# Nursery sleep policy

**Setting name:** little garden nursery
**Policy lead:** Nursery Manager
**Date implemented:** September 2026
**Review date:** September 2027
**Applies to:** All staff, students, apprentices, agency staff and other adults involved in the care of children.

## 1. Policy Statement

At Little Garden Nursery we recognise that sleep and rest are essential for children's health, wellbeing, growth, development and emotional regulation.

We are committed to providing a safe, calm and comfortable environment in which every child can rest according to their individual needs. The safety of children is our highest priority, and all sleeping arrangements will follow the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, Department for Education safer sleep guidance, relevant NHS advice and safeguarding procedures.

We understand that babies and young children are particularly vulnerable while sleeping and require appropriate supervision and individualised care.

All staff must understand and consistently follow this policy. No staff member may disregard safe sleep procedures, even when a child is unsettled, a room is busy or staffing pressures arise.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- Protect children from avoidable risks associated with sleeping and resting.
- Reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related incidents.
- Ensure all babies and children have a safe, suitable and individual sleeping space.
- Establish clear procedures for supervision, physical checks and recording.
- Respect each child's individual sleep routine, developmental stage, health needs and family circumstances.
- Ensure parents and carers are involved in planning and reviewing sleep arrangements.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate guidance, training and supervision.
- Maintain accurate records and demonstrate effective safeguarding practice during Ofsted inspections.

## 3. Individual Sleep Routines and Parental Information

Before a child starts attending the nursery, the key person will discuss the child's sleep routines with their parents or carers.

Information gathered will include:

- Usual sleep and rest times and signs of tiredness.
- The child's usual settling routine.
- Any relevant medical conditions, allergies or additional needs.
- Any known breathing difficulties or previous sleep-related concerns.
- Whether the child was born prematurely or had a low birth weight, where relevant to safer sleep advice.
- Any advice provided by a health professional.
- The family's approach to sleep, where relevant to the child's care.

The information will be recorded in the child's individual care plan and shared with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis.

Parents may provide information about their child's preferences, but nursery staff must always follow the nursery's safe sleep procedures and current statutory guidance. Any conflicting advice or specific medical requirements must be discussed with the manager and, where necessary, the child's health professional before arrangements are agreed.

Sleep routines will be reviewed regularly and whenever the child's needs change.

## 4. Safe Sleeping Arrangements for Babies

Babies aged 12 months and under must be placed to sleep in their own suitable cot, including an appropriate carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot that meets relevant safety requirements and is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Babies must be placed on their backs at the beginning of every sleep. Staff must not deliberately place a baby on their side or front to sleep.

If a baby can independently roll from back to front and front to back, staff must still initially place the baby on their back and follow current safer sleep guidance.

Each baby must have a separate sleeping space. Babies must never share a cot.

### Clear cot policy — no toys or unnecessary items, no negotiable

**Cots used for sleeping must be kept free from toys and unnecessary items at all times.**

The cot must not contain:

- Soft toys or cuddly toys.
- Comforters or security objects.
- Pillows or cushions.
- Cot bumpers.
- Loose blankets or loose bedding.
- Wedges, positioners or sleep restraints.
- Straps or other unauthorised accessories.
- Any other item that could obstruct breathing, cause entrapment or increase the risk of overheating.

The sleeping space must have a firm, flat, waterproof mattress. Only appropriate lightweight bedding, securely tucked in below the baby's shoulders, or a suitable, well-fitting baby sleep

bag used according to its manufacturer's instructions, may be used in accordance with current guidance.

Where a blanket is used, the baby must be positioned feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with the blanket securely tucked in and no higher than the shoulders. The baby's head must remain uncovered.

Staff must inspect the cot before every sleep and remove any unauthorised items immediately.

A baby's personal comforter or toy may be used during supervised settling or play, but it must be removed before the baby is placed down to sleep.

## 5. Sleeping Arrangements for Children Over 12 Months

Children over 12 months must have their own appropriate, safe and separate sleeping space on a clear, flat, firm surface, such as a suitable bed or mattress.

Sleeping arrangements must be appropriate to the child's age, size, mobility and individual needs, and must be risk-assessed.

Children must be placed on their backs at the beginning of sleep. Staff must not force a child to remain in a particular position if the child independently changes position while sleeping, but must continue to monitor their safety.

Comforters may only be considered for children over 12 months where they are age-appropriate, safe and consistent with the child's individual risk assessment and nursery procedures. They must never be placed in a baby's cot.

Children must not sleep on sofas, armchairs, beanbags or other soft or unsuitable surfaces. If a child falls asleep in an unsuitable place, staff must safely transfer the child to an appropriate sleeping space.

## 6. Sleep Environment and Room Temperature

The nursery will ensure that sleep areas are clean, calm, adequately ventilated and free from hazards.

For babies aged 12 months and under, the recommended room temperature is 16–20°C.

Staff will:

- Check and record the room temperature in accordance with the nursery's sleep-check procedure.
- Ensure children are dressed appropriately and do not become too hot or too cold.
- Remove hats and unnecessary outdoor clothing when children come indoors.
- Ensure the baby's head and face remain uncovered.
- Check for signs of overheating, such as sweating, clammy skin or a chest that feels unusually hot.
- Adjust clothing or bedding when necessary.
- Follow management instructions and use professional judgement during extreme temperatures.

Cots and beds must be positioned safely, away from hazards such as blind cords, heaters, electrical cables and objects that could fall into the sleeping space.

Sleep equipment must be checked regularly, kept clean and maintained in safe working condition. Any damaged or unsuitable equipment must be taken out of use immediately.

## 7. Supervision and Sleep Checks

**Every sleeping child must remain within the sight and hearing of staff.** Staff must provide active supervision and must never assume that a sleeping child is safe simply because the child appears settled.

Babies under six months must always have an adult in the same room for every sleep.

For children over six months, a suitable monitor may be used where it allows them to be seen and heard at all times. A monitor does not replace frequent physical checks.

All sleeping children must be checked frequently throughout every sleep. Checks must be sufficiently frequent and appropriate to the child's age, health, individual risk assessment and circumstances. Any additional checks specified in an individual care plan must be followed.

During each physical check, staff must observe the child and, where appropriate, check:

- That the child is breathing normally.
- The child's colour and general appearance.
- The child's position and that their airway is unobstructed.
- That the child's head and face are uncovered.
- That the sleeping environment remains safe.
- That there are no signs of distress, overheating, illness or unusual behaviour.

Staff must not rely solely on listening for sounds or observing a monitor. A quiet child must not automatically be assumed to be sleeping safely.

Sleep checks must be recorded accurately, including the child's name, date, time of check, staff member's initials and any relevant observations or action taken.

Staff must never record a check that they have not completed.

## 8. Staffing and Staff Responsibilities During Sleep

The manager must ensure that sleeping arrangements and supervision can be maintained safely alongside the nursery's staffing requirements and ratios.

The designated staff member must know which children are sleeping, where they are sleeping and when their next checks are due (every 15 minuets).

Staff must not leave sleeping children without the required supervision in order to complete other duties, take breaks or attend to another room.

Where a staff member needs to leave the sleep area, responsibility must be clearly handed over to another suitable staff member before they leave.

Any staff member who identifies inadequate supervision, unsafe equipment or a breach of this policy must take immediate action to protect the children and inform the manager.

## 9. Settling Children to Sleep

Staff will use calm, reassuring and age-appropriate approaches to help children settle.

These may include quiet conversation, gentle reassurance, a familiar sleep routine or a story for older children.

Staff must never:

- Force a child to sleep.
- Restrain a child to keep them in a sleeping position.
- Use unsafe equipment or surfaces to make a child sleep.
- Cover a child's face or head.
- Ignore a child's distress.
- Leave a baby unattended in an unsafe sleeping arrangement.

If a child does not settle, staff will respond sensitively to their needs and offer an appropriate quiet activity or further reassurance.

## 10. Children Who Do Not Want to Sleep

Not every child will need or want to sleep during the nursery day. Staff will respect individual differences and will not force children to sleep.

Children who do not sleep will be offered quiet, supervised activities appropriate to their age and developmental needs.

Staff will work with parents to agree a consistent approach to rest, taking into account the child's wellbeing and daily routine.

## 11. Children with Additional Needs or Medical Conditions

Where a child has a medical condition, disability, developmental need or other circumstance that affects their sleep, the nursery will complete an individual risk assessment and, where appropriate, a written care plan.

Advice from relevant health professionals will be sought when necessary. Any agreed adjustments must remain consistent with safe sleep requirements and the child's welfare.

Staff must understand the child's individual needs and know what action to take if the child's condition changes during sleep.

No unsafe sleeping practice may be introduced solely because it is requested by a parent or appears to help the child settle.

## 12. If a Child Falls Asleep Unexpectedly

If a baby aged 12 months and under falls asleep in a car seat, pushchair or other unsuitable place, staff must transfer the baby to their appropriate cot as soon as it is safe to do so.

Babies must not use car seats, slings, beanbags or pushchairs as their main sleeping space in the nursery.

For children over 12 months, staff should transfer them to an appropriate, separate sleeping space whenever possible.

Staff must ensure that any transfer is carried out safely and that the child is checked after being placed in the appropriate sleeping space.

## 13. Emergency Procedures

If a child appears unresponsive, is not breathing normally, has abnormal breathing, changes colour significantly or causes staff any serious concern:

1. Staff must act immediately and assess the child's responsiveness and breathing.
2. A member of staff must call 999 and follow the emergency operator's instructions.
3. Paediatric first aid must be administered by a trained staff member, as appropriate, without delay.
4. Another staff member must alert the manager and arrange for emergency responders to be met.
5. Parents or carers must be contacted as soon as practicable.
6. The incident must be documented, reported and reviewed in accordance with the nursery's safeguarding, accident and incident procedures.

Staff must never delay emergency action while completing paperwork or attempting to contact parents.

Any unexplained or serious incident must be escalated to the appropriate authorities in accordance with current reporting requirements.

## 14. Staff Training and Policy Implementation

The nursery manager is responsible for ensuring that all staff read, understand and follow this policy.

Staff will receive appropriate induction and regular refresher guidance on safer sleep, supervision, emergency procedures and recording requirements.

Staff must also read current NHS safer sleep advice and the Department for Education's safer sleep guidance.

The manager will monitor practice through observations, checks of sleep records, staff discussions and reviews of incidents or concerns.

Any breach of this policy will be addressed promptly and may result in further training or formal disciplinary action, depending on the circumstances.

## 15. Partnership with Parents and Carers

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Parents will be informed of the nursery's sleep arrangements and the importance of following safe sleep guidance.

The nursery will communicate relevant information about a child's sleep routine and any concerns arising during the day.

Parents may be asked to provide updated information about changes in sleep patterns, medical needs or advice received from a health professional.

The nursery will work in partnership with families while ensuring that all sleeping arrangements remain safe and comply with statutory requirements.

## 16. Recording and Confidentiality

Sleep records and individual care plans must be completed accurately, stored securely and made available to authorised staff who need the information to care for the child safely.

Any concerns, unusual observations, missed checks, equipment faults or incidents must be reported to the manager and documented in accordance with nursery procedures.

Records must be retained in line with the nursery's record-retention and data-protection policies.

## 17. Monitoring and Review

The nursery manager will review this policy at least annually and sooner if there are changes to the EYFS statutory framework, government safer sleep guidance, relevant professional advice or nursery practice.

The manager will ensure that any changes are communicated to staff and implemented consistently.

**Policy approved by:** ___Rassmieh Ketabpour____

**Signature:** ____rassmieh ketabpour_____

**Date:** _____7 September 2026_____