



Sleeping Babies and Toddlers/Rest Policy

At Little Explorers, we aim to ensure that all children have sufficient rest to support their development and natural sleep rhythms in a calm, safe environment. We follow best practice guidance from the Lullaby Trust and NHS to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and ensure high standards of care for all sleeping children.

This policy is implemented in line with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2025, including safeguarding and welfare requirements relating to children's safety, supervision, health and wellbeing.

Safe Sleeping Practices

- Babies are always placed on their backs to sleep. If a baby rolls onto their front, they are returned to their back unless they can confidently roll both ways.
- Babies/toddlers are never put to sleep with a bottle to self-feed.
- Sleeping babies and toddlers are visually monitored at all times. Staff observe chest movement and positioning. Where sleeping bags are used, they must be the correct size and tog rating for the child and room temperature and comply with current safety standards.
- Sleep times, checks are recorded every 10 minutes, and significant observations are recorded in accordance with nursery procedures and shared with parents. Babies under six months or new to the setting are checked every 5 minutes during the initial settling-in period. Additional supervision and more frequent checks may be implemented for younger babies, children new to the setting, premature babies, or children with identified medical needs.
- Babies/children are never left to sleep alone in a separate sleep room; staff supervision is continuous.
- Sleeping children remain within sight and/or hearing of staff at all times and are monitored in accordance with individual risk assessments and nursery procedures.
- If a baby or young child falls asleep while being held or carried, they are gently transferred to a safe, flat sleeping surface to continue resting.
- Babies are monitored for signs of overheating, including checking chest/back temperature where appropriate.
- Babies will not wear hats indoors while sleeping.
- Where babies use a dummy for sleep, staff will follow parents' wishes and safer sleep guidance. Dummies will never be forced or reinserted once a child is asleep.

- Children who are unwell, have breathing difficulties, a temperature, or symptoms affecting safe sleep will be closely monitored and may require collection in line with the nursery's sickness policy.
- Swaddling is not routinely practised within the nursery. Any exceptional arrangements would require written parental consent, risk assessment, and adherence to current safer sleep guidance.
- Electronic monitoring devices may support supervision but never replace direct visual checks by staff.

Babies are placed in the 'feet to foot' position, with their feet at the bottom of the cot or sleep space, to reduce the risk of slipping under bedding.

Staff must immediately report any concerns regarding a child's breathing, colour, temperature, responsiveness, or sleeping environment to the room leader or manager.

Creating a Safe Sleep Environment

- Room temperatures are monitored to ensure comfort and safety.
- Babies are dressed appropriately for sleep, with light bedding or sleeping bags provided to prevent overheating.
- We use only safety-approved cots and sleep mats that comply with British Standards, with clean fitted sheets and mattress covers.
- Cot bumpers and soft toys are avoided.
- Babies are always placed on a firm, flat mattress or sleep surface.
- No loose or hanging cords, bags, or objects are allowed near sleep spaces.
- All bedding is labelled for individual children and washed at least weekly or more frequently if soiled.
- Where a child falls asleep in a pram or pushchair, staff will transfer them to a safe flat sleeping surface where possible. Any planned sleeping in a flat-lying pram requires written parental consent and a risk assessment.
- We uphold a strict no-smoking policy.
- The nursery carries out regular risk assessments of sleep areas, cots, bedding, sleep routines, and supervision arrangements.
- Children must arrive at nursery awake and be handed over directly to a member of staff. Children who arrive asleep in car seats, pushchairs, or other transport equipment will not routinely be accepted into the setting until awake, unless exceptional circumstances have been agreed in advance with management. This supports safe handovers, wellbeing checks, and safer sleep practices.

Unsuitable Sleep Equipment

Children are not routinely permitted to sleep in:

- Car seats
- Bouncers
- Swings
- Beanbags
- Sofas
- Pillows or sleep positioners (including Sleepyheads)
- Comforters used during sleep must be age-appropriate, safe, and not pose a suffocation or strangulation risk.

Evacuation arrangements for sleeping children

Emergency evacuation procedures take account of sleeping children, and staff are trained to safely evacuate children from sleep areas where necessary.

Medical Needs/Care Plans

Where a child has a medical condition affecting sleep, breathing or positioning, the nursery will follow an individual healthcare plan and professional advice.

Sleep Routines and Parent Communication

- Upon joining the nursery, parents complete a sleep routine form with their child's key person. Sleep routines are reviewed with parents regularly and updated whenever needs change.
- Where a child has a sleep position not routinely recommended within safer sleep guidance (e.g. tummy sleeping), this will only be followed where supported by written medical advice and risk assessment.
- We recognise that parents know their child best and aim to follow individual routines as closely as possible.
- Staff will not force a child to sleep or keep them awake. Children will only be woken where necessary for their wellbeing, safety, medical needs, or to support agreed care routines.
- Sleep is based on individual needs rather than set times. Staff use calming techniques (e.g., dimmed lights, soft music) to help children rest, while also ensuring children who do not sleep continue to access stimulating play activities.
- Staff work flexibly between rooms and outdoors where needed to meet the needs of both sleeping and awake children.

Staff Training

All staff receive safer sleep awareness training as part of induction and ongoing professional development.

The nursery recognises that safer sleep is a safeguarding responsibility. Staff remain vigilant at all times and follow current safer sleep guidance, individual risk assessments,

and children's care routines to minimise risks and promote children's health, safety and wellbeing.

Sleep for Twins

We follow Lullaby Trust guidance for the safe sleeping of twins, including appropriate spacing and supervision.

Daily Updates and Monitoring

- Any changes to a child's sleep pattern are discussed with parents at pick-up.
- Staff share observations about sleep quality and note if a child seems under-rested.

Further guidance is available at: <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk>

Reviewed annually or sooner following changes to legislation, EYFS requirements, safeguarding guidance, or safer sleep recommendations.

This policy was adopted on	Reviewed
24/01/2022	18/05/2026