



Safe Sleep Policy and Procedure 2026-27

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest, we understand that quality sleep plays a crucial role in young children's cognitive, emotional, and physical development. We recognise that each child has their own sleep routine, and we work closely with parents and carers to ensure a consistent and comforting approach to sleep both at home and in the Nursery.

Before a child's first day at Nursery, parents and carers will be asked to share details of their child's sleep routine, including typical nap times, duration, and any settling techniques used at home. If there are any changes to this routine, we ask that these are communicated to the Nursery as soon as possible. We will inform parents and carers of their child's sleep times at the end of each session via the Family app.

We follow NHS safer sleep guidance and have comprehensive risk assessments in place to ensure the safety of children during sleep and nap times. These assessments include measures to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Our nursery is a smoke-free and vape-free environment, ensuring that children are never exposed to harmful substances, including during sleep.

Statutory Guidance

In line with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework, childcare settings have a duty to keep babies safe, which includes following NHS guidance on reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Our Sleep Policy and Procedures reflect this commitment and are informed by the NHS publication '*Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)*': <https://www.nhs.uk/baby/caring-for-a-newborn/sudden-infant-death-syndrome-sids/> as well as advice from The Lullaby Trust: <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/safer-sleep-information/>

Safer sleep guidance applies to all babies under 12 months of age, or up to 12 months from their due date for those born prematurely.

- Each sleeping baby will have their own clear, flat sleep surface, free from toys, bumpers, cushions, sleep positioners, wedges, and loose bedding.
- The use of nests, hammocks, and beanbags is also discouraged, as these items can pose a choking or suffocation risk.
- These practices are in line with recommendations from The Lullaby Trust, recognised experts in the prevention of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), and supported by NHS guidance.

Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest Safe Sleep Procedures

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest, we give careful thought to the safest location for sleep, considering the bed/cot itself, room temperature, potential hazards that need to be out of reach and how we will monitor each child.

Babies sleep in cots or beds within the sleep room and the quiet area of the learning environment, while toddlers and other young children sleep in beds in the sleep room.

- All babies will sleep in age-appropriate cots or beds. All mattresses used will be flat, firm, waterproof, and maintained in good condition.
- Sleep spaces are positioned safely and appropriately within the setting. Potential hazards such as blind cords, plastic bags, or other strangulation risks will be kept well out of reach. Babies will never be permitted to sleep on sofas or chairs, even under adult supervision. For children who are able to climb out of cots, a sleeping mat may be used as an alternative.
- It is recommended that babies do not sleep in inclined or seated positions.
- If a child falls asleep while travelling, they will be reclined where possible and transferred to a suitable cot or bed as soon as they return to the setting.
- If a baby falls asleep while seated within the setting (e.g. in a bouncer, highchair, or swing), they will be moved immediately to a flat, appropriate sleep surface such as a cot or bed.
- In line with NHS guidance, babies will be placed on their backs for sleep, with their feet positioned at the bottom of the cot. Once a baby is able to roll independently, they will be allowed to settle in the position they find most comfortable and will not be repositioned onto their back.
- We aim to maintain a recommended room temperature of between 16°C and 20°C, avoiding exposure to direct sunlight, draughts, and heat sources. Thermometers are used to monitor and regulate the temperature to ensure a safe and comfortable sleep environment.
- Babies may sleep using age-appropriate, well-fitting sleeping bags or lightweight sheets when needed. If sheets are used, they will be securely tucked in and will not rise above the baby's shoulders.
- Care is taken to prevent overheating. Babies and children will not sleep in outdoor clothing or coats, and hot water bottles, electric blankets, or heaters placed near sleep areas will not be used. Hats, slings, or muslins will never be placed over a child's head or face while they are sleeping. If needed, a baby's body temperature will be checked by placing a hand gently on their chest or upper back.
- All babies and children are closely monitored during sleep and remain within sight and/or hearing at all times. Additionally, each child is checked on individually and in person at regular intervals while sleeping. These checks occur every 10 minutes and are recorded on a sleep record.
- Sleeping babies and children will be gently wake children at the end of their allocated sleep time / allow children to wake naturally without disturbance.
- After each sleep, mattresses will be thoroughly wiped down and bedding changed. Any pets on the premises will be kept away from children's beds, cots, and bedding at all times.
- All staff are trained to call 999 immediately if a child is unresponsive, has difficulty breathing, appears severely disoriented, or experiences a seizure.

In addition to following safer sleep procedures within our setting, we strive to provide families with the knowledge they need to make informed choices about their child's sleep routines at home. If parents' or carers' preferences conflict with safer sleep guidelines, we will address these concerns individually and work collaboratively on a case-by-case basis.

Children with Medical Needs

Children with pre-existing health needs will have an individual sleep plan, developed using information provided by parents. This plan will guide staff on specific procedures to follow during sleep times and include any additional or specialised checks required.

Parents must inform staff if their child is unwell upon arrival at Nursery and provide details of any medication given prior to attendance. If a child becomes unwell while at Nursery, their temperature will be checked before sleep and monitored throughout their sleep session. Staff will also carry out more frequent checks on the child's condition and will wake them if medication or medical attention is needed.

Settling Procedures

At Sir James Knott Nursery School and the Nest, we understand that every child has their own unique routine. We work closely with parents and carers to maintain consistency between home and the setting, while ensuring safe practices and fulfilling our duty of care.

- For children who use dummies and/or comforters, these should be provided by parents or carers and kept with the child's personal belongings. If a dummy falls out during sleep, it will not be replaced unless the child wakes. Dummies used during sleep must never have cords attached, as these pose a strangulation hazard.
- All children will either self-settle or be settled by staff, following parents' and carers' preferences wherever possible. We also consider safety requirements, as well as the wellbeing and needs of all children in our care.
- Drinks are not allowed in children's cots due to the risk of choking. Where necessary, we will discuss the risks of propping bottles with parents and carers.

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