellery, bibs and clothing with buttons, zips, drawstrings, heavy clothing (such as jeans), very loose clothing (such as dresses) and clothing with hoods should be removed from all children before they go to sleep.
- Dummies should not be attached to dummy straps/clips.
- All rooms are well ventilated, with temperatures of 16-20c where possible (recommended guidelines), however this may be higher during the summer months, where fans will be used to try to regulate temperature and colder in the winter months where heaters may be used safely. There are thermometers in all rooms to ensure temperatures are monitored.

- Window coverings in the sleep areas are cordless blinds.
- All areas around sleep spaces are kept clear.
- Children will not sleep in direct sunlight and close radiators will be off to prevent overheating.
- Children under 6 months old sleep in cots, travel cots or moses baskets in the same room as staff.
- Babies under 12 months old sleep in cots, travel cots or moses baskets.
- Older babies and young children sleep in cots or coracle cots or on sleep mats or sleep beds with individual sheets for each child.
- All cots, coracle cots, travel cots, or moses baskets are checked for safety following gov guidance to ensure they ar safe to sleep in. This includes checking the structure and date of manufacture.
- Babies are placed to sleep in the cot on their back with their feet against the bottom of the cot. Babies who can roll will be allowed to find a comfortable sleep position but must first be placed on their backs.
- Only one baby will be placed in a cot at a time.
- Thin, lightweight blankets can be used but must be tucked into the bottom of the mattress and come up no higher than the child's shoulders.
- Babies under 12 months old must not have anything in their cot apart from a lightweight blanket. No other comforters or toys, apart from a dummy, can be in the sleep space.
- If a baby falls asleep in a pushchair whilst on a trip the pushchair will be laid flat and the child checked regularly. On return to the setting the child will have any outer clothing removed and be placed in their safe sleep space immediately.
- Cot and coracle cot mattresses are to be firm, flat, well-fitting and be covered with a waterproof and wipeable cover.
- All sleep spaces are regularly checked for any signs of damage and are turned and aired daily.
- Between different children using a sleep space, bedding will be changed and the mattress cover wiped down.
- Staff will follow our no smoking policy to ensure babies do not inhale smoke or vape residue whilst sleeping.

Safe Sleeping Checks:

- Every room has a sleep chart. Sleeping babies and children are checked at 10-minute intervals and the sleep chart is signed with the time and initials.
- During extreme weathers, sleeping babies and children are checked every 5 minutes
- Visual checks ensure the child has not pulled their blanket out, covered their face or got tangled in any sheets whilst moving in their sleep.
- Breathing checks ensure the child's chest is rising and falling by gently placing a hand on the child's back or chest or feeling for breath near their nose or mouth.
- Upon checking, if a child is sweating in their sleep, it is important to remove a layer of bed covers or clothing to avoid the child overheating.

- It is important not to place a dummy into a sleeping child's mouth. If a child drops their dummy or fell asleep without it, it should only be replaced if the child wakes.
- There are video and sound monitors in each sleep room so that a child can be seen and heard as soon as they wake or fall into difficulty in their sleep.

Settling Sleepers:

- Comforters such as dummies muslins or taggy blankets, where required, should be provided from home and these will be stored with the child's personal belongings. Children under 12 months should only sleep with a dummy or no comforter. If a child under 12 months has any other comforter that they require to fall asleep they must be directly supervised until they are asleep and the comforter removed from their sleep space immediately after they fall asleep.
- Comforters should not be soft toys for children under 2. For children over 2 years who have a soft toy as a comforter they must be directly supervised until they are asleep and the comforter removed from their sleep space immediately after they fall asleep.
- A child will be supported by staff members to settle themselves to sleep where possible.
- Staff will sit with a child and gently rock, pat/stroke their stomach or stroke the side of their face to support them to settle to sleep if needed.
- Children who cannot self settle, or be supported to self settle, may be rocked in arms or a carrier/sling and transferred to a safe sleep space once asleep.
- Children who fully settle themselves will have a staff member sat near them until they are asleep.
- Soothing music is played in our sleep areas.
- Children will not consume a bottle of milk whilst in a sleep space to settle to sleep due to choking risk from lying flat. Bottles will be given following NHS guidelines.
- As part of the transition from baby room to toddler room, children will sleep on a sleep mat from approximately 18 months.

Relaxation:

- From approximately 1:30-2pm the preschool and toddler rooms will take part in relaxation time. This allows children to take part in activities requiring little physical input after lunch.
- Relaxation times are to be a maximum of 20 minutes unless the child falls asleep.
- During relaxation some children will choose to sleep in safe sleep areas in the preschool room and mats or beds with sheets for each child in the toddler room.
- Our relaxation time will consist of activities such as listening to classical music, listening to or reading a story, colouring, self-massage, playing with a fidget toy, quiet painting to classical music, completing a jigsaw puzzle etc. depending on the children's needs and ages.

- Children may choose to lay down for these activities and can have their comforter if needed for them.
- These activities will be carried out individually or in small, quiet groups.

Healthy Under 5s Guidelines for recommended sleep times from the Sleep Charity UK:

	Average recommended hours of sleep	
Age	**Daytime**	**Nighttime**
3 months	5	10
6 months	4	10
9 months	2.75	11.25
12 months	2.5	11.5
2 years	1.25	11.75
3 years	1	11
4 years	0	11.5

You can find safer sleep advice here:

- **Lullaby Trust**
  - https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/safer-sleep-advice/
- **NHS**
  - https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/reducing-risk-cot-death/
- **Government**
  - https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safer-sleep