

Community Pre-schools Safe Sleeping Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings, such as Community Pre-schools, have a vital responsibility to ensure the safety, comfort, and well-being of every child in their care. Sleep and rest are essential for the healthy development of young children, contributing to their physical growth, emotional regulation, and cognitive development. The Community Pre-schools EYFS Safe Sleeping Policy is designed to provide clear guidelines and procedures that safeguard children during sleep and rest periods while fostering a nurturing and supportive environment.

This policy aligns with statutory guidance and best practice recommendations from the Department for Education, the Lullaby Trust, and other authoritative bodies. It serves to inform staff, parents, carers, and stakeholders of the protocols in place to minimise risk and optimise the quality of children's sleep at the pre-school.

Aims and Objectives

- To ensure every child has the opportunity for safe, comfortable, and undisturbed sleep or rest during their time at pre-school.
- To reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related incidents through robust procedures and staff vigilance.
- To work collaboratively with families, respecting children's individual routines, preferences, and needs.
- To create an environment that fosters healthy sleep habits and emotional security for all children.

Guiding Principles

- **Child-Centred Approach:** All decisions regarding sleep are based on the individual needs and routines of each child, as agreed with their parents/carers.
- **Risk Assessment:** Sleeping arrangements, equipment, and supervision are regularly risk-assessed and reviewed to ensure ongoing safety.
- **Staff Training:** All staff involved in supervising sleep are trained in safe sleep practices, including the prevention of SIDS and emergency response procedures.
- **Communication:** Open, regular communication with parents ensures that sleep needs and concerns are addressed collaboratively.

Safe Sleeping Procedures

1. Sleep Environment

- Rooms/ Areas designated for sleeping/resting are kept at a comfortable temperature (ideally between 16°C-20°C), well-ventilated, and free from hazards.
- Lighting is dimmed to encourage rest but remains sufficient for staff supervision.
- Noise levels are kept low, and any background music or white noise used must be at a safe volume and non-disruptive.
- Children are not forced to sleep; instead, rest is encouraged in a calm, supportive manner. Quiet activities are available for those who do not wish to sleep.

2. Sleep Equipment and Bedding

- Cots, mats, or beds meet British Safety Standards and are regularly checked for damage or wear.
- Mattresses are firm and fit snugly into the cot/bed frame, with no gaps at the sides.
- Each child is provided with clean, age-appropriate bedding that is laundered regularly. Bedding is never shared between children.
- No soft toys, pillows, bumpers, or loose bedding are placed in cots with babies under 12 months, following Lullaby Trust guidance.
- Babies are always positioned on their backs to sleep unless there is a written medical reason, provided by a healthcare professional, for an alternative position.
- Suffocation hazards (plastic bags, cords, etc.) are never present in sleeping areas.

3. Sleep Supervision and Monitoring

- Children are regularly checked at intervals of no more than 10 minutes during sleep, either by direct observation or via a monitoring system (not to replace physical checks).
- Staff record the times each child falls asleep and wakes, noting any observations or concerns in a sleep log.
- Babies and young children are never left unsupervised while sleeping.
- If a child appears distressed or unwell during sleep, staff gently rouse them and assess their condition, following illness and accident procedures as necessary.
- Any incidents, such as a child found sleeping in an unusual position, are immediately reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and parents/carers.

4. Individual Needs and Parental Involvement

- Staff discuss sleep routines with parents upon enrolment and update them regularly to reflect changes at home or developmental stages.
- Children's individual sleep preferences, comfort items (e.g., a blanket or soft toy for older children, if safe), and habits are respected within the boundaries of safe sleep practice.
- Where a child has a medical condition or specific sleep need, a care plan is created in partnership with parents and healthcare professionals.
- Parents are kept informed of their child's sleep patterns at pre-school through daily **feedback or written records.**

5. Promoting Good Sleep Hygiene

- Staff model and encourage calm, soothing transitions to sleep, such as reading, gentle music, or soft lighting.
- Consistent routines for naptime and rest periods help children feel secure and promote healthy sleep habits.
- Children are supported to self-settle wherever possible, fostering independence and self-soothing skills.

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Awareness

All staff receive training in the current research and guidance on reducing the risk of SIDS, including:

- Always placing babies on their backs to sleep.
- Maintaining a smoke-free environment.
- Ensuring no overheating by monitoring room temperature and appropriate clothing.
- Ensuring babies' heads remain uncovered while sleeping.
- Not using pillows or duvets for babies under 12 months.
- Avoiding co-sleeping within the pre-school setting.

Staff are diligent in communicating any concerns or changes in sleep patterns to parents and safeguarding leads, recognising that sleep can be a window into a child's health and well-being.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a medical emergency during sleep (e.g. a child found unresponsive):

- The nearest qualified first aider is alerted immediately.
- Emergency services are called without delay.
- The child's care plan and emergency contact information are referenced.
- The incident is recorded in detail and reported according to safeguarding and accident policies.
- Parents/carers are informed as soon as it is safe to do so.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

- All practitioners are familiar with this policy and adhere to its principles at all times.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) ensures the policy is reviewed annually and updated in line with statutory guidance and best practice.
- All new staff receive induction training on safe sleep on commencement of employment and ongoing refresher training as required.
- Staff are responsible for maintaining accurate sleep logs and communicating with parents about any concerns or incidents.
- Supervision ratios are maintained at all times, including during sleep and rest periods.

Record Keeping and Documentation

- Sleep logs are maintained for each child, recording sleep times, checks, and any notes of interest or concern.
- Accident, incident, and safeguarding forms are completed promptly where applicable.
- All records are stored securely in accordance with data protection legislation and can be accessed by authorised personnel only.

Working in Partnership with Parents

- Parents are provided with information about safe sleep practices at pre-school and are invited to share their own routines and strategies.
- Feedback from parents is welcomed and considered in policy review and practice improvements.
- Any concerns raised by parents about sleep are addressed promptly and with sensitivity.

Policy Review and Monitoring

- This policy is reviewed at least annually or in response to new legislation, guidance, or significant incidents.
- Feedback from staff, parents, and regulatory bodies is actively sought and used to improve practice.
- Regular audits of sleep environments and procedures are conducted to ensure compliance.