



Little Learners
NURSERY GROUP

Safer Sleep Policy

Reviewed: September 2026

To be reviewed: September 2027

Introduction

Little Learner's Nursery Group understands that babies and young children will join the nursery with a sleep routine that has already been established within their family environment. Babies' and young children's sleep patterns are an important part of their routine and contribute to their health, growth and development.

At Little Learner's Nursery Group, practitioners will accommodate each child's established sleeping pattern and individual sleep needs so far as this is safely possible within the nursery environment.

The Nursery follows the Department for Education (DfE) safer sleep guidance and The Lullaby Trust's evidence-based safer sleep advice. From 1 September 2026, safer sleep requirements are explicitly included within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework.

Parents as Partners

To help us provide the best possible care for babies and young children, the key person or EYFS practitioner will:

- Introduce and discuss the nursery's safer sleep policy with all parents when their child joins the nursery.
- Gather information from parents about how their child sleeps at home, including their usual sleep patterns and settling routines.
- Work with parents to agree appropriate sleep routines for their child during their time at nursery.
- Explain to parents that the nursery follows safer sleep guidance and that children under two years will be placed on their back when initially put down to sleep.
- Explain that safer sleep requirements must be followed at all times and cannot be overridden by parental preference.

- Ask parents about their child's individual settling preferences, comfort needs and normal sleep routine, where these are consistent with the nursery's safer sleep requirements.
- Ensure that all parents of babies and young children cared for in the nursery receive a written copy of the nursery's safer sleep policy.
- Provide parents with information about The Lullaby Trust and safer sleep guidance where appropriate.

Key Person and Nursery Staff Role

- All practitioners caring for babies and young children will receive appropriate induction and training on the nursery's safer sleep policy and the reduction of the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and sudden unexpected death in childhood (SUDC).
- Children under two years of age will always be placed on their back when initially put down to sleep.
- Children under two years of age will sleep in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface.
- Babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a suitable cot. This includes a cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot that meets the relevant safety requirements and is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Floor beds, coracles and sleep pods will not be used for babies aged 12 months and under.
- Once a baby can independently move from their back to their front and from their front to their back, they may find their own sleeping position. Staff will continue to place the baby on their back when initially putting them down to sleep.
- Babies will never be put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed. Staff will always sit with feeding babies until their milk is finished and the baby is settled.
- Babies under six months of age will always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep.

- All sleeping children will remain within the sight and hearing of staff while sleeping.
- Sleeping children will be frequently checked throughout their sleep.
- Sleep checks will be recorded at least every 15 minutes on the nursery sleep chart, in accordance with the nursery's monitoring procedure.
- During sleep checks, staff will observe the child's breathing by looking for the rise and fall of the chest, check the child's temperature by feeling the chest or back of the neck, and check the child's sleeping position.
- Staff will respond immediately if they identify any concern regarding a child's breathing, temperature, position, wellbeing or sleep environment.
- The child's wellbeing, sleep position and relevant observations will be documented on the safe sleep chart and initialled by the staff member.
- Staff will prepare children for nap time by moving to a quieter part of the nursery, having a story, playing relaxing music and/or providing a cuddle.
- Children may be comforted by appropriate settling techniques, such as gentle patting or stroking, where this is appropriate and safe.
- Staff will sit to the side of the cot or mat when settling a child and will not leave a baby sleeping on a practitioner's lap.
- Staff will use quiet voices while children are sleeping and will minimise unnecessary movement and disturbance within the sleep area.
- Parents' wishes regarding sleep routines and settling will be considered, provided they are consistent with the nursery's safer sleep requirements.
- Children will never be forced to sleep, woken unnecessarily or deliberately kept awake against their needs.
- Children and parents will be supported to reduce or stop daytime naps when developmentally appropriate.

Providing a Safe Sleeping Environment

- The nursery will provide a safe, clean and suitable sleep environment for every child.
- Babies aged 12 months and under will sleep only in a suitable cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot.

- Children over 12 months will sleep in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
- All sleep spaces will have a firm, flat, waterproof mattress with an appropriate fitted sheet.
- For children under two, lightweight bedding will be firmly tucked in and must not be higher than the child's shoulders. Alternatively, a well-fitted baby sleep bag may be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Where blankets are used, the child will be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot and the blanket will be firmly tucked in.
- Children's heads must never be covered while sleeping.
- Hats, hoods, bibs and other items that could cover a child's head or face will be removed before sleep.
- Cots for babies aged 12 months and under will be kept completely clear and will not contain toys, pillows, loose bedding, cot bumpers, wedges, straps or other unnecessary items.
- Sleep comforters may only be used for children aged over 12 months and must be appropriate and safe for the child's age and stage of development.
- The nursery will not use weighted blankets, weighted sleep bags or other weighted sleep products for babies.
- Room temperatures for babies aged 12 months and under will be monitored and maintained at approximately 16–20°C wherever reasonably possible. Professional judgement will be used during periods of extreme temperatures.
- Children will be dressed appropriately for the room temperature and staff will take care to prevent overheating.
- Staff will check whether a baby or child is too hot or cold by feeling the chest or back of the neck. Hands and feet may normally feel cooler and this is not necessarily an indication that the child is cold.
- If a child's skin feels clammy or sweaty, staff will remove one or more layers of clothing or bedding as appropriate.

- Safety-approved cots and sleep equipment will be used and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- The nursery will ensure that sleeping equipment is regularly inspected and remains clean, safe and in good condition.
- The sleeping area will be cleared and tidied before use.
- Mats used for children over 12 months will be positioned away from open cupboards, shelves and other potential hazards.
- Appropriate space will be left between sleeping children to allow staff to move freely and safely.
- Where children sleep on mats, children will be positioned head-to-toe where appropriate to reduce the risk of contact between children.
- Every child will be provided with clean bedding, which will be changed regularly and immediately if soiled or contaminated.

Sleeping Whilst Travelling

- Babies aged 12 months and under who fall asleep while travelling must be transferred to their cot once they return to the setting.
- A buggy, pushchair or pram will not be used as the main sleep space for a baby aged 12 months and under.
- If a baby aged 12 months and under falls asleep in a buggy or pram while travelling, they will be transferred to an appropriate cot when they return to the nursery.
- If a baby or child falls asleep in a car seat while travelling, they will be transferred to their separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting.
- Coats, hats and excess clothing will be removed or adjusted as appropriate when children return indoors to prevent overheating.
- Children over 12 months who fall asleep while travelling will, where possible, be transitioned to their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface when they return to the setting.

Parental consent cannot be used to override the nursery's safer sleep requirements.

Smoking

The nursery operates a no-smoking policy in accordance with relevant legislation.

Staff members who smoke will take appropriate steps to ensure that they do not expose babies or children to tobacco smoke while at work. Staff will ensure that their clothing and breath do not smell strongly of smoke when caring for children.

When Getting a Child Ready to Sleep

Nursery staff will ensure that:

- The child is toileted or given a clean nappy if required.
- Clothing is checked for wet patches, particularly around the sleeves and body.
- Outer clothing is removed.
- Hats, hoods and bibs are removed.
- Any items that could cover the child's face or head are removed.
- The child is dressed appropriately for the room temperature.
- Any appropriate comforter for a child over 12 months is provided where required and where it is safe to do so.
- The child's chest or back of neck is checked to assess whether they are appropriately dressed for sleep.
- The child's sleep space is clear and safe before the child is placed down to sleep.

When a Child Falls Asleep on a Practitioner

If a baby or child falls asleep on a practitioner's lap, the practitioner will transfer the child to an appropriate separate sleep space as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

Babies aged 12 months and under must be transferred to their cot.

Children must not routinely be allowed to complete a sleep on a practitioner's lap.

When Children Wake

When children wake, they will be given cuddles, reassurance and support as appropriate. They will be helped to get dressed if required and will then be provided with suitable activities and appropriate light.

Wherever possible, children who wake early will be taken to the garden area or a separate learning space so as not to disturb children who are still sleeping.

Parental Wishes Statement

Parents' wishes regarding their child's sleep routine, settling methods and daytime sleep patterns will always be taken into consideration.

However, the nursery must follow the statutory EYFS safer sleep requirements and national safer sleep guidance. Parents cannot request or consent to a sleep practice that does not comply with these requirements.

Staff cannot force a child to sleep, wake a child unnecessarily or deliberately keep a child awake against their needs.

Safer Sleep for Children Under Two

The following safer sleep requirements apply to children under two years of age:

- Children must be placed on their back when initially put down to sleep.
- Children must have their own separate sleep space.
- The sleep surface must be clear, flat and firm.
- Babies aged 12 months and under must sleep in a suitable cot, including a cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot.
- Floor beds, coracles and sleep pods must not be used for babies aged 12 months and under.
- For children under two, bedding must be lightweight, firmly tucked in and no higher than the child's shoulders, or an appropriately fitted baby sleep bag may be used.
- Where blankets are used, children will be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot.
- Children's heads must never be covered.

- Cots for babies aged 12 months and under must remain clear and must not contain toys, pillows, loose bedding, cot bumpers, wedges, straps or other unnecessary items.
- Sleep comforters may only be used for children aged over 12 months.
- Babies under six months must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep.
- All sleeping children must remain within the sight and hearing of staff.
- Children must be frequently checked while sleeping.
- Babies aged 12 months and under should be kept at a comfortable temperature, with the recommended room temperature being approximately 16–20°C.
- Staff will continue to place babies on their back even once they are able to independently roll from back to front and front to back. If they subsequently move themselves into another position, they may be allowed to remain in that position.

Staff Training and Implementation

All staff working with babies and young children will be made aware of this policy during induction and will receive appropriate safer sleep information and training.

Staff will be expected to understand and consistently implement the safer sleep requirements in their daily practice.

The nursery will regularly review its sleep arrangements, equipment, staff practice and records to ensure that they remain consistent with the EYFS statutory framework and current safer sleep guidance.

The policy will be reviewed whenever national guidance or statutory requirements change and at least annually.

Consent and Parent Acknowledgement

I have read and understood the Little Learner's Nursery Group Safer Sleep Policy.

I understand that the nursery follows the safer sleep requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the Department for Education and The Lullaby Trust.

I understand that children under two will be placed on their back when initially put down to sleep and that babies aged 12 months and under must sleep in an appropriate cot.

I understand that parental preferences cannot override statutory safer sleep requirements.

I am aware of The Lullaby Trust safer sleep information and would / would not like a copy.

Name of Child:

Name of Parent/Carer:

Signature of Parent/Carer:

Date:

Signed on behalf of Little Learner's Nursery Group:

Name:

Signature:

Date: