Sleep and Rest Policy

At The Orchard Nursery, we recognise that it is imperative that children get the sleep they need to support their cognitive, physical, and emotional development. Ensuring children receive sufficient, good-quality rest is essential for their health and well-being.

We follow safer sleep guidance recommended by The Lullaby Trust and the NHS to minimise the risk of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**. The safety of all babies and children is paramount, and we work in close partnership with parents to ensure consistent and safe sleep practices. Staff receive training on safer sleep awareness and will be asked to read the NHS guidance along with this policy.

All our safer sleeping advice is for every sleep and nap.

All cots, mattresses, mats and sleep coracles are inspected on a regular daily basis to ensure they are in good condition before each sleep session. This also includes fitted sleep sheets and blankets.

Sleep Restrictions

Some parents may not wish for their child(ren) to sleep while at nursery. This will be discussed during settling-in sessions between parents and the child's key person, alongside all sleep requirements of the child.

We will gently distract and discourage sleep if requested; however, we will **never physically prevent a child from falling asleep**. If a child does fall asleep, we will support them to rest appropriately, usually allowing a full sleep cycle (approximately 45 minutes), as waking too early can cause distress and unsettled behaviour.

If a child does not wish to sleep, they will not be forced and will instead be offered calm, quiet activities.

When waking children (if a sleep limit has been agreed), staff will do so gradually and sensitively:

- Blankets will be removed
- Lighting will be gently increased
- Children will be allowed to wake naturally where possible

Preparing for Sleep / Rest Time

Before sleep, staff will ensure:

- The baby/child has had a nappy change with a fresh, clean nappy
- Outer clothing (e.g. thick cardigans with zips/buttons) is removed. Hair clips and bobbles will also be removed. Bibs or dribble scarves are also removed.
- The baby/child has been fed and had a drink
- The room temperature is comfortable (16–20°C recommended)
- White noise or soft lullaby music may be played, and lights dimmed/ turned off where possible

During Sleep Time Children will:

- Have clean, individual bedding.
- Be placed **on their back to sleep** in line with safer sleep guidance
- Be placed in their **own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface**, such as a cot, dream coracle or sleep mat on the floor
- Babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot - this includes carrycots, moses baskets, travel cots and dream Coracle (We check our sleep equipment to make sure products meet the British Safety Standards)
- Children under **24 months will never be left to sleep in a bouncy chair, pushchair or car seat**
- Sleep comforters may only be used for children aged over 12 months.
- Be comforted to sleep, (e.g. patted, rocked) if needed.
- Be monitored continuously, with checks at least every 10 minutes (recorded)
- Be positioned so that **nothing covers their face or head**
- For children up to 12 months sleeping in a cot: Blankets will be securely tucked into the sides of the cot and positioned below shoulder height

Sleep spaces will:

- Contain only a **firm, flat, waterproof mattress**
- Use **lightweight bedding**, firmly tucked in to prevent head covering
- Alternatively, a **well-fitted baby sleep bag** may be used (following manufacturer guidance)
- Follow **feet-to-foot positioning** where blankets are used
- Be kept clear of **toys, pillows, duvets, extra blankets, cot bumpers, wedges, or straps**
- Babies aged 12 months and under that fall asleep whilst travelling must be transferred to their cot once they return to the setting.
- Children aged over 12 months that fall asleep whilst travelling should, where possible, be transitioned to their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface such as a cot, bed or suitable mattress on the floor upon return.
- If a baby or child falls asleep whilst travelling in a car seat, they must also be transferred to their separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting.
- Supported by NHS guidance, any hats and extra clothing should be removed as soon as you come indoors or enter a car, bus or train, even if it means waking the baby.
- A lie-flat pram or lie-flat pushchair should not be their main separate sleep space.

Children will:

- Be kept at a comfortable temperature (16–20°C) and not overdressed
- Have their heads uncovered at all times
- Always remain **within sight and hearing of staff**

Children under six months:

- Will always have an adult present in the same room during sleep

A sleep monitor is used within the baby room sleep area to support staff in monitoring children, ensuring they remain within sight and hearing at all times. This is used alongside regular (10 minute) physical checks to maintain the highest standards of safety and supervision. Checks will be recorded

on a specifically designed sleep chart and will include information such as type of sleep area, sleep position, comforter, time of check and staff initial. These will be retained for a period of one month before being securely disposed of.

Partnership with Parents

- Sleep routines are discussed and agreed with parents
- Parents receive feedback on sleep patterns daily
- We work in partnership with parents and carers and take their views into consideration; however, individual preferences cannot be accommodated where they conflict with current safer sleep guidance or may place a child at risk.

Understanding SIDS

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), sometimes known as cot death, is the sudden and unexplained death of an otherwise healthy baby. While rare in the UK, safer sleep practices significantly reduce the risk.

SIDS is most common in babies under 6 months and may be influenced by factors such as:

- Premature birth or low birth weight
- Exposure to smoke
- Unsafe sleep environments
- Overheating or airway obstruction

Although the exact cause is unknown, following safer sleep guidance helps minimise risks.

Why safer sleep is important

It is important to provide babies and children with a safer sleep environment to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) in babies up to 12 months of age, and sudden unexpected death in childhood (SUDC) in children aged over 12 months.

SIDS is the sudden unexpected death of a baby where no cause is found. Whilst it is uncommon, there are some factors that can increase a baby's risk of SIDS. These include:

- being born prematurely (before 37 weeks)
- low birthweight (less than 2.5kg or 5.5lb)
- exposure to smoking in pregnancy
- sleeping with babies and children on sofas or chairs

SUDC is the sudden unexpected death of a child where no cause is found. Creating a safer sleep space can help avoid accidents, such as the risk of suffocating when sleeping from becoming entangled in soft bedding and/or getting trapped in soft furniture.

It is important to follow all the steps in this policy to ensure that we are providing as safe a sleep environment as possible for every baby and child in our care.

Procedure for children arriving asleep at nursery

To ensure the highest standards of safety, wellbeing, and safeguarding for all children in our care, we are unable to accept children who arrive at nursery already asleep.

When a child arrives asleep, staff are unable to complete a full and immediate wellbeing check. For example, it may not be possible to assess whether a child is unwell, their level of responsiveness, or their overall condition on arrival. In addition, some children may become unsettled or distressed

when they wake in a different environment, which can affect their emotional wellbeing and settling-in experience.

Seated or inclined sleeping position

In line with guidance from The Lullaby Trust and Ofsted, pushchairs/ buggies / car seats / bouncy chairs/ swings and hammocks are not recommended for sleep as they do not provide a firm, flat surface. For this reason, and to support safe sleep practices, children will be settled in a suitable cot or on an appropriate sleep mat while at nursery

If a baby falls asleep in a sitting device they will be moved to a flat surface eg. cot or sleeping mat. The sitting device must not be placed on a high or soft surface.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Some children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may have additional sleep needs which require extra support or reasonable adjustments to this policy. In such cases, we will always follow the guidance set out in this policy and work in partnership with parents to discuss and meet individual needs.

In addition, some children may fall asleep in the main room and may not wish to transition to a separate sleep space. In these situations, we will move the child to a safe, appropriate area, where they will be continuously monitored by an adult in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Medical Concerns

If a baby becomes unwell:

- Staff will monitor closely and inform parents
- Advice may be sought via a GP or NHS 111

Emergency Action

Staff will call 999 immediately if a baby:

- Stops breathing or turns blue
- Is struggling to breathe
- Is unconscious or unresponsive
- Cannot be woken
- Has a seizure

Further information

Early years staff should read NHS advice on Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – NHS.

More information on safer sleep guidance is available from The Lullaby Trust.

Further information about product safety and recalls can be found on the Office for Product Safety and Standards.

Signed on behalf of the nursery.....Emma Middleton.....Date:… August 2026