

## **Safer Sleep Policy**

### **Rationale**

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the death of a baby under the age of 12 months, where no cause can be identified. It is primarily defined as a sleep-related death, and since the introduction of the 'Back to Sleep' campaign in 1991 (later known as the 'Safe to Sleep' campaign from 2012), deaths attributed to SIDS have fallen by over 80%.

The NHS and the Lullaby Trust provide guidance for families, care givers and early years settings on safer sleep in order to reduce instances of SIDS deaths. From September 2026, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework will explicitly outline safer sleep requirements for early years settings.

Children between the age of 1 and 18 years can be affected by Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC). Whilst the Safer Sleep recommendations have not reduced the number of instances of SUDC, they continue to have strong benefits for the child by maintaining a healthy sleep environment and reducing other risks such as entanglement, entrapment, overheating and asphyxiation.

Having enough good quality sleep is essential for a child's healthy physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. We understand the importance of sleep in supporting a child's growth, healing, learning and development. We prioritise good quality sleep within the setting, and follow the safer sleep advice provided by the NHS and the Lullaby Trust. All children will have adequate time during their day at Wild Things – Droitwich to meet their daytime sleep needs. Children who are transitioning to fewer or no daytime naps will be supported to rest through quiet, calming activities.

### **Procedure**

#### **Babies under six months of age**

Babies under the age of six months will sleep in a cot, travel cot, Moses basket or carrycot (referred to collectively as 'cot' throughout this policy) meeting the relevant British Safety Standards. They will be placed to sleep on their back, with their feet at the foot of the cot. They will be kept suitably warm with either a lightweight cellular

blanket or baby sleeping bag appropriate to the baby's age, size and the room temperature. Each child will be allocated their own waterproof sheet and bedding. Bedding, blankets and sleeping bags will be washed and sanitised regularly. The cot will not contain any additional items. An adult will always be present during the baby's sleep, and physical health observations will be carried out regularly.

### **Babies between 6 months and 12 months of age**

Babies aged between 6 and 12 months will sleep in a cot, travel cot, moses basket or carrycot (referred to collectively as 'cot' throughout this policy) meeting the relevant British Safety Standards. They will be placed to sleep on their back, with their feet at the foot of the cot. They will be kept suitably warm with either a lightweight cellular blanket or baby sleeping bag appropriate to the baby's age, size and the room temperature. Each child will be allocated their own waterproof sheet and bedding. Bedding, blankets and sleeping bags will be washed and sanitised regularly. The cot will not contain any additional items. The child will always be within sight and sound of an adult during sleep, and physical health observations will be carried out regularly.

### **Children over the age of 12 months**

Once we feel they are ready, children over 12 months old will be transitioned to firm, flat, waterproof sleep mats on the floor. This gives the child the additional space and independence they need as they grow. The child will be supported to lie down on their back initially, but they are then free to find their own most comfortable position. Each child will be allocated their own sleep mat and set of bedding, with spares available when needed. Lightweight cellular blankets or sleeping bags appropriate to the child's age, size and room temperature will be used for warmth. Bedding, blankets, sleeping bags and sleep mats will be washed and sanitised regularly. The child will always be within sight and sound of an adult during sleep, and physical health observations will be carried out regularly.

### **Premature babies**

Babies born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy) will be supported to sleep safely in accordance with their corrected age, ie based on their due date rather than actual birth date.

### **Comforters and dummies**

The Department for Education permits sleep comforters only for babies and children over the age of 12 months. We understand the phrase 'sleep comforters' to include toys, muslins, blankets and similar items, but not to include dummies.

Some research suggests that dummy use during sleep time for babies under the age of 12 months can reduce the risk of SIDS. If your baby regularly uses a dummy during daytime naps, we will offer this to your baby at naptimes (without a dummy clip or cord attached). The Lullaby Trust recommends phasing out dummies for sleep time between the ages of 6 and 12 months.

### **Sleeping position**

We will place your baby or child on their back to sleep. Once your child can safely and reliably roll themselves front-to-back and back-to-front, they can find their own sleeping position after they have been placed on their back.

### **Sleep during outings**

If a baby or child falls asleep in a car seat whilst travelling with us, they will be taken out of the car seat upon arrival at our destination. If the destination is away from the setting and the baby or child needs to continue their sleep, they will be placed in a fully lie-flat pushchair for the remainder of their nap. If the destination is the setting, they will be placed in a cot or on a firm, flat, waterproof sleep mat on the floor to continue their sleep.

If a baby or child falls asleep in a pushchair whilst we are walking on an outing, the seat will be reclined to a fully lie-flat position for the duration of their sleep whilst we are away from the setting.

If, when we return to the setting, the baby is still sleeping and is 12 months of age or under, we will remove any hats and extra clothing and transfer the baby to a cot to continue their sleep. If the child is over 12 months of age we will, where possible, transfer the child to a firm, flat, waterproof sleep mat on the floor to continue their sleep, having first removed any hats and extra clothing.

## Temperature

The recommended room temperature for babies aged 12 months and under is 16 – 20°C. We will take all reasonable steps to maintain the baby’s sleeping space at this temperature. When the temperature is above 20°C, we will adjust the baby’s clothing and bedding accordingly, and use an electric fan to circulate the air within the room. We will monitor the baby closely for signs of overheating.

No recommended room temperature is given for children over the age of 12 months, however our children typically sleep in the same room, so all of the sleeping children will benefit from the comfort adjustments we make.

## Keeping up to date on recommendations

We have undertaken the Lullaby Trust’s ‘Safer Sleep for Early Years Settings’ training. We regularly review the advice and guidance given by the Lullaby Trust and the NHS, and continue to adhere to the requirements of the EYFS.

## Summary table

	Under 6 months	6-12 months	13-24 months	25+ months
Sleep in a cot, travel cot, moses basket or carrycot	✓	✓	✓	✗
Sleep on a firm, flat, waterproof sleep mat	✗	✗	✓	✓
Suitable size and tog sleeping bag	✓	✓	✓	✗
Cellular blanket	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comforters	✗	✗	✓	✓
Dummies	✓	✓	✗	✗
Transfer from lie-flat pushchair to cot or mat upon return to the setting	✓	✓	Where possible	Where possible
Transfer from car seat to cot or mat upon return to the setting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Placed on their back to sleep	✓	✓	✓	✓
Placed feet to foot of cot	✓	✓	✓	N/A
Adult physically present at all times during sleep	✓	Sight and sound	Sight and sound	Sight and sound
Regular physical health checks during sleep	✓	✓	✓	✓
Take all reasonable steps to maintain room temperature between 16 – 20°C	✓	✓	✓	✓
Take reasonable mitigating actions and monitor for overheating where room temperature is above 20°C	✓	✓	✓	✓

## **Links to further information and research**

The Lullaby Trust:

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/safer-sleep-information/>

NHS safer sleep:

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/baby-basics/newborn-and-baby-sleeping-advice-for-parents/safe-sleep-advice-for-babies/>

Department for Education – Safer Sleep for Early Years Providers:

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safer-sleep>

Department for Education – Frequently Asked Questions (Safer Sleep for Early Years Providers):

<https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2026/04/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-safer-sleep-requirements-frequently-asked-question/>

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