



Safer Sleep Policy

Effective from: September 2026 | Review date: September 2027 or sooner if guidance changes

Applies to	All staff, students, volunteers and children who sleep or rest at nursery
Policy owner	Management team / DSL
Sources	DfE Help for Early Years Providers: Safer sleep, NHS SIDS guidance, The Lullaby Trust safer sleep guidance

1. Policy statement

Wise Owls Nursery School is committed to providing a safe sleep and rest environment for all babies and young children in our care. Safer sleep practice is part of our safeguarding responsibility and will be followed consistently for every sleep, including planned naps, children who fall asleep unexpectedly, and children who fall asleep while out of the setting.

This policy reflects the updated safer sleep expectations for early years settings from September 2026 and is informed by Department for Education guidance, NHS safer sleep advice and The Lullaby Trust guidance.

2. Purpose of this policy

- To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related risks.
- To ensure all children have a clear, firm, flat, safe and separate sleep space.
- To ensure all staff understand their responsibilities before, during and after sleep times.
- To ensure sleep checks are completed, recorded and acted on appropriately.
- To make sure parents understand our safer sleep expectations and what they need to provide.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all children who sleep or rest at Wise Owls Nursery School, with particular focus on babies under 12 months and children under 2 years old. It applies in all rooms, on outings, during settling sessions and whenever a child falls asleep.

4. Safer sleep arrangements by age

Babies aged

12 months and under

- Babies aged 12 months and under must sleep in a cot or travel cot only.
- At Wise Owls, a suitable cot or travel cot will be used for any baby aged 12 months and under.
- The cot or travel cot must be assembled and used in line with manufacturer instructions.
- The mattress must be firm, flat, waterproof or wipe-clean, clean, dry, undamaged and well-fitting with no gaps.



- No additional mattress, extra padding, pillow, pod, nest, wedge or positioning aid may be added.

Children over 12 months

- Children over 12 months may sleep on an individual firm, flat sleep mat or suitable floor/rest bed, provided the sleep surface is safe, clear, firm, flat and separate.
- Sleep mats and floor/rest beds must be clean, in good condition, age appropriate and positioned so each child has their own individual sleep space.
- Any product used for sleep must be checked by management before use. Products described as pods, nests, loungers, wedges or positioners will not be used for sleep unless the nursery has confirmed in writing that they are suitable and compliant with safer sleep requirements.

5. Sleep position

- Children should be placed down to sleep on their back, in the supine position.
- If a baby rolls during sleep, staff should gently return them to their back until they can roll from back to front and front to back independently.
- Once a child can roll both ways independently, they may find their own sleep position, but staff must still place them down on their back at the start of each sleep.
- A child must never be put down to sleep on their front or side unless there is a written medical instruction and this has been risk assessed and agreed by management.

6. Clear sleep spaces

All sleep spaces must remain clear. The following must not be placed in a cot, travel cot or sleep space:

- pillows
- duvets
- cot bumpers
- loose toys
- soft toys for babies aged 12 months and under
- pods, nests or wedges
- straps or positioning aids
- extra mattresses or soft padding
- loose blankets that could cover the child's face or head

Children's heads and faces must always remain uncovered.

7. Bedding and sleep bags

- Fresh breathable bedding must be used for each child.
- If blankets are used for babies, they must be lightweight, tucked in securely and no higher than the shoulders, with the baby's feet near the foot of the cot.
- Parents will be asked to provide a clearly named, well-fitting sleep bag if their child uses one.
- Sleep bags should stay in the child's bag and be returned home at the end of the day.
- Staff must check that sleep bags are suitable for the room temperature and fit safely around the neck and armholes.
- Weighted blankets, weighted sleep bags or weighted sleep aids must not be used.



8. Room temperature and clothing

- The sleep room temperature must be maintained between 16°C and 20°C where possible.
- A room thermometer must be used to monitor the sleep environment.
- Staff must check children are not too hot or too cold by feeling the chest or back of the neck. Cool hands or feet alone are not a reliable sign that a child is cold.
- Hats, hoods, outdoor coats and thick outer layers must be removed before sleep indoors.
- If a child feels hot, sweaty, clammy or flushed, staff must remove a layer and continue to monitor closely.
- Children must not sleep next to radiators, heaters, direct sunlight or other heat sources.

9. Sleep checks and supervision

- All sleeping children must be checked every 10 minutes.
- Sleep checks must be logged accurately on Famly.
- Checks must include breathing, colour, position, temperature, general comfort and whether the face and head are clear.
- All sleeping children must be within sight and hearing of staff.
- The sleep room camera must be live with sound on via the Nest app during sleep times.
- The camera supports supervision but does not replace physical 10-minute checks.
- Only permanent staff may be alone in the sleep room.
- Any concerns about breathing, colour, temperature, position or wellbeing must be acted on immediately and reported to the room leader or manager.

10. Buggies, car seats, slings and outings

- Buggies, car seats and slings are not routine sleep spaces.
- The nursery will not use buggies as routine sleep spaces and will ensure suitable cots, travel cots or sleep mats are available.
- If a child falls asleep in a buggy, car seat or sling, staff must ensure the child's face is visible and airway is always clear.
- When returning to the setting, the child should be moved to their safe sleep space as soon as practical.
- Car seats must only be used for transport and not as a sleep space once the journey has ended.

11. Sleep records

Sleep information must be recorded on Famly. Records should include:

- time the child went to sleep
- time the child woke
- 10-minute checks
- temperature or wellbeing concerns
- any action taken
- name or initials of the staff member completing the check

Records must be accurate and completed at the time. Sleep checks must not be guessed, copied or completed retrospectively.



12. Parent communication

- Parents will be asked to complete the Family All About Me form before the home visit, including information about sleep routines, settling methods, sleep bags, breathing or medical needs and any positioning concerns.
- Parents will be asked to provide a named sleep bag if their child uses one.
- Staff will explain that nursery follows safer sleep guidance and may not replicate unsafe sleep practices used at home.
- If a parent requests a sleep practice that does not meet safer sleep guidance, staff must refer this to management before agreeing any arrangement.
- Any medical sleep instruction must be provided in writing and risk assessed.

13. Training and staff responsibilities

- Staff who put children to sleep, supervise the sleep room or complete sleep checks must complete the required 2-hour safer sleep training course.
- All staff will receive a safer sleep overview so they understand the key expectations.
- All staff must read and complete the SIDS, The Lullaby Trust and safer sleep pamphlets as part of their induction and regular policy reviews.
- Safer sleep will be included in induction and regular staff review processes.
- Room leaders are responsible for monitoring sleep practice in their room and ensuring records are completed.
- Managers are responsible for policy review, training records, equipment checks and responding to concerns.
- Sleep room CCTV footage is reviewed weekly by management to monitor that sleep checks are being carried out correctly and in line with safer sleep guidance. CCTV supports monitoring but does not replace physical 10-minute checks.

14. Equipment checks

- Cots, travel cots, mattresses, sleep mats and floor/rest beds must be checked regularly for damage, cleanliness and safe use.
- Any damaged or unsuitable sleep equipment must be removed from use immediately and reported to management.
- Only products that meet safer sleep expectations will be used. This means firm, flat, clear, clean, separate and appropriate for the child's age.
- Products described as pods, nests, loungers, wedges or positioners must not be used for sleep unless management has confirmed in writing that they are suitable and compliant. Until confirmed, they must not be relied on as sleep spaces.

15. If staff are concerned about a sleeping child

1. Go to the child immediately.
2. Check breathing, colour, temperature, position and responsiveness.
3. Call for the room leader or manager straight away.
4. If the child is not breathing, is struggling to breathe, is floppy, unresponsive, blue, grey, pale, stiff, shaking or not waking, call 999 immediately and begin emergency procedures.
5. Record the concern and actions taken as soon as it is safe to do so.



6. Inform parents and follow safeguarding, accident and incident procedures as appropriate.

16. Monitoring and review

- Managers will carry out regular checks of sleep practice, equipment and Family sleep records.
- The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance, DfE guidance, NHS advice or The Lullaby Trust advice changes.
- Any breach of safer sleep practice will be addressed immediately through supervision, retraining and, where necessary, disciplinary procedures.

Key safer sleep reminders for staff

Back to sleep.

Clear sleep space.

Firm, flat surface.

Safe temperature.

10-minute checks.

Act immediately if concerned.

Linked Policies

Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Medication, Nappy and Toileting, Intimate Care, Risk Assessment, Illness and Infection Control

References

- Department for Education, Help for Early Years Providers: Safer sleep, published 20 April 2026.
- NHS, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), page last reviewed 25 November 2025.
- The Lullaby Trust, safer sleep information and early years resources.

Written	11 August 2026
Written by	Anna Olley
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