

## Safer Sleep Policy



At Sandcastle Nursery & Preschool Ltd, we understand that sleep is essential for children's healthy growth and development. During sleep, children's bodies rest and repair, while their brains consolidate learning and prepare for new experiences. We are committed to providing a safe, calm, and comfortable environment that supports every child's individual sleep needs, in line with current safer sleep guidance.

### Our Sleep Approach

We support children's well-being by:

- Allowing children to sleep when they are tired.
- Supporting children to sleep for as long as they need, allowing them to wake naturally wherever possible.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers to follow the child's home sleep routine as closely as possible.
- Creating a calm, safe space with soothing background noise or music to help settle children and reduce distractions.
- Completing an **individual sleep care plan/risk assessment for all babies and children under 2**, reviewed regularly with parents.

### Safe Sleep Practices

We follow current guidance to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and to promote safe sleep for all children:

#### For Babies:

- Babies are always placed on their backs to sleep, unless a parent requests an alternative based on medical advice. This will be discussed, documented, and risk assessed with management.
- Babies are positioned with their feet at the foot of the cot, with blankets securely tucked in (if used).
- Once babies can independently roll from back to front, they are permitted to adopt their own sleep position.
- Babies will never be placed to sleep with a bottle. If a baby falls asleep during feeding, staff will gently transfer them to a safe sleep space.
- **All sleeping babies are under constant supervision**, with staff able to see and/or hear them at all times.
- **Sleep checks are carried out and recorded at least every 10 minutes**, including breathing, skin colour, and temperature.
- **A named member of staff is responsible for monitoring sleeping children at all times.**
- Room temperatures are checked regularly and we try to maintain the temperature between **16°C – 20°C**.
- Bibs, hooded tops, and clothing with cords are removed before sleep.
- No pillows, duvets, or loose bedding are used. A sleep sack (correct tog for season) may be used.
- Every baby has individual clean bedding, washed every three sleeps (or after each use if attending fewer sessions).
- Cots are spaced safely apart and kept away from hazards such as cords, blinds, radiators, and electrical wires.
- Cots and mattresses are cleaned between uses.
- **Only firm, flat, waterproof mattresses that fit the cot correctly are used.**
- Mattresses are checked daily and replaced every two years or sooner if required.

- Babies will not sleep in car seats, prams, bouncers, or nesting pods while at nursery.
- Children will never be forced to sleep.

Evidence suggests that babies (those aged 12 months and under) are at a higher risk of SIDS if they have their heads covered. Some items added to their sleep space may increase the risk of SIDS and unnecessary items, such as cot bumpers and toys, can also increase the risk of accidents. **Sleep comforters may be used for babies and children aged over 12 months only.**

### Sleep Mats for Toddlers and Older Children

All the above safety measures also apply to children using sleep mats. In addition:

- Children are placed top-to-toe on mats to reduce the spread of infection.
- Mats are firm, flat, and used in a clear, ventilated space.
- Children are supported to sleep in the same place each time for consistency.
- Children may bring a comfort item or soft toy (subject to safety checks).
- Gentle reassurance (e.g., patting) may be used to support settling.
- Mats must never block walkways or fire exits.
- Children who do not wish to sleep can rest quietly in a designated area.

### Enhanced Safer Sleep Procedures (Updated Guidance)

To ensure best practice and compliance with updated safer sleep expectations:

- **Staff complete regular safer sleep training and updates**, including recognising risks and responding to emergencies.
- **New staff and students are not left unsupervised with sleeping babies until fully trained.**
- **All sleep areas are risk assessed daily** and kept free from hazards.
- **Sleep environments are regularly audited by management** to ensure ongoing compliance.
- **We follow guidance from trusted organisations such as The Lullaby Trust.**
- **Any changes in a child's sleep pattern, health, or behaviour are shared with parents promptly.**
- **If a baby falls asleep outside of a cot (e.g., in arms), they will be transferred to a safe sleep space as soon as possible.**
- **Dummy use is supported if part of the child's routine, but checked regularly during sleep.**

### Additional Information

- If a child has coughs, colds, or respiratory difficulties, staff are especially vigilant during sleep checks.
- In warmer months, appropriate measures such as fans and ventilation are used safely to maintain a comfortable sleep environment (fans are positioned safely and never directed at children).
- We offer optional home visits for babies to support settling-in, especially for those with more complex needs.

We will always work closely with families to ensure your child's individual sleep needs and routines are respected, while maintaining the highest standards of safety, supervision, and care.

