



CROW ORCHARD

Primary School and Nursery

Safe Sleep and Rest Policy

Policy Lead	Designated Safeguarding Lead: Jen Hollings EYFS & Nursery Lead: Jenna Smith
Policy Reviewed	June 2026
Next review	June 2027, or sooner if guidance changes
Setting	Crow Orchard Primary School Nursery
Location	Lancashire
Age range	2-year-olds to 4-year-olds / pre-school age

SAFE SLEEP and REST POLICY

Policy statement

At Crow Orchard Primary School Nursery, we recognise that rest and sleep are important for young children's health, wellbeing, emotional regulation and development. We are committed to providing a safe, calm and supervised sleep/rest environment for all nursery children.

This policy follows the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, which states that sleeping children must be checked frequently and that cots and bedding must be in good condition and suitable for the age of the child. The current EYFS framework also directs providers to follow the latest government and NHS safer sleep guidance.

This policy also reflects the Department for Education safer sleep guidance, published in April 2026 in collaboration with The Lullaby Trust, which supports planned updates to the EYFS statutory framework expected in September 2026.

Although our nursery provision is for children aged 2-4 years and not babies under 12 months, we still follow safer sleep principles because safer sleep environments help reduce risks for babies and older children, including the risk of sudden unexpected death in childhood and accidents such as suffocation or entanglement.

2. Aims of this policy

The aims of this policy are to:

- ensure all children who sleep or rest in nursery are safe, supervised and comfortable;
- ensure staff understand safe sleep procedures and follow them consistently;
- ensure parents and carers understand our sleep and rest arrangements;
- reduce risks linked to unsafe sleep environments, overheating, unsuitable bedding, poor supervision or entanglement;
- support children's individual routines, while always prioritising safety.

3. Key safer sleep principles

At Crow Orchard Primary School Nursery:

- Children will sleep or rest on a flat, firm, suitable sleep mat.
- Children will have their own separate sleep/rest space.
- Children will be supported to settle in a safe sleeping position. Where children independently change position during sleep, staff will monitor them to ensure they remain safe and comfortable.
- Children will always be within sight and hearing of staff while sleeping.
- Sleeping children will be checked frequently.
- Sleep/rest spaces will be kept clear of unnecessary items.
- Children will not sleep in pushchairs, car seats, chairs, beanbags, sofas or other sitting devices.
- Children will not be allowed to become too hot or too cold.
- Coats, thick outdoor clothing, hats and hoods will be removed before sleep.
- Any concerns about a child's breathing, colour, temperature, responsiveness or general presentation will be acted on immediately.

The DfE safer sleep guidance states that children should be placed in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface, and that children should always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.

4. Sleep and rest arrangements for 2-4 year olds

Children in our nursery may need a rest or sleep during the nursery day, particularly younger 2-year-olds or children attending long sessions.

Sleep/rest will take place in a calm, supervised area of the nursery. Children will use clean, age-appropriate sleep mats. The area will be organised so that staff can clearly see and hear children at all times.

Children will not be forced to sleep. Children who do not sleep will be offered quiet rest activities, such as books, soft music, calm sensory activities or quiet play.

Parents and carers will be asked about their child's usual sleep routine when the child starts nursery. However, nursery staff will always follow safer sleep practice, even where a child's routine at home is different.

5. Sleep environment

The sleep/rest area will be:

- calm, quiet and appropriately lit;
- well ventilated;
- not too hot or too cold;
- free from trailing wires, blind cords, loose materials or other hazards;
- arranged so staff can see and hear children clearly;
- risk assessed as part of the daily nursery environment check.

The Lullaby Trust advises that safer sleep reduces the risk of sudden infant death syndrome and identifies key areas including sleep position, clear sleep spaces, room temperature and keeping airways clear.

6. Bedding and comforters

For nursery-aged children, bedding will be kept simple, clean and safe.

We will use:

- individual wipe-clean sleep mats;
- lightweight blankets if needed;
- children's own named comforter only if agreed with parents and judged safe by staff.

We will not use:

- heavy blankets or duvets;
- weighted blankets;
- pillows that could cover a child's face;
- loose bedding near a child's head;
- cot bumpers, wedges, straps or sleep positioners;
- large soft toys during sleep.

The DfE guidance states that sleep spaces should only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding tucked no higher than the shoulders, and that sleep spaces must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, loose bedding, bumpers, wedges or straps.

As our children are over 12 months, a small comforter may be used where appropriate, but staff will ensure it does not cover the child's face, restrict breathing or present a safety risk.

7. Supervision and sleep checks

Sleeping children will be supervised at all times. Children who are sleeping remain included within statutory EYFS staff-to-child ratios. Staffing arrangements will ensure that children who are asleep and awake are appropriately supervised at all times and that sleeping children remain within sight and hearing of staff.

Staff will ensure that:

- children are always within sight and hearing;
- sleep checks are completed at least every 10 minutes and more frequently where a child's age, medical needs, SEND, illness, individual risk assessment or other circumstances indicate closer monitoring is required;
- checks are recorded on the nursery sleep check record;
- checks include the child's position, breathing, colour, temperature and general comfort;

- any change in the child's presentation is acted on immediately.

Sleep checks will include:

- Is the child breathing normally?
- Is the child's colour normal?
- Is the child too hot or too cold?
- Is the child's face and head uncovered?
- Is the child in a safe position?
- Is the sleep space clear?
- Is the child settled and responsive as expected?

The EYFS statutory framework requires that sleeping children are frequently checked to ensure they are safe.

8. Temperature and clothing

Staff will make sure children do not become too hot or too cold while sleeping. Before sleep, staff will remove:

- coats;
- hats;
- hoods;
- thick jumpers if the child may overheat;
- outdoor clothing;
- dressing-up clothes or accessories that may cause risk.

Staff will check the child's temperature by observing the child and, where needed, feeling the child's chest or the back of the neck. DfE guidance advises that hands and feet may feel cooler and that the chest or back of the neck gives a better indication of whether a child is too hot or cold.

For babies aged 12 months and under, the recommended room temperature is 16-20°C. Although our nursery does not care for babies, staff will still use professional judgement to ensure the room is comfortable and safe for older children.

9. Children who fall asleep unexpectedly

If a child falls asleep unexpectedly during the nursery session, staff will move them, where possible and safe to do so, to their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface.

Children will not be left to sleep in:

- pushchairs;
- car seats;
- chairs;
- beanbags;
- sofas;
- cosy corners where the surface is soft or cluttered;
- adult laps.

The DfE guidance states that children over 12 months who fall asleep while travelling should, where possible, be moved to their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface, and that car seats should not be used as a sleep space once back at the setting.

10. Individual sleep needs

Some children may need specific arrangements due to medical needs, SEND, tiredness, family circumstances or settling-in needs.

Where a child requires a different sleep arrangement for medical reasons, parents/carers must provide medical advice or a care plan from an appropriate health professional. The nursery will complete an individual risk assessment and ensure all relevant staff are informed.

Examples may include:

- children with complex health needs;
- children with breathing difficulties;
- children recovering from illness;
- children with SEND who require additional support to rest safely;

- children with asthma, epilepsy, sleep apnoea, respiratory conditions or other health needs that may affect sleep safety;
- children who use prescribed equipment.

Where appropriate, sleep arrangements for children with identified medical conditions will be detailed within their individual healthcare plan and supported by a written risk assessment.

Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership provides safer sleep guidance, assessment tools and professional training resources, including tools for children with complex health needs.

11. Parent and carer partnership

When children start nursery, parents/carers will be asked to share:

- whether their child usually sleeps during the day;
- usual sleep times;
- comforters used;
- allergies or medical needs;
- any concerns about sleep;
- any professional advice relating to sleep or rest.

Staff will speak to parents/carers if:

Staff will remain professionally curious where a child presents as unusually sleepy, difficult to rouse, repeatedly falls asleep unexpectedly, or demonstrates a significant change from their usual sleep pattern.

- a child is unusually sleepy;
- a child struggles to settle;
- a child's sleep pattern changes significantly;
- a child appears unwell;
- staff have any safety concerns.

Where concerns arise, staff will consider whether further health, welfare or safeguarding action is required and will discuss concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Children should not be brought into nursery asleep.

Parents and carers are asked to wake their child before arriving at nursery and hand them over awake to a member of staff. If a child arrives asleep in a pushchair or car seat, staff will ask the parent/carer to wake them before they are admitted into the setting. This is because staff need to be satisfied that every child is alert, responsive and well on arrival. Bringing a child into nursery asleep could delay the recognition of an underlying illness, injury or other welfare concern. Where a child appears unusually difficult to wake, unusually sleepy or unresponsive, staff will follow the school's safeguarding and medical procedures and seek further advice where appropriate.

12. Staff responsibilities

All nursery staff are responsible for following this policy. Staff must:

- read and understand this policy;
- follow safer sleep procedures consistently;
- complete sleep checks accurately;
- never leave sleeping children unsupervised;
- ensure sleeping children remain within sight and hearing;
- keep sleep/rest areas clear and safe;
- report concerns immediately to the Nursery Lead or DSL;
- complete relevant safer sleep training as directed by school leaders.

The DfE safer sleep guidance states that early years staff should read NHS advice on sudden infant death syndrome and that more information is available from The Lullaby Trust.

13. Training

All staff working with nursery children will receive information and training on:

- this policy;
- safer sleep principles;

- sleep check procedures;
- recognising signs of distress or illness;
- emergency procedures;
- recording and reporting concerns.
- Safer sleep training and awareness will be refreshed regularly, during staff induction, and whenever national, local authority or safeguarding guidance is updated.

New staff, students, volunteers and agency staff will be made aware of sleep/rest procedures as part of their induction before supervising children.

The Lullaby Trust provides safer sleep training designed for early years professionals who are responsible for placing children to sleep.

14. Recording sleep

Staff will record sleep/rest information using the nursery sleep record. The record will include:

Child's name	Date	Time asleep	Sleep check times	Breathing/ colour checked	Temperature/ comfort checked	Time awake	Staff initials	Comments/concerns/actions taken

Any concern must be recorded and reported to the Nursery Lead/DSL immediately.

15. What staff must do in an emergency

If a sleeping child appears unwell, is difficult to wake, has unusual breathing, changes colour, becomes floppy, has a seizure, is choking or staff have any immediate concern:

1. Call for help immediately.
2. Start first aid/pediatric first aid procedures.
3. Call 999 if required.
4. Inform the Headteacher/Nursery Lead/DSL.
5. Contact parents/carers as soon as safe to do so.
6. Record the incident in line with school safeguarding, first aid and accident procedures.
7. Follow any required reporting procedures, including Ofsted/local authority safeguarding procedures where applicable.

16. Risk assessment

The sleep/rest area will be included in daily risk checks. Staff will check:

- sleep mats/mattresses are clean and in good condition;
- bedding is clean and suitable;
- the area is free from hazards;
- children can be seen and heard;
- room temperature is comfortable;
- children are not near cords, wires, heaters, doors or furniture that could cause risk;
- there is enough space between children;
- emergency access is clear.
- Any changes to the sleep environment, room layout, equipment, staffing arrangements or children's individual needs will trigger a review of the sleep risk assessment to ensure arrangements remain safe and effective.

The EYFS requires providers to take reasonable steps to ensure staff and children are not exposed to risks and to be able to demonstrate how risks are managed.

17. Safeguarding links

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy

- Intimate Care Policy
- SEND Policy
- Medication Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- EYFS Policy

Any concerns about unsafe sleep practice, neglect, inappropriate supervision or a child's wellbeing must be reported to the DSL in line with the school safeguarding policy.

18. Monitoring and review

The Nursery Lead and DSL will monitor this policy by:

- checking sleep records;
- observing practice;
- reviewing any safer sleep incidents, concerns or near misses to identify learning and improve practice;
- ensuring staff training is up to date;
- reviewing any incidents or near misses;
- checking updates from the DfE, NHS, The Lullaby Trust and Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if statutory guidance changes.

Any safer sleep incident or near miss will be recorded, reviewed by the Nursery Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead, and used to inform future risk assessments, staff training and policy review.

19. References used

- Department for Education. Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers. Current version effective from 1 September 2025. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
- Department for Education. EYFS statutory framework, paragraph 3.84: sleeping arrangements. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/>
- Department for Education. Safer sleep guidance, published 20 April 2026 in collaboration with The Lullaby Trust. <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safer-sleep>
- The Lullaby Trust. Safer sleep information, including sleep position, clear sleep spaces, room temperature and keeping airways clear. <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/safer-sleep-information/>
- Lancashire Safeguarding Partnership. Safer sleep resources and professional tools. <https://lancshiresafeguardingpartnership.org.uk/p/toolkits/safer-sleep-1>
- The Lullaby Trust. Safer sleep training for early years professionals. <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/professionals-hub/training/sids-and-safer-sleep-training/for-early-years-professionals>.
- • Department for Education. Working Together to Safeguard Children (current edition). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>