Rest and Sleep Policy May 2026

Nursery children get tired during the day and need to have opportunities to rest and sleep during the nursery day. It is very important that young children get all the sleep they need in a safe environment.

Every child's needs are different, so we provide opportunities for children to take rests and naps as they need in a flexible way.

COMFORTERS AND COMFORT BLANKETS

Comfort blankets and soft toys can bring enormous comfort and reassurance to small children, especially when they are new to the nursery and during rest and sleep times. Children are able to have these when they are going to sleep, but when asleep, sleep spaces must be clear at all times any soft toys or items must be removed once the child is asleep and staff are not present.
Parents may wish to provide dummies for their children, as they can provide comfort during rest and sleep times. However, the nursery does not provide, supply or introduce them to children themselves. Beaded chains and bracelets etc, must not be brought into the nursery, to prevent choking hazards.

Nursery practitioners will label children's dummies to ensure they are not used by other children. Dummies can be used when children need comfort or reassurance. However, prolonged use may impact speech development and social interaction. As children grow and no longer rely on them, we gradually and discreetly phase dummies out.

CLOTHING

Where possible, all jumpers, hoodies, cardigans, sweatshirts etc are removed from the child when putting them to bed, to avoid overheating during their sleep. Bibs must always be removed.

REST AREAS

Children are encouraged to indicate and say when they are tired and need to rest and are also encouraged to take a rest or nap during certain times of the day.

There are accessible rest areas with soft seating and cushions in rooms and in garden spaces where children can go if they wish to rest and relax. We also provide a separate sleep room for babies which provides under 2s with a tranquil and calm environment to sleep without disturbance.

PARENTS' WISHES

The preferences and wishes of parents are always valued and respected. Staff work closely with parents, especially in the baby room, to ensure each child's individual needs are carefully met. Some parents prefer to restrict their children's sleep and this will be taken into account provided it is clearly in the child's best interests.

ARRIVING TO NURSERY AWAKE

For the safety and wellbeing of all children, we require that all children arrive at the nursery **awake**. This allows staff to safely observe the child's initial condition, confirm their responsiveness, and ensure a proper handover with parents/carers.

Children must not be transported into nursery while asleep in car seats, pushchairs, or baby carriers. This is due to the known risk of positional asphyxia associated with unsupervised sleep in such equipment.
This procedure is part of our safeguarding practice and aligns with safe sleep guidelines recommended by national health authorities.

HYGIENE

Staff ensure that bedding is washed regularly.
Bedding for full time children is washed at least twice per week and part time children once a week.

SLEEP RECORDS

In the sleep room, sleep start and finish times are recorded. A sleep chart is used to record sleep and room temperature 10-minute checks, beginning with an immediate check by office/management staff to ensure all of the children sleeping are safe, that blankets are not over face, breathing is not being obstructed and that lowerable sides of cots are all raised up, and that children aren't able to climb/fall out of the cot.

SAFER SLEEP GUIDLINES

Nine out of ten deaths from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) occur within the first six months; We follow the guidelines from the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths 2012, The Lullaby Trust and EYFS safer sleep guidelines to ensure their continued safety when sleeping.

- Room temperature is maintained between 16–20°C, monitored using thermometers.
- Sleep areas are clear, calm, and free from hazards at all times. This includes soft toys or comforter items, which must be removed once the child is asleep.
- No loose items (e.g. toys, pillows, heavy blankets) are left in sleep spaces.
- Only firm, flat, wipeable mattresses are used (no memory foam or makeshift bedding).
- All mattresses must be clean, in excellent condition, and fit correctly with no gaps.
- Children must not sleep in car seats, bouncers, or seated devices- if they fall asleep in any of these, they are to be moved to a flat surface as soon as possible.
- No loose bedding is permitted in cots. Lightweight cellular blankets may be used if they are large enough to be tucked into mattress with no risk of coming loose. We provide sleep bags.
- Blankets or coverings must never be draped over cots.
- We follow the 'feet to foot' sleeping position. Feet are positioned close to the end of the cot/bed to prevent wriggling and risk of bedding covering the head.
- Distances between sleeping Under 2s are maintained at 1 meter apart.
- Sleep and room temperature checks are carried out every 10 minutes and recorded.
- Sleep areas are within sight or hearing of staff at all times, supported by staff presence and CCTV.
- During warmer weather, oscillating fans may be used safely, positioned out of reach and risk assessed.
- Staff must remain calm, vigilant, and fully focused, always checking for hazards. A second staff member must complete an immediate check when a child is left to sleep.

UNDER 6 MONTHS

- Babies are always placed on their back to sleep.
- The 'feet to foot' position is used (feet at the bottom of the cot).
- Babies must be supervised at all times while sleeping, with a staff member present in the same room.
- Cots must be completely clear (no loose bedding or soft items).

- Lightweight cellular blankets may be used only if securely tucked and safe.
- Babies are checked frequently and consistently, following nursery procedures.

UNDER 2S

- Each child has their own bedding and/or sleep bag.
- Sleep spaces are arranged with at least 1 meter between children.
- A room thermometer is used to monitor and maintain safe temperature.
- Children may settle in different ways (e.g. patting, soothing, or self-settling).
- Staff should supervise children while settling to sleep.
- Babies must not be left unsupervised with bottles
- Children are regularly monitored, with sleep checks carried out every 10 minutes.

2-4 YEARS

- Children use comfortable, padded foldable bed mats which are laid out in the room.
- Each child has their own bedding sheets (blankets are not to be used due to the difficulty keeping them secure under bed mats)
- Not all children will sleep; opportunities for rest and quiet time are provided.
- Children are supported to settle through comforting or self-settling strategies.
- A staff member remains within sight or hearing at all times.
- Sleep checks are completed every 10 minutes.
- Sleep limits and routines are clearly recorded and followed by all staff.
- Parents' wishes are respected in line with the child's best interests.
- Sleep times are recorded