St. Lawrence Church of England Primary School

E.Y.F.S. SLEEP & REST POLICY

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At St. Lawrence Church of England Primary School, we recognise that young children have individual sleep and rest needs. Children may arrive at school tired, become tired during the school day or, on occasion, fall asleep unexpectedly.

We aim to provide a safe, nurturing and responsive environment in which children's individual needs are recognised and supported.

This policy sets out the school's arrangements for:

- supporting children who are tired or need a period of rest;
- responding safely when a child falls asleep during the school day;
- ensuring appropriate supervision and safeguarding;
- working in partnership with parents and carers;
- making reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs or medical conditions; and
- ensuring that any sleeping arrangements meet the requirements of the current EYFS Statutory Framework where applicable.

The policy should be read alongside the school's safeguarding and health and safety procedures.

Legislative and guidance framework

This policy has been developed with reference to the following current guidance and legislation:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers, Department for Education, effective from 1 September 2026;
- Help for Early Years Providers: Safer Sleep, Department for Education, developed in collaboration with The Lullaby Trust;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE);
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant health and safety legislation;
- relevant advice and resources from Lancashire County Council Early Years;
- relevant safeguarding information and resources from the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP);
- guidance from The Lullaby Trust and NHS safer-sleep advice where appropriate.

The EYFS Statutory Framework is mandatory for school-based early years providers. The current framework came into force on 1 September 2026 and contains strengthened safer-sleep requirements.

EYFS requirements for safer sleep

The September 2026 EYFS Statutory Framework states that babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely.

For **children under two years of age**, the following statutory requirements apply:

- children must be placed on their backs to sleep in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface;
- babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot, which includes a cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot;
- sleep spaces must contain only a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and appropriate lightweight bedding, or a suitably fitted sleep bag;
- where blankets are used, they must be tucked in appropriately and the child placed feet-to-foot;
- cots must not contain toys, pillows, loose bedding, bumpers, wedges or straps;
- children should not become too hot or too cold;
- children's heads must not be covered;
- babies under six months must have an adult in the same room for every sleep;
- all children must be frequently checked when sleeping; and
- children must always be within the sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.

These requirements are set out in paragraph 3.86 of the current EYFS Statutory Framework.

St Lawrence Primary School currently provides Reception provision for children aged approximately four to five years. Therefore, the specific statutory requirements relating to babies and children under two will not normally apply to the Reception classroom.

However, the principles of safer sleep, appropriate supervision, risk assessment and safeguarding underpin the school's approach to any child who sleeps during the school day.

Sleep and rest in Reception

Reception children are not routinely expected to have a daytime nap.

The school recognises, however, that children develop at different rates and may occasionally need a period of quiet rest. This may be particularly relevant:

- during the first few weeks of Reception;
- following illness;
- following a particularly demanding or stimulating day;
- where a child has had disrupted sleep at home;
- where a child has additional needs;
- where a child has a medical condition or medication that causes tiredness;
- where a child is experiencing emotional or social difficulties; or
- where a child's individual circumstances mean that additional rest is beneficial.

Staff will respond sensitively to individual children rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. Where a child appears tired, staff will first consider whether they need:

- a quiet activity;
- access to a calm or sensory area;
- a drink of water;
- a movement or sensory break;
- reassurance and emotional support; or
- a short period of rest.

Where a Reception child falls asleep

If a Reception child falls asleep unexpectedly, staff will:

- Check that the child is safe and breathing normally.
- Ensure that the child is in a safe position and is not at risk from furniture, equipment, other children or loose objects.
- Where it is safe and appropriate to do so, move the child to an appropriate clear, firm and flat resting surface rather than allowing them to remain asleep in a chair, sofa or other unsuitable position.
- Ensure that the child remains within sight and hearing of staff.
- Maintain appropriate supervision of the sleeping child while continuing to meet the needs and supervision requirements of the other children.
- Check the child regularly while they are asleep.
- Avoid covering the child's face or allowing them to become excessively hot.
- Record the incident where appropriate, particularly if the child is unusually tired, sleeps for a prolonged period or the incident is repeated.
- Inform the parent/carer at collection or earlier where there is a reason for concern.

Sleep environment

Where a child needs to sleep or rest, staff will ensure that the environment is:

- calm and quiet where reasonably possible;
- appropriately ventilated;
- free from unnecessary hazards;
- free from items that could cover the child's face;
- appropriately temperature controlled;
- adequately supervised; and
- accessible to staff.

The DfE safer-sleep guidance emphasises the importance of a separate, clear, flat and firm sleep surface. The Lullaby Trust also advises that firm, flat sleep surfaces are preferable for toddlers and young children in early-years settings.

Supervision

Children who are asleep must remain within the sight and hearing of staff. Staff must not leave a sleeping child unsupervised. When a child is sleeping, staff will balance the child's need for rest with the need to maintain appropriate supervision of all other children.

If a child's individual needs mean that they require a level of supervision which cannot safely be provided within the normal classroom arrangements, the EYFS Lead/SENCO/Headteacher will be consulted.

Where necessary, an individual risk assessment will be completed. The school will never allow a child to be placed in an isolated area where staff cannot maintain appropriate safeguarding oversight.

Length of sleep

There is no prescribed length of sleep for a Reception child within this policy. Where a child falls asleep unexpectedly, staff will use professional judgement based on:

- the child's age;
- the child's usual sleep pattern;
- the reason for tiredness;
- the child's presentation;
- any medical or additional needs;
- information provided by parents/carers; and
- the child's overall wellbeing.

A prolonged or unusual period of sleep should be discussed with the parent/carer.
If staff are concerned that a child is unusually difficult to rouse, appears unwell or is displaying concerning symptoms, they will follow the school's first aid and medical emergency procedures.

Children with SEND or medical needs

The school recognises that some children with SEND or medical conditions may have individual sleep or rest needs. This may include children who:

- become overwhelmed by sensory input;
- require periods of sensory regulation;
- have neurological or developmental conditions;
- experience fatigue;
- take medication which may cause drowsiness;
- have sleep-related medical conditions; or
- require additional rest as part of an agreed support plan.

Where a child's sleep or rest needs are significant or regular, the school will work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, health professionals, the SENCO and other relevant professionals. The current EYFS framework requires providers to have arrangements in place to support children with SEND and requires maintained schools and academies to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice.

Children who regularly fall asleep at school

If a child regularly falls asleep during the school day, the child's key person/class teacher should:

- discuss the pattern with the parent/carer;
- establish the child's normal sleep routine;
- consider whether there are changes at home or school which may be contributing;
- consider whether the child may be unwell;
- consider whether additional needs may be contributing;
- monitor the child's presentation and wellbeing;
- record relevant information where appropriate; and
- discuss the situation with the EYFS Lead/SENCO where appropriate.

Where concerns remain, parents/carers may be encouraged to seek advice from their GP, health visitor or another appropriate health professional.
The school will not make medical diagnoses.

Safeguarding

Sleep and rest arrangements form part of the school's wider safeguarding responsibilities. Staff must remain alert to changes in a child's behaviour, appearance, attendance, emotional wellbeing or physical presentation. If a child's tiredness appears unusual, persistent or accompanied by other concerns, staff must follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSL. Staff must not attempt to investigate safeguarding concerns themselves. KCSIE 2026 states that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that staff should act immediately on concerns and report them to the DSL or deputy without delay.

Safeguarding and supervision when a child is asleep

Sleeping children remain subject to the school's normal safeguarding arrangements. Staff must:

- maintain professional boundaries;
- avoid unnecessary physical contact;
- ensure that any necessary physical assistance is appropriate and proportionate;
- follow the school's intimate care procedures where applicable;
- ensure that children are not photographed or filmed while sleeping unless there is a specific authorised reason in accordance with school policy;
- maintain confidentiality; and
- report any safeguarding concern immediately.

Any allegation or concern about the conduct of an adult towards a child must be dealt with under the school's safeguarding procedures.

Clothing and temperature

Staff will ensure that children do not become excessively hot or cold while resting. Children should not sleep wearing hats or with clothing or bedding covering their face. Where children are sleeping or resting, staff should consider:

- room temperature;
- clothing layers;
- bedding;
- signs of overheating;
- signs of being too cold; and
- the individual needs of the child.

For babies, the DfE recommends a room temperature of approximately 16–20°C. This specific recommendation relates particularly to babies aged 12 months and under and is not intended to prescribe the temperature of a Reception classroom. Staff should nevertheless ensure that the environment is comfortable and safe.

Accidental sleep

It is recognised that young children may occasionally fall asleep during:

- story time;
- carpet sessions;
- quiet reading;
- after lunch;
- during continuous provision;
- while travelling to or from school activities; or
- following illness or a particularly tiring experience.

An isolated incident does not necessarily indicate a concern. Staff should respond calmly and sensitively, prioritising the child's safety. If a child falls asleep in an unsafe position, staff should take reasonable steps to move the child to a safer position or appropriate sleep surface.

Recording

A record should be made where:

- a child sleeps for an unusually long period;
- a child repeatedly falls asleep at school;
- a child is unusually difficult to wake;
- there is an accident or injury;
- a medical concern arises;
- staff have a safeguarding concern; or
- the child's sleep pattern forms part of an agreed individual support plan.

Records will be factual, objective and proportionate. Records relating to children's sleep and rest will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the school's Data Protection Policy, Records Retention Schedule and UK GDPR requirements. Any safeguarding concern will be recorded in accordance with the school's safeguarding recording procedures. Safeguarding concerns arising from a child's sleep, presentation, welfare or wellbeing should be recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures. The current EYFS framework requires providers to maintain appropriate records and share relevant information where necessary to ensure children's safety and meet their needs.

Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers are important partners in supporting children's health and wellbeing. Parents will be informed where there is:

- a significant change in their child's sleep pattern at school;
- repeated daytime sleep;
- unusually prolonged sleep;
- concern about the child's level of tiredness;
- a concern about the child's health or wellbeing; or
- a need for an individual sleep/rest plan.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to share relevant information about:

- normal sleep routines;
- changes to sleep patterns;
- medical conditions;
- medication;
- additional needs;
- significant family circumstances which may affect sleep; and
- strategies which help the child to settle and regulate.

The EYFS requires providers to maintain a regular two-way flow of information with parents/carers and to ensure that parents are informed about how the setting meets children's needs.

Emergency procedures

If a child who is sleeping:

- is difficult to wake;
- appears unresponsive;
- has difficulty breathing;
- becomes unusually pale, blue or floppy;
- has a seizure;
- becomes seriously unwell; or
- is otherwise causing immediate concern,

staff will follow the school's emergency and first-aid procedures.

A paediatric first aider will be contacted where appropriate and emergency services will be called where necessary. Parents/carers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable. Any incident will be recorded in accordance with the school's accident, first aid and safeguarding procedures.

The EYFS Lead, DSL and SENCO are responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and ensuring that any concerns or emerging patterns are addressed appropriately.

Related documents

This policy should be read alongside:

- St Lawrence Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- St Lawrence Health and Safety Policy
- St Lawrence SEND Policy
- St Lawrence Intimate Care Policy
- St Lawrence Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs Policy
- St Lawrence Attendance Policy
- St Lawrence Behaviour & Relationships Policy
- EYFS Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (DfE, September 2026)
- DfE: Help for Early Years Providers – Safer Sleep
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Lancashire County Council Early Years Safeguarding and Safer Sleep guidance
- Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership guidance
- The Lullaby Trust safer-sleep guidance

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed:

- annually;
- following significant safeguarding incidents;
- following changes to EYFS requirements;
- following changes to safer-sleep guidance; or
- where monitoring identifies a need for amendment.

Key principles for staff – quick reference

If a Reception child falls asleep:

SAFE – SUPERVISE – CHECK – RECORD – INFORM

SAFE

Ensure the child is in a safe position and away from hazards.

SUPERVISE

The child must remain within sight and hearing of staff.

CHECK

Check the child regularly and ensure they are breathing normally and not overheating.

RECORD

Record prolonged, unusual or repeated sleep where appropriate.

INFORM

Tell parents/carers if the sleep was unusual, prolonged, repeated or gives rise to concern. Any safeguarding, medical or welfare concern must be passed to the appropriate member of staff immediately.