

STAFF NEWSLETTER

April, 2025

Introduction

As we begin the Summer term, this newsletter highlights several key priorities for the months ahead.

Staff appraisals will be taking place, and your nursery manager will be in touch soon to arrange these meetings. A staff meeting is also scheduled for the end of April which you should of all received confirmation of the date which they will be held.

We will be sharing important updates on screen time guidance for children aged 0-5, along with our continued commitment to safeguarding. We will also revisit recent updates shared earlier this month, including safer sleep requirements and key health and safety information. These topics will also be discussed further during your upcoming staff meeting.



Website reminder

Please remember to use the staff portal for safeguarding guidance, curriculum tips, and general information to support you in your role. The portal is regularly updated and should be your first point of reference for key guidance and resources.



Newsletter contents

- Safeguarding-recap on recent updates
- Safer sleep requirements update
- Screen time updates for children ages 0-5 years
- Employee handbook updates
- Health and safety updates



Screen Time Guidance for Under 5s

The government has recently published new, evidence-informed guidance to support parents and carers in managing screen time for children under 5.

While digital screens are now a normal part of everyday life, the early years are a critical period for development. Around 90% of a child's brain development occurs by the age of 5, making this a vital time for building social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Key Government Recommendations

- Avoid screen time for children under 2 years old
- For children aged 2–5, limit screen time to no more than 1 hour per day
- Choose slow-paced, predictable content that supports learning
- Avoid fast-paced or overstimulating content (e.g. social media-style videos)
- Do not allow children to use screens alone
- Instead, watch and engage together to support understanding and safety
- Avoid screens during mealtimes and before bed
- Encourage alternatives such as reading stories or playing simple games
- Be mindful that children copy adult behaviour—model healthy screen use

How We Support Screen Time at Nursery

At nursery, we follow a cautious and development-focused approach to screen use:

- No screen time for children under 2 years
- Children who access screen time are limited to 15 minutes per session
- Only educational games and content are used on nursery iPads
- Devices are securely controlled and offline
- A staff member is always present and actively monitoring when iPads are in use

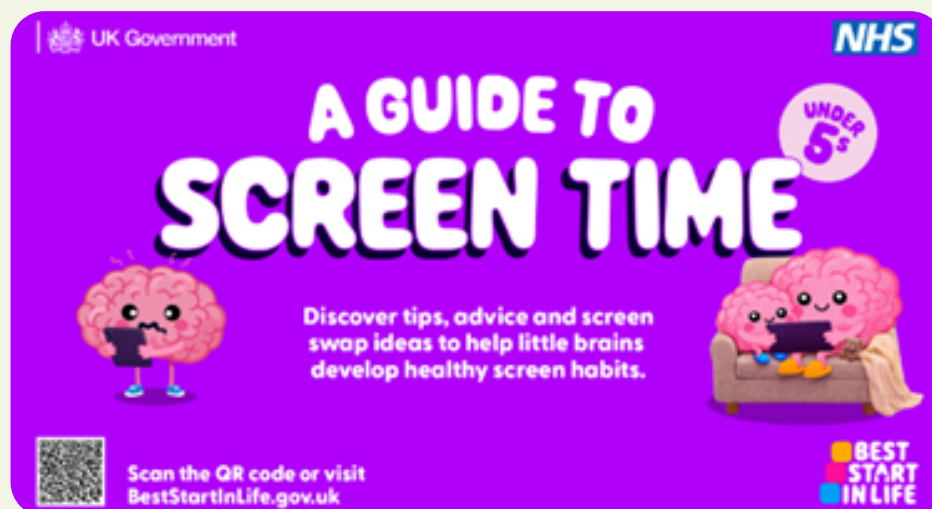
Our Approach

We prioritise play-based learning, social interaction, and real-world experiences, ensuring that screen use is minimal, purposeful, and always supported.

Final Reminder

Screen time should never replace meaningful interactions, active play, or rest. By working together, we can ensure children develop the skills they need in a healthy and balanced way.

Thank you for your continued support in promoting positive early development.



Safer Sleep Requirements Update – September 2026

We would like to inform all staff of upcoming updates to safer sleep requirements within the EYFS, coming into effect from September 2026.

These updates follow the tragic story of Gigi, who lost her life while in nursery care. As a result, there will be clarifications to safeguarding requirements around sleeping arrangements.

While there are no changes to how we support babies and children to fall asleep, the updated guidance strengthens expectations around safe sleep practices and monitoring.

Our sleep policy and procedures will be updated in line with these changes. In the meantime, please take a moment to revisit the key expectations below.

Key Safe Sleep Reminders

Managers will be observing sleep-time routines to ensure these practices are consistently followed.

Babies must always be placed on their backs to sleep

If a baby rolls onto their tummy, they should be returned to their back unless they can roll both ways independently

Where blankets are used, babies must be placed feet-to-foot with blankets securely tucked in

Babies and toddlers must never be put to sleep with a bottle to self-feed

Sleeping children must always be in sight and sound of staff

Staff must monitor breathing by observing the rise and fall of the chest and any changes in sleep position

Sleep Checks & Monitoring

Sleep checks must be recorded every 10 minutes

Babies under six months, or new starters, should be checked every 5 minutes initially

This closer monitoring helps build familiarity with the child's routines and reassures families

Creating a Safe Sleep Environment

We ensure safe sleeping conditions by:

Monitoring room temperature to prevent overheating

Using clean, lightweight bedding and appropriate clothing

Providing only safety-approved cots and equipment that meet British Standards

Using a firm, flat mattress with a waterproof cover and fitted sheet

Ensuring blankets are tucked below the shoulders and heads are never covered

Additional Safe Sleep Practices

Children may use sleeping bags provided by parents, fitted safely by staff

Babies may only sleep in prams if they lie flat and we have written parental permission

Outdoor sleeping may be supported where appropriate and with parent consent

Cots must be clear of hazards, including toys, pillows, bumpers, wedges, or loose items

Comforters may be used where appropriate

Safe Environment Standards

Keep areas around cots free from hanging or hazardous objects (e.g. cords, drawstrings, bibs)

Ensure each child has clean, labelled bedding

Bedding must be cleaned regularly

Babies who fall asleep while being held must be moved to a safe sleeping surface

Children arriving asleep must also be transferred safely to a cot or bed

No Smoking or Vaping

We operate a strict no smoking or vaping policy to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children.

Final Reminder

These practices are essential in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every child in our care. If you are ever unsure about safe sleep procedures, please speak to your manager.

Thank you for your continued commitment to safeguarding and high-quality care.



Safeguarding Update & Reminder for All Staff

Earlier this month, we shared important safeguarding updates for everyone to review. This included key policy information to ensure a clear and consistent understanding across the team. Following this, you were asked to complete a safeguarding knowledge quiz to help confirm your understanding of these updates.

Over the coming weeks, managers will be reviewing your quiz responses and will be discussing them with you to ensure confidence and clarity in applying safeguarding practices.

Low-Level Concerns: A Reminder

We would like to remind all staff of the importance of reporting low-level concerns. These are behaviours or situations that may not meet the threshold for formal safeguarding action but may still fall below expected standards.

Reporting low-level concerns is essential. It helps us:

Maintain a safe and transparent culture
Identify patterns of behaviour early
Address potential risks before they escalate

All concerns should be shared promptly and recorded in line with our procedures.

When Does a Low-Level Concern Become Safeguarding?

Some behaviours may start as low-level concerns but can escalate into safeguarding issues if they are repeated or ongoing. For example:

- Repeated unsafe sleep practices → Safeguarding concern
- Ongoing poor supervision → Increased risk of harm
- Ignoring policies consistently → May indicate neglect

Examples to Guide You

Scenario Classification

Forgetting a sleep check once Low-level concern
Repeated missed sleep checks Safeguarding concern

Using a sharp tone once Low-level concern
Frequent use of a harsh tone Safeguarding concern

Unsure What to Do?

If you are ever unsure whether something constitutes a low-level concern or a safeguarding issue, please speak to your designated safeguarding officer. It is always better to raise a concern and seek guidance than to leave something unreported.

Thank you for your continued commitment to maintaining a safe and supportive environment for everyone.



Employee Handbook Update

We have recently sent our correspondence letting you know that the Employee Handbook has been reviewed and updated as of March 2026. The latest version is available on the nursery website. If you have any questions about the updates, please speak with your Nursery Manager.

Health and Safety Updates

Your role in keeping our nursery safe and healthy is essential! Here's a quick reminder of your key responsibilities:

- Take reasonable care of your own health and safety
- Ensure your actions don't put others at risk (colleagues, children, or visitors)
- Supervise children at all times, keeping them safe and supported
- Follow all nursery policies and procedures (safeguarding, health & safety, daily routines)
- Attend training, understand your role, and apply learning in practice
- Do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for health, safety, or welfare
- Report injuries, illnesses, hazards, or concerns as soon as possible

We've recently reviewed our health and safety pages on the website and are currently updating our risk assessments, including fire safety. These updates will be shared as soon as they're ready.

COSHH Review

A reminder that the 6-monthly COSHH review has been sent to you. Please:

- Complete it by 30th April
- Read, understand, and review the products we use in the nursery
- Follow safe usage instructions carefully

Your attention helps keep everyone safe and ensures our nursery remains a healthy environment for all.

Thank you for your continued dedication and care – together we make our nursery a safe, happy place for children to learn and grow!

RE CAP

WATCH US GROW



Screen time guidance

Please ensure you read and understand the guidance on screen time and how we should be implementing screen time with children in the nursery. Your managers will be monitoring and observing the children's use of screen time in the nursery.

Safeguarding

Please ensure you are always keeping up to date with your nursery's safeguarding information. This can be found on the New Beginnings staff portal pages and on the safeguarding notice boards within your nursery. If you ever have any concerns or safeguarding queries, please do not hesitate to speak to your designated safeguarding leads.

Safer sleep requirements

Please ensure you read the updates regarding safer sleep requirements. It is essential that we always follow our policies and procedures when supporting children to sleep. This helps us keep every child safe, comfortable, and well-supervised during rest times.



Staff Meetings



Staff meetings will be held at each nursery at the end of April. Attendance is compulsory for all staff, unless you have pre-booked annual leave.

During these meetings, we will discuss the contents of this newsletter, so please make sure you have read it beforehand.

If you have any questions, please speak with your Nursery Manager.