



Safe Sleep and Rest Policy

Policy Statement

This policy sets out the procedures and standards that ensure all children within our setting are provided with a safe, appropriate, and nurturing sleep and rest environment. It aims to safeguard children and support staff in delivering consistent, evidence-based practice at all times.

Introduction

This policy is informed by the following guidance and statutory requirements:

- NHS guidance on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Safer Sleep recommendations from The Lullaby Trust
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework (September 2026)

All practitioners must adhere to this policy to ensure safe sleep practices are consistently implemented.

Why Safer Sleep Matters

Providing a safe sleep environment significantly reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in babies under 12 months and Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC) in children over 12 months.

SIDS refers to the sudden and unexplained death of a baby where no cause is identified. Although rare, certain factors increase risk, including:

- Premature birth (before 37 weeks)
- Low birthweight (under 2.5kg / 5.5lb)
- Exposure to smoking during pregnancy
- Sleeping with babies on sofas or chairs

A safe sleep environment also reduces the risk of accidental injury, such as suffocation or entanglement in soft bedding or furniture.



Safe Sleep Requirements for Babies and Children Under Two

Sleep Environment

- Babies aged 12 months and under must only sleep in a cot, carrycot, Moses basket, or travel cot that meets relevant British Safety Standards. Coracles must not be used for babies under 12 months.
- Children must be placed on their back in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface.
- Sleep spaces must contain only:
 - A firm, flat, waterproof mattress
 - Lightweight bedding securely tucked no higher than shoulder level
 - OR a well-fitted baby sleep bag (used in line with manufacturer guidance)
- When blankets are used, babies must be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot.
- Cots must not contain toys, pillows, loose bedding, bumpers, wedges, straps, or any unnecessary items.
- Babies must not become too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies under 12 months is **16–20°C**.
- Babies' heads must remain uncovered during sleep.
- Babies under six months must always sleep in the same room as an adult. All sleeping children must be checked frequently.
- Children must remain within sight and hearing of staff at all times. Where a staff member is not present in the sleep room, a video monitor must be used alongside 15-minute physical checks.

Additional Guidance

Evidence shows that babies are at increased risk of SIDS if their heads become covered. Items such as cot bumpers and toys increase risk and must not be used. Comforters may be used only for children aged over 12 months.



Once babies can independently roll from back to front and back again, they may adopt their own sleeping position; however, staff must continue to place them on their back initially.

Safety Standards

All sleep equipment used in the setting meets the following British Safety Standards:

- Cots, travel cots, Moses baskets, carry cots: **BS EN 716-1:2017, BS EN 1466:2014, BS EN 1466:2023**
- Bedside cribs: **BS EN 1130:2019**
- Mattresses: **BS 7177:2008+A1:2011**
- Mattresses for cots, travel cots, cribs: **BS EN 16890:2017+A1:2021**
- Sleep bags: **BS EN 16781:2018**

Sleeping While Travelling

- Babies under 12 months who fall asleep while travelling must be transferred to a cot immediately upon returning to the setting. Hats and extra clothing must be removed as soon as entering a vehicle or building, even if this wakes the baby.
- Children over 12 months should be transitioned to their own sleep space on a firm, flat surface wherever possible. Lie-flat prams or pushchairs must not be used as their main sleep space.
- If a child falls asleep in a car seat, they must be moved to their separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting.

Procedures

Sleep Routines

- “All About Me” sheets are completed with parents/carers during settling-in. These record each child’s usual sleep routine.
- Staff must be aware of individual sleep needs and ensure this information is clearly displayed and communicated during staff handovers.
- Babies must never be left to cry themselves to sleep or left for extended periods to “drop off”.



Preparing a Baby for Sleep

Staff must ensure the following before settling a baby:

- Clean nappy
- Outer clothing removed
- Baby has been fed or offered a drink
- Bib removed
- Comforter provided if required
- Room temperature is appropriate

Babies should be prepared for sleep in a calm environment, such as a quiet area with a story or cuddle.

Settling Techniques

Some babies may require gentle patting or tummy rubbing. Staff must use a chair beside the cot or sit on the floor to avoid strain. When using rest mats, staff should sit close to the child.

If a child has not fallen asleep after 20 minutes, staff should consider getting them up and trying again later. The key person should agree a suitable time limit with parents/carers and ensure this is communicated to all staff.

If a baby falls asleep in a staff member's arms, they must be transferred to a cot immediately.

Equipment Maintenance

Cots and sleep mats must be cleaned regularly. Screws and bolts must be checked and tightened periodically.

Sheets should be only used with one child. They should be named and stored so they can be reused for the same child and laundered at the end of the week.

Dummies

Parents may provide dummies; the setting does not supply or introduce them.

Dummies are usually restricted to sleep and rest times. (See *Dummies, Bottles and Cups Policy*.) After 9 months, staff will encourage parents to begin weaning their child off the dummy.

Dummies or comfort items must not be left in a cot when not in use, as they may pose a choking hazard.



Older Children

Children require rest and sleep to support healthy development. As children grow, their sleep needs change, and staff must respond appropriately.

Children may rest or sleep throughout the day as needed. Staff must provide a calm environment, such as a quiet area with books or sleep mats.

Parental wishes will be considered; however, staff cannot force a child to sleep or stay awake. Staff will not physically wake a sleeping child, though they may gently create natural cues to support waking.

Sleep Monitoring

All sleeping children must be checked every **15 minutes**. All staff in the room share responsibility for these checks. A timer must be used to ensure consistency, and checks must be recorded on the Famly app.

If the sleep room is unattended, a video monitor must be used alongside physical checks. Daily sleep records are shared with parents via Famly.

Checks must include:

- Visual confirmation of breathing (chest movement). If unsure, staff may place a hand on the child's chest or feel for breath near the mouth.
- Assessment of wellbeing.
- Temperature check: staff should feel the child's chest or back of neck. If the child is clammy or sweaty, layers must be removed. Professional judgement should be used during extreme temperatures.
- Ensuring bedding is secure and not wrapped around the child.

Appropriate Adults

Only employed staff may take responsibility for settling children to sleep and monitoring them. All staff involved must have read this policy beforehand.

Students may assist but must be supervised at all times and must read the policy before participating.