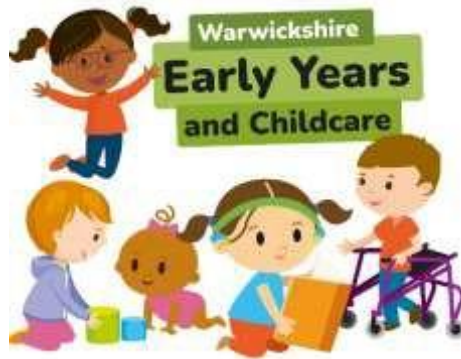


Warwickshire Early Years Quality Standards and Safeguarding Team

Safe Sleep Policy

Policy Framework for Early Years Providers



Purpose of this model policy:

The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) 2026 states that: **“Babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely.”**

For children under 2 years old, the following requirements apply:

- Children must be placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm flat surface such as a cot, bed or mattress on the floor. **Babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot.**
- Sleep spaces must only contain firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child below their shoulders to prevent head covering. Alternatively, a well fitted baby sleep bag may be used. Check the manufacturer’s recommendations before using a baby sleep bag.
- Where blankets are used, the child must be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.
- Cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges, or straps.
- Children should not get too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16 – 20°C.
- Children’s heads must not be covered.
- **Babies under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep. All children must be frequently checked when sleeping.**
- **Children must always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.**

Practitioners must read NHS advice on [Sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\) – NHS](#). More information on safer sleep guidance is available from [The Lullaby Trust. Early-years-safer-sleep-booklet_Digital.pdf](#)

Reviewed on:	September 2026
Next Review Date:	September 2027



This model policy has been developed to support all Early Years Providers working with children aged from birth to five years, with a focus on good practice in relation to safe sleep practices. **This is a policy framework for safe sleep and must not be used in its entirety. Instead, each individual setting should reflect upon their own policies and procedures and adapt the policy framework based upon these.**

Links to settings individual policies may also need to be made when appropriate, which may include:
Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Staff induction and Training Policy, Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Please note:

Additional elements to consider are included within the policy and are highlighted in yellow. Early Years Providers should consider these points in relation to their own policies and procedures and include reference to these points when relevant.

Safe Sleep Policy Framework

Policy Statement

This Safe Sleep Policy outlines our commitment to ensuring the health, safety, and wellbeing of all children during sleep and rest periods. We adhere to the statutory requirements of the EYFS 2026 framework, NHS safer sleep guidance, and The Lullaby Trust recommendations. Our aim is to provide a safe, nurturing, and developmentally appropriate sleep environment for every child in our care.

This Safe Sleep Policy is linked with other policies for the setting, including:

- Child Protection / Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Infection Control Policy
- Staff induction Training and Supervision Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy
- Parent Partnership Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy

Policy Aims

- To safeguard children by implementing evidence-based safe sleep practices.
- To ensure sleep environments are safe, hygienic, and conducive to rest.
- To support individual sleep routines and preferences in partnership with families.
- To train staff in safe sleep supervision and emergency response.
- To monitor and review sleep practices regularly to maintain high standards of care.

The safety of babies' and young children sleeping is paramount

Our policy at (insert name of setting), follows the advice provided by The Lullaby Trust / NHS to ensure safe sleep practices and minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death.

Creating a Safe Sleep Culture

At (insert name of setting), we recognise that leadership and management play a critical role in establishing and maintaining a safe sleep culture. Effective leadership at (insert name of setting), therefore ensures that the importance of safe sleep is fully understood, that staff are well-trained, and that our policies and procedures for safe sleep are consistently followed by all staff and monitored by senior leaders.

Shared responsibility and team accountability

At (insert name of setting) every practitioner takes ownership of their role in ensuring a safe sleep environment. Staff are proactive in following and promoting safe sleep guidelines and being vigilant in identifying and addressing potential risks. Ongoing discussions, between staff especially during handovers, ensures that all children's sleep needs and any specific requirements are consistently and safely met. This continuous communication helps all staff within our setting to maintain a high standard of care. At (insert name of setting) we encourage staff to foster a supportive open culture within their teams, so they feel comfortable raising concerns about sleep safety and to offer peer support to one another.

Child-Centred Care

At (insert name of setting), individual sleep plans are carefully developed in partnership with parents and carers to reflect each child's unique sleep needs, routines, and any relevant medical or cultural considerations.

In line with the EYFS 2026 framework, providers must promote children's welfare and ensure their individual needs are met (EYFS 2026, Section 3 – Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements). Practitioners respect each child's autonomy by never forcing sleep; instead, they observe signs of tiredness and offer rest in a calm and reassuring environment. Sleep routines are tailored to be developmentally appropriate, supporting each child's age and stage of development while promoting emotional regulation and overall wellbeing.

At (insert name of setting) we provide tailored care for each child and seek specialist advice for children with SEND who may require additional support or reasonable adjustments.

Safe Sleep Environment

The EYFS 2026 states:

"Babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely."

For children under 2 years old, the following requirements apply:

- Children must be placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm flat surface such as a cot, bed or mattress on the floor. **Babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot.**
- Sleep spaces must only contain firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child below their shoulders to prevent head covering. Alternatively, a well fitted baby sleep bag may be used. Check the manufacturer's recommendations before using a baby sleep bag.



- Where blankets are used, the child must be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.
- Cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges, or straps.
- Children should not get too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16 – 20°C.
- Children's heads must not be covered.
- Babies under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep. All children must be frequently checked when sleeping.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.

The EYFS 2026 states:

Providers must take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well. This includes:

- *Safeguarding children.*
- *Ensuring the people who have contact with children are suitable.*
- *Promoting good health.*
- *Supporting and understanding behaviour.*
- *Maintaining records, policies, and procedures. (EYFS 2026, Group and School Based settings / Childminders Section 3)*

At (insert name of setting), a safe sleep environment is prioritised to support children's wellbeing and reduce risks. Our practise and procedures are informed by the latest government [safety guidance](#): . We also follow the [NHS advice on safety of sleeping children](#). and Lullaby Trust [Safe Sleep Awareness: Guidance for Early Years Settings](#) and [A guide for professionals](#).

To ensure a safe sleep environment at (insert name of setting), staff ensure:

- Babies are always placed on their backs with their feet at the foot of the cot, following best practice to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).
- Once a baby is able to roll over, we will allow them to find their most comfortable position, as advised by the NHS factsheet and parents (see letter to parents in appendix).
- Only sleep equipment that meets British Safety Standards is used. [Safe Sleep Awareness](#)
- Cots are kept free from hazardous items including pillows, duvets, bumpers, soft toys, and loose bedding.
- One lightweight fitted single sheet per child will be used on a firmly fitted cot mattress. Sleep mats will have a single fitted sheet.
- Children over the age of two, who wish to sleep, will be placed on a sleep mat that meets British Safety Standards.
- Each child is provided with their own clean sheet that is washed weekly (or more if required) and has a photo connected to the sheet. Each child's bedding is stored in their own named bag.
- Babies/children are appropriately dressed for sleep to avoid overheating. Any bibs/ shoes/ tight clothing, will be removed before putting a child down to sleep
- All spaces around cots and beds are kept clear from hanging objects i.e., hanging cords, blind cords, drawstring bags.
- Babies or children who fall asleep while being comforted by a practitioner are transferred to a safe sleeping surface to complete their rest.
- Babies/young children are never left alone with a bottle/feeding cup to self-feed.
- Where a child has a dummy, we will check it is not obstructing the babies/ young child's breathing, as good practice, we will remove the dummy once the child is asleep. Dummy attachments and clips are not permitted to be used.
- Sleep spaces for babies or children are not positioned next to a radiator or next to a window in direct sunlight.
- Babies who to fall asleep in a car seat when travelling to the setting, are taken out as soon as they get to the early years setting, and placed onto a firm, flat safe sleeping surface such as a cot to complete their rest.
- The settings non-smoking / vaping policy is upheld within the setting.
- Daily checks on the sleeping equipment and condition of cots / mattresses are conducted by staff. Staff will inspect each mattress before use to ensure they are in good condition with no rips, tears or sagging and that they fit the cot well with no gaps. Staff will take immediate action to remove and replace any damaged mattresses or equipment which is unsafe to use.
- All mattresses have a waterproof cover, (which meets British Safety Standards) which is wiped down after every use.

- Dummies or comforters are checked to ensure they are in good / safe condition. Babies and young children can choke on damaged dummies and lose threads in blankets.
- Regular audits of the nursery's sleep areas and staff adherence to safe sleep practices are conducted to ensure compliance with safety standards.
- Babies under six months of age will always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep and all children will always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping and will be frequently checked when sleeping in line with our settings policies and procedures.

Temperature and Ventilation

At (insert name of setting), careful attention is given to temperature and ventilation to ensure a safe and comfortable sleep environment for all children. Room thermometers are placed in each sleep room and temperatures within the room are maintained between 16–20°C in line with The Lullaby Trust) Staff monitor and record the temperature in each room frequently and check for any signs of overheating.

At (insert name of setting), appropriate bedding, such as cellular blankets or sleeping bags with correct tog ratings, is used, and blankets are securely tucked below shoulder level to promote safe sleep. Rooms are well-ventilated, ensuring fresh air circulation while avoiding direct airflow on children.

Supervision and Monitoring

The EYFS 2026 framework states:

- “Babies under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep. All children must be frequently checked when sleeping.”
- “Children must always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.”
- Being safe includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child, and that babies are placed down to sleep safely in line with the latest government safety guidance: Practitioners must read NHS advice on [Sudden infant death syndrome \(SIDS\) – NHS](#). More information on safer sleep guidance is available from [The Lullaby Trust](#). [Safe Sleep Awareness](#)

At (insert name of setting), the safety and wellbeing of sleeping children is a top priority, with supervision and monitoring guided by best practice and statutory requirements.

In accordance with the EYFS 2026 framework 3.86 (Group and School Based Settings / Childminders). Staff carry out visual checks at least every 10 minutes, observing breathing, sleep position, colour, and general

wellbeing. These checks are documented in a sleep log, noting the time, observations, any actions taken and the name of the staff member who completed the check; logs are reviewed daily and shared with parents and carers.

At (insert name of setting), as good practice we monitor babies under six months or a new baby sleeping during the first few weeks every five minutes until we are familiar with the child and their sleeping routines, to offer reassurance to them and families.

At (insert name of setting), a staff member is always physically present in the sleep room / same room to ensure a rapid response to any changes in a child's condition. While audio or video monitors may be used to support supervision, **they never replace physical checks** and are used in line with safeguarding and data protection policies.

All sleep rooms at (insert name of setting) are equipped with thermometers, ventilation systems or windows, and lighting controls to maintain a calm, dim environment conducive to rest.

As part of their induction and through regular professional development opportunities staff are trained to recognise signs of overheating, breathing difficulties, and unusual sleep behaviours, and are prepared to respond to emergencies, including administering first aid and alerting senior staff or emergency services.

Upon waking, all children are observed for alertness, mood, and any signs of discomfort or illness, these observations are shared with parents and used by staff to inform ongoing care planning.

Staff Training

At (insert name of setting), staff training is a vital component of ensuring safe sleep practices are consistently upheld. As part of their induction all staff receive mandatory training covering key areas such as sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) prevention and emergency response procedures. This training is refreshed annually and incorporates the latest guidance from trusted sources including the NHS and The Lullaby Trust.

Communication with Families

At (insert name of setting), we believe that clear and consistent communication with families is central to supporting children's sleep routines and overall wellbeing. By developing positive relationships with parents, practitioners gain valuable insights into each child's sleep needs, which supports a smooth settling-in process and ensures any changes or concerns in sleep patterns are shared promptly.

During each child's induction process, we ask parents to provide information on their child's sleeping routine with the child's key person when the child starts at nursery, and these are reviewed and updated at timely intervals sleep practices. During the induction process, parents are invited to complete sleep routine sheets with their child's key person. These are reviewed and updated at regular intervals to reflect any changes. Our nursery's safe sleep procedures are discussed with parents and carers during induction, and the Lullaby Trusts [Lullaby Trusts Safer sleep for babies: a guide for parents](#) is provided to reinforce understanding and promote safe sleep practices at home. We also offer advice, guidance, and workshops to support families in implementing safe sleep strategies.

At (insert name of setting), we recognise and value parents' knowledge of their child's sleep routines and aim to work collaboratively to maintain consistency between home and the setting. Staff will never force a child to sleep or keep them awake against their will, nor will they usually wake a sleeping child. Each child's key person or a staff member shares daily feedback with parents, including details about sleep duration, mood upon waking, and any observations or concerns.

To ensure a joined-up approach to care, staff routinely ask parents how their child slept at home upon arrival. This helps us tailor our plans to align with each child's usual sleep routine, supporting their comfort, safety, and overall wellbeing.

Sleeping arrangements for twins and multiples

At [insert name of setting], we follow the guidance provided by The Lullaby Trust on safe sleep practices for twins. As part of the nursery induction process, we will have a dedicated discussion with parents to agree on suitable sleeping arrangements. A clear and tailored plan will be put in place and reviewed regularly to ensure it continues to meet the individual needs of each child. Further information on safe sleeping for twins or multiples can be found on the [Lullaby Trust website](#).

Risk Management

At (insert name of setting), we recognise that effective risk management is essential to maintaining a safe sleep environment. All sleep areas and procedures have been thoroughly risk assessed and are subject to daily checks and reassessed following any changes to ensure ongoing safety.

Prior to every child being placed to sleep, a risk assessment will be conducted to ensure any hazards are removed from the sleep space and to ensure the environment is safe and secure.

Any sleep-related incidents are promptly documented and communicated to relevant parties, supporting transparency and continuous improvement.

Managers monitor staff compliance with sleep policies through regular supervision and feedback, ensuring consistent practice across the setting.

Unexpected situations

We do not promote sleeping babies in a seated or inclined position such as in pushchairs/buggies. However, where a child does fall asleep in a buggy and cannot be moved to a safe sleep space, perhaps when attending a group or on an outing, staff will ensure:

- The pushchair will be placed in a lie-flat position when sleeping. This will be completely flat, not just in a recline position.
- The buggy is placed next to / backs onto a wall to reduce the risk of tipping over.
- You can see and hear the child at all times.
- Children playing nearby are not able to climb onto the buggy or into the buggy shopping basket.
- The period of time the child sleeps in a buggy is kept to a minimum and they are transferred to a safe sleeping position as soon as possible.

Staff will also ensure adequate shade is provided for infants sleeping in a buggy or pram. Staff will ensure that buggies are never covered with blankets or cloths to reduce light or encourage sleep, as this practice can significantly raise the temperature inside and increase the risk of babies and young children overheating. It also restricts the child's view and may impact supervision. Instead, staff will use sunshades that are specifically designed for use with babies and young children. When using a parasol, they will regularly reposition it or the buggy to maintain effective shade as the sun moves.

If an older child falls asleep during play, such as in a quiet area or the home corner, practitioners will assess the situation to ensure the child's safety and consider whether the environment poses any risk and whether it can be made safe without moving the child.

If moving the child is necessary, practitioners will gently wake the child and support them to transition to a designated sleep space, such as a mattress, to ensure comfort and safety.

Rest times

At (insert name of setting), we recognise that young children, particularly those over two years old, may become tired during the day and benefit from opportunities to rest or sleep. Staff provide a flexible approach that respects each child's individual needs and routines, offering rest as and when children need or choose it.

Children aged 12 months and over are welcome to bring comfort blankets or toys from home, which can offer reassurance, especially during rest times or when settling into the nursery.

Each nursery room includes a quiet area with soft flooring and seating where children can relax. Clean, lightweight sleep mats and blankets are provided (pillows are not used), and all bedding is washed after each use.

Staff are attentive to children's cues and encourage rest when needed, while respecting their autonomy—children are never forced to sleep or rest if they are unwilling or distressed. Sleep/ rest routines are discussed with parents and recorded, and staff support children in settling and remain with them throughout sleep/ rest periods.

Sleep/ rest records are completed daily, and children are checked every five/ ten minutes during sleep. Parents are informed verbally at the end of each session if their child has slept/ rested.

Policy Review This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if guidance changes. Next review: **Insert date**

Appendix 1

Policy Review

Policy Title	Safe Sleep Policy
Reviewed on:	
Reviewed by:	
Next Review Date:	

Appendix 2

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Due to procedures that are in place for under 2's, the sleep monitoring system has been reviewed in line with guidance issued by the foundation for the studies of "Sudden Infant Death". It is recommended that, children under 2 should be placed to sleep on their backs in the feet to foot position (feet at the bottom of the cot). However, it is recognised that young babies roll over and move out of this position. Therefore, we advise staff that they check the child every **10 mins** and move them back into the original position.

If you feel that this will disturb or wake your baby up and you wish for us to leave them in the position that they have adopted for themselves, we will require your permission to do this.

Please fill in the section below accordingly

Early Years Setting:

CHILD'S NAME:

D.O.B:

Please delete and sign as necessary

- ☐ During my child's sleep time at nursery, I wish for staff to leave my child in the position that they have adopted for themselves.
- ☐ During my child's sleep time at nursery, I wish for staff to move my child back into the recommended sleeping position if needed.

Parent/ Carer Signature:

Print Name:

Nursery Key Person Sign:

Print Name:

Date:

Appendix 3 Safe Sleep Monitoring Sheet

Child's Name	Time of Check	Sleep Position (Back/Side/Front)	Breathing: Normal Irregular	Colour: Normal Pale Flushed	Temperature Check (if applicable)	Wellbeing Observations	Staff Initials	Comments

Appendix 4

Checking Sleeping Children



Breathing is regular



Skin temperature (chest or back of neck) and adjust accordingly



Position of child in cot



Fill details in on monitoring sheet

**Any concerns Do not delay
Call for a PFA immediately**

Procedure for Monitoring Sleeping Children

Staff must ensure the safety and comfort of sleeping children by conducting regular checks. During each check, please observe and record the following:

- **Breathing:** Confirm that the child's breathing is regular and unobstructed.
- **Skin Temperature:** Gently feel the nape of the neck to assess warmth. Adjust clothing or bedding if necessary to maintain comfort.
- **Sleeping Position:** Ensure the child is positioned safely and comfortably within the cot.
- **Documentation:** Record all observations promptly and accurately on the designated sleep monitoring sheet.

Any concerns Do not delay Call for a PFA immediately

Appendix 5



Advice for Early Years settings – sleeping space for babies

The safest place for babies to sleep is on a **clear, flat and separate sleep space** such as a:



Moses Basket



Cot



Crib



Travel cot



Carrycot

We advise against sleeping babies in a seated or inclined position such as in

- ✗ **pushchairs / buggies**
- ✗ **car seats**
- ✗ **bouncy chairs**
- ✗ **swings**
- ✗ **hammocks**

These are not suitable sleep surfaces for babies as they are not firm and flat, therefore can be associated with an increased risk of SIDS. This is because if a baby's chin is close to, or on their chest, this position can restrict their airways and become a possible contributing factor to SIDS so should be avoided.

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

If a baby falls asleep in a sitting device they should be moved to a flat surface. Don't place sitting devices on a high or soft surface.

This advice should be the setting's policy to ensure safer sleep is always followed.

SLEEP SUPERVISION

In a nursery / childcare environment, sleeping babies should be closely supervised. This can be a member of staff being present in a dedicated sleep room whilst the babies sleep or frequent monitoring by members of staff in an open plan room.

- ✓ **Inspect cots, bedding and mattresses and ensure all are in good condition before each sleep session**
- ✓ **To avoid overheating, babies should be dressed appropriately for the room temperature (the ideal temperature is 16-20 degrees)**

Registered Charity Number: 262191
Company registration number: 01000824

<https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Advice-for-early-years-poster.pdf>

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Appendix 6

Safe Sleep

Place on the back

Place on a firm, flat mattress. Avoid sleeping pods and nests.



Clear Cot

Keep cot free of pillows, duvets, and soft toys.



Feet to Foot

Position in the feet to foot' position with feet at the bottom of the cot.



Ideal temperature

Use a room temp of 16–20°C.



Regular Checks

Check sleeping children regularly to ensure they are safe and well.

