



Safer Sleep & Rest Policy

St Anne's Catholic Primary School

Nursery and Reception

Policy established	September 2026	Approved Headteacher	by
Approved by Chair of Governors	_____	Review date	September 2027 or on change of guidance from the DfE.
Applies to	EYFS provision	Status	School policy

1. Purpose

At St Anne's Catholic Primary School, we recognise that appropriate sleep and rest are important for children's health, wellbeing, emotional regulation and development.

Children in Nursery and Reception have differing sleep and rest needs. While many children will no longer require a daytime sleep, some younger children, children with additional needs, or children who are particularly tired or unwell may need an opportunity to rest or sleep.

This policy sets out how we ensure that any child who sleeps or rests within our EYFS provision does so in a safe, appropriately supervised and comfortable environment. Our procedures reflect the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory requirements and current Department for Education safer-sleep guidance.

2. Our principles

We will:

- treat each child as an individual and consider their age, development, health and usual sleep needs;
- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- provide an appropriate, safe and hygienic place for children who need to sleep or rest;
- ensure sleeping children remain appropriately supervised and within sight and hearing of staff;
- carry out and record appropriate sleep checks where required;
- ensure staff understand safer-sleep procedures;
- respond promptly if a sleeping child appears unwell or there is any cause for concern; and
- regularly review sleeping arrangements and risk assessments.

Children will never be left to sleep unsupervised.

3. Sleep and rest in Nursery and Reception

We will not require children to sleep. Children who do not need to sleep will have opportunities for quieter activities and relaxation where appropriate.

If a child regularly requires daytime sleep, parents or carers should discuss this with the child's Key Person or class teacher so that suitable arrangements can be agreed.

Where a child unexpectedly falls asleep, staff will ensure that the child is safe and, where appropriate, move them to a suitable sleep space. The child will then be monitored in accordance with this policy.

Safer Sleep & Rest Policy

4. Individual sleep needs

On admission, and whenever circumstances change, parents and carers will be encouraged to tell us about relevant sleep needs, including usual sleep patterns and settling routines, medical information, SEND or sensory requirements, medication that may cause drowsiness, and professional advice concerning sleep.

Individual arrangements may be recorded in a healthcare or support plan where appropriate. A child's safety will always take precedence over a preferred sleep practice if that practice conflicts with current safer-sleep requirements.

5. Safe sleeping environment

Any designated sleeping or resting area will be appropriately risk assessed. It will:

- be appropriately ventilated and maintained at a comfortable temperature;
- be free from avoidable hazards;
- provide a clear, flat and firm sleep surface appropriate to the child's age;
- allow staff to see and hear sleeping children;
- be positioned away from heaters and other sources of excessive heat;
- allow safe access for staff;
- be kept clear of cords, blind cords, electrical cables and similar hazards; and
- be arranged so children cannot become trapped between furniture, walls or sleeping equipment.

6. Bedding and sleep equipment

If children fall asleep, they will be placed in a quiet area of the classroom, either on the floor/rug or onto a bean bag or cushion. Clean blankets are available, but staff will not generally place a blanket on the child to prevent overheating. If a child does require a blanket, they will remain under supervision of a member of staff who will monitor that the position of the blanket does not cover the face of the child or endanger the child in any other way. Staff will also use an infra-red thermometer to monitor the child's temperature.

If a blanket is used, this will be washed and dried before being used for another child.

7. Positioning children for sleep

Children will be placed down to sleep safely and their sleeping position and environment will not present an identifiable risk.

For children covered by the DfE's under-two safer-sleep requirements, the specific statutory and guidance requirements for younger children will be followed, including appropriate sleep positioning and sleep-space arrangements. Although pupils in our Nursery and Reception would not normally fall into this age group, staff should understand these principles where relevant.

8. Temperature and overheating

Staff will take reasonable steps to prevent children becoming too hot or too cold while sleeping. Children will not normally sleep indoors wearing coats, hats, scarves, excessively heavy clothing or other outdoor garments likely to cause overheating.

Staff will consider room temperature, clothing and bedding when ensuring that a child is comfortable. Children's heads and faces must remain uncovered.

Safer Sleep & Rest Policy

9. Supervision of sleeping children

All sleeping children must be appropriately supervised and remain within sight and hearing of staff.

Staff will conduct regular physical checks of sleeping children. The frequency of checks will be determined by the setting's risk assessment and the child's individual circumstances. Children who are unwell, have a medical condition or have other identified vulnerabilities may require more frequent or continuous supervision.

Any monitor or technological aid used will supplement, not replace, appropriate staff supervision and physical checks.

10. Sleep checks

When checking a sleeping child, staff should observe:

- the child's sleeping position;
- that the child's face, mouth and nose are unobstructed;
- breathing and skin colour;
- body temperature or signs of overheating;
- whether bedding and the sleep space remain safe;
- whether the child appears comfortable; and
- whether there are signs of illness or distress.

Where formal sleep monitoring is required, staff will record the time of the check and their initials, together with any relevant observations. Staff must not rely solely on hearing a child or viewing them from a distance if a closer check is necessary.

11. A child who falls asleep unexpectedly

A child may occasionally fall asleep somewhere that is not intended as a sleep space. Staff will assess the situation and, where appropriate and safe to do so, move the child to a suitable sleep space as soon as practicable.

A child should not routinely remain asleep on a sofa or soft chair, in a position where their airway could be compromised, with their face covered, wearing excessive outdoor clothing, or in any location where appropriate supervision cannot be maintained.

12. Sleeping during travel

Where children fall asleep while travelling on an educational visit or journey, staff will continue to supervise them appropriately. On returning to the setting, a sleeping child should, where appropriate, be transferred to a suitable sleep space.

Children who fall asleep in a car seat or other travel equipment will be managed in accordance with current safer-sleep guidance, with attention to positioning, overheating and transfer to an appropriate sleep surface as soon as practicable.

13. Children who are unwell

A child who is unusually sleepy or difficult to wake may be unwell. Staff must not assume that unusual drowsiness is simply tiredness. If there are concerns about a child's health, staff will:

- attempt to rouse and assess the child;
- seek assistance from another member of staff;
- follow the school's first-aid and medical procedures;

Safer Sleep & Rest Policy

- contact parents or carers as appropriate; and
- seek emergency medical assistance without delay where necessary.

Any serious or unusual incident will be recorded and reported in accordance with school procedures.

14. SEND and medical needs

Some children with SEND or medical conditions may have specific sleeping or resting requirements. Where necessary, an individual healthcare or support plan will describe the child's needs, professional advice, appropriate positioning, required equipment, supervision arrangements, monitoring and emergency procedures.

Where medical advice differs from the setting's usual arrangements, this must be appropriately documented and agreed with relevant professionals.

15. Hygiene and infection prevention

Sleep equipment and bedding will be managed hygienically. We will:

- ensure bedding is clean and stored appropriately;
- avoid sharing used bedding between children;
- clean sleep equipment regularly and whenever soiled;
- follow appropriate infection-control procedures; and
- ensure sleep areas are clean and appropriately ventilated.

Soiled bedding will be removed immediately and cleaned appropriately.

16. Waking children

Children will normally be allowed to wake naturally where this is compatible with the school day and their individual arrangements. Where a child needs to be woken, staff will do so sensitively and calmly.

Children will be given time to fully wake, orient themselves and rejoin activities. Parents and practitioners may discuss the length or timing of daytime sleep where it appears to affect the child's wellbeing, participation or nighttime sleep.

17. Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers are important partners in understanding children's sleep needs. We will communicate with families about significant sleep while the child is at school, particularly where:

- the child has slept for an unusual length of time;
- the child unexpectedly needed to sleep;
- there has been a significant change in sleeping pattern;
- staff have concerns about the child's tiredness;
- the child was difficult to wake; or
- there are health or wellbeing concerns.

Parents and carers should tell staff about significant changes at home that may affect their child's sleep or wellbeing.

18. Safeguarding considerations

Persistent or unexplained tiredness can sometimes indicate a wider welfare or safeguarding concern. Staff should remain professionally curious where a child:

Safer Sleep & Rest Policy

- regularly appears excessively tired;
- repeatedly falls asleep unexpectedly;
- reports significant sleep disruption;
- appears consistently unable to stay awake;
- displays a marked change in behaviour or alertness; or
- presents with other indicators of neglect or harm.

Concerns will be recorded and discussed promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

19. Staff training and responsibilities

All relevant EYFS staff will be made aware of this policy and the setting's safer-sleep arrangements. Staff responsible for supervising sleeping children must understand:

- safe sleep positioning and appropriate sleep environments;
- supervision requirements and sleep checks;
- the risks associated with overheating, obstruction and unsafe sleep spaces;
- how to recognise when a sleeping child may be unwell; and
- what action to take in an emergency.

Safer-sleep practice will form part of relevant staff induction, safeguarding and health-and-safety arrangements.

20. Risk assessment

The EYFS Leader will ensure that sleeping and resting arrangements are appropriately risk assessed. Risk assessments will consider the sleeping environment, equipment, room temperature, supervision, staffing, individual needs, emergency access, hygiene, bedding storage, SEND and medical needs.

Any identified concern will be addressed promptly.

21. Monitoring and review

The EYFS Leader will monitor safer-sleep arrangements in Nursery and Reception.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's normal policy-review cycle, following a significant incident or near miss, if sleeping arrangements change, or following significant changes to national guidance or EYFS requirements.

Related school policies

This policy should be read alongside the school's EYFS Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, First Aid Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, SEND Policy, Intimate Care Policy, Educational Visits Policy, and EYFS Parental Involvement and Information Sharing Policy.

Key national guidance

- Department for Education: Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers.
- Department for Education: Help for Early Years Providers - Safer sleep.
- Department for Education: EYFS safeguarding requirements.
- NHS safer sleep advice and relevant safer-sleep guidance.