

Sunflowers Day Nursery Policy & Procedures Document.

Safe Sleep and Rest Policy

At Sunflowers, we recognise that babies and young children need sleep and rest to support their health, wellbeing and development. We provide safe, age-appropriate sleep opportunities that meet individual needs while following the latest Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2026), NHS and Lullaby Trust safer sleep guidance.

We work closely with parents and carers to understand each child's sleep routine and ensure that all sleeping arrangements are safe and appropriate.

Safer Sleep Requirements

In line with EYFS 3.86 and current safer sleep guidance:

- Babies aged 12 months and under must always sleep in a cot or a travel cot. Cots will have a firm, flat mattress that meets relevant British Standards. BS EN 716-1:2017
- If a baby was born prematurely (before 37 weeks) or weighing less than 2.5kg or 5.5lb, you should follow the safer sleep advice for a year from their due date, rather than when they were born.
- Older babies and children will sleep in a sleep pod or on a sleep mat, which is also firm, flat and waterproof.
- Lightweight bedding will be used which is firmly tucked around the child below their shoulders to prevent accidental head covering.
- Children will be dressed appropriately to prevent overheating, hoodies, thick jumpers and bibs will be removed.
- Cots and sleeping areas must not contain items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges or straps.
- Babies must be placed 'feet to foot' in a cot.
- Children's heads must not be covered.
- Children should not get too hot or too cold. The recommended room temperatures are between 16-20c. This will be monitored and adjusted where possible. On very hot days, staff will ensure good air flow through use of air conditioning units and fans. Staff will liaise with Heather, the Nursery Manager each day to look at ways of increasing or decreasing their temperature within their sleeping areas.
- Sleeping children will remain within sight or hearing of staff at all times. Babies under 6 months must have a member of staff in the same room as them at all times.
- Formal sleep checks will be completed and recorded at least every 10 minutes.

Sleep Environment

Sunflowers Nursery will ensure that all sleep areas:

- Are clean, safe and well ventilated.
- Are maintained at a comfortable temperature.
- Are free from hazards, cords, furniture or equipment that could cause injury or entanglement.
- Allow staff to supervise sleeping children effectively.

Supporting Children to Sleep

Staff will:

- Follow each child's individual sleep routine where possible.
- Help children settle through comfort, reassurance, stories, songs or quiet activities.
- Ensure nappies are changed where necessary and children are comfortable before sleep.
- Remove bibs, coats, hooded clothing and other items that may pose a risk.
- Never leave children to cry for prolonged periods without comfort and support.
- Ensure each child has their own bag of lightweight bedding which will be laundered weekly or adapted to a child's attendance patterns.

If a child falls asleep unexpectedly on a member of staff, they will be transferred to a safe sleep space as soon as possible.

Use of Dummies

Some research suggests that using a dummy during sleep can lower the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

If a parent chooses to use a dummy:

- Wait until breastfeeding is well established – usually when a baby is around four weeks old.
- Suggest use of an orthodontic dummy – these adapt to the baby's mouth shape.
- Make it part of the baby's sleep routine – offer the dummy for every sleep, not just occasionally.
- Encourage the parent to gently stop using the dummy between six and 12 months – to avoid problems caused by longer term use, such as misaligned teeth and ear infections.

Things to avoid

- Don't force a baby to take a dummy – if the baby spits it out, don't worry about putting it back in.
- Don't use a neck cord and dummy attachments – as these can be dangerous and present strangulation risks.
- Don't offer the dummy during awake time.

Use of comforters and personal blankets

If a child has a comforter such as a teddy bear or a blanket to help them sleep, this must be used under strict observation of a staff member and gently removed once the baby or child is asleep. WE must ensure that the comforters or blankets NEVER cover their child's face.

Monitoring Sleeping Children

A member of staff will supervise sleeping children at all times.

Checks will be carried out and recorded on our sleep check chart every 10 minutes and will include:

- Breathing is normal and unobstructed.
- The child's face remains uncovered.
- The child is comfortable and appropriately positioned.
- The child is not too hot or too cold.
- The sleep environment remains safe.
- Children who are unwell may require more frequent checks.

A record of each child's sleep information will be transferred to their daily sheet (babies & 2deloos) and verbally passed on to parents and carers (3bees & preschool).

Individual Sleep Arrangements

We ask parents to tell us about their baby's/child's sleeping routine when starting at nursery; this is reviewed and updated at timely intervals. If a baby has an unusual sleeping routine or a position that we do not use in the nursery, i.e. babies sleeping on their tummies or in a sling, we will explain our policy to the parents and not usually offer this unless the baby's doctor has advised the parent of a medical reason to do so. In such cases, we would ask parents to provide written permission to adopt a different position or pattern for their baby/child.

We recognise parent knowledge of their baby/child with regard to sleep routines and will, where possible, work together to ensure individual sleep routines and well-being continue to be met. However, staff will not force a baby/child to sleep or keep them awake against their will. They will also not usually wake children from their sleep. Individual sleep routines are followed rather than having one set sleep time for all children. We create an environment that helps to settle children that require a sleep, for example dimming the lights or using soft music, where applicable. We will maintain the needs of the children who do not require a sleep and ensure they can continue to play, learn and develop. This may involve taking children outdoors or linking with other rooms or groups of children.

Staff will discuss with parents any changes in sleep routines at the end of the session and share observations and information if they do not receive enough sleep.

Sleeping Outdoors

Outdoor sleeping may be offered where appropriate and will follow the same safer sleep requirements and supervision arrangements as indoor sleeping.

Babies aged 12 months and under sleeping outdoors must sleep in a travel cot that meets relevant British Standards.

Hygiene

- Each child will have their own bag of lightweight bedding which will be laundered weekly or adapted to a child's attendance patterns.
- Bedding will be laundered regularly and immediately if soiled.
- Cots, pods and mats will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Sleep equipment will be maintained in a clean and safe condition.

All staff must:

- Communicate well with each other about each child's sleeping and rest requirements
- Communicate well with all parents and carers about each child's individual routine and day to day changes which may happen.
- Fully work in partnership with parents and carers to meet each child's individual needs and support routines within the home.
- Share safe sleep advice with parents and carers and other staff / students / volunteers.
- Take full responsibility for ensuring the safety of each child when they are asleep and when they are awake.
- Take into full consideration the well-being of each child before, during and after sleep time.
- Ensure that checks are thorough, purposeful and it is clear who is completing them.
- Ensure sleep mats remain clean and hygienic, that they aren't stood on and they are cleaned each day

Appendix 1: Pushchair Sleeping

Sleeping in a pushchair is not routine practice and will only occur in exceptional circumstances, such as when a child falls asleep during an outing.

Where this occurs:

- The pushchair must be fully reclined.
- The child must remain within sight of staff at all times.
- Checks must be completed every 10 minutes.
- Parents must be informed.
- The child must be transferred to an appropriate sleep space as soon as reasonably practicable.