

Sleep and Rest Time Policy

Policy Statement

At The Acorn Nursery School, we recognise that adequate sleep and rest are essential for children's physical health, emotional wellbeing, learning and development. We are committed to providing a calm, safe and nurturing environment where children can rest or sleep according to their individual needs while ensuring that all sleep arrangements meet the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework. We work in partnership with parents and carers to establish and maintain children's individual sleep routines wherever possible.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- promote children's health, wellbeing and emotional security
- provide safe sleep arrangements that comply with current EYFS requirements
- respect individual sleep needs and family preferences
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities for supervising sleeping children
- minimise the risk of accidents or unsafe sleep practices
- support children who no longer sleep but require quiet rest during the day.

Individual Sleep Needs

Before a child starts nursery, key persons will discuss with parents:

- usual sleep routines
- comforters used at home
- preferred settling techniques
- medical conditions affecting sleep
- cultural or family preferences
- any advice provided by healthcare professionals.

Sleep routines will be reviewed regularly with parents and amended as children's needs change.

Children will never be forced to sleep or kept awake unnecessarily.

Sleep Environment

Children aged over 12 months who require sleep will be provided with:

- their own individual sleep space
- an appropriately sized firm, flat, waterproof sleep mat placed directly on the floor where suitable
- lightweight, clean bedding allocated for their use
- a comfortable room temperature
- a quiet, dimly lit and well-ventilated environment.

Sleeping areas will be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition at all times.

Safe Sleep Practice

In accordance with the EYFS requirements:

- Children under the age of 2 years old will always be placed down to sleep on their backs unless written medical advice states otherwise.
- Children will sleep in their own separate sleep space.
- Sleep mats will be firm, flat and waterproof.
- Where blankets are used, the child must be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the sleep mat, with blankets tucked in.
- Sleep spaces will remain free from unnecessary items.
- Children will be dressed appropriately to avoid overheating.
- Staff will ensure children's heads remain uncovered whilst sleeping.

- Dummies, sleep comforters or soft toys provided by parents may be used where appropriate, provided it does not present a safety risk.

Supervision

Sleeping children will:

- remain within sight and hearing of staff at all times
- be physically checked at least every 10 minutes, or more frequently where individual risk assessments indicate
- have checks recorded on the nursery's sleep monitoring record.

During checks staff will observe:

- normal breathing
- skin colour
- temperature
- sleeping position
- positioning of blankets, sleep comforters and soft toys
- signs of distress or discomfort
- overall wellbeing.

Rest Time for Non-Sleepers

Many children over two years no longer require daytime sleep but continue to benefit from periods of relaxation. Children who do not sleep will be offered opportunities for quiet rest. Children will not be required to sleep if they do not wish to do so.

Settling Children

Staff will support children to settle using gentle, responsive approaches including:

- reassurance
- quiet conversation
- calming music
- familiar routines
- comforting touch where appropriate
- comforters provided by parents.

Hygiene

The nursery will ensure that:

- bedding is washed regularly
- sleep mats and cots are cleaned between users
- bedding is individually stored where appropriate
- children sleep in clean environments.

Medical Needs

Where a child has a medical condition affecting sleep, including epilepsy, respiratory conditions or other health needs, an individual risk assessment and care plan will be completed in partnership with parents and relevant health professionals. Staff will receive any necessary training before caring for the child.

Partnership with Parents

Parents will be informed about:

- the nursery's sleep policy
- their child's sleep duration
- any changes to normal sleep patterns
- any concerns regarding sleep or wellbeing.

Parents are encouraged to keep staff informed of any changes to routines at home.

Staff Responsibilities

All practitioners will:

- follow this policy and EYFS requirements
- complete safer sleep training as part of induction and ongoing professional development
- record sleep checks accurately
- report any concerns immediately to the Room Leader
- follow individual care plans where applicable.

The Nursery Manager is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy through supervision, observations and regular policy reviews.

Risk Assessment

The nursery will undertake regular risk assessments of all sleep environments, considering:

- suitability of sleep equipment
- room temperature
- supervision arrangements
- individual children's needs
- staffing ratios
- emergency evacuation procedures.