



Promoting health and hygiene

3.11 Safer Sleeping

Safe Sleeping procedures

This policy follows the latest guidance from [Department for Education safer sleep guidance](#) and recommendations from [The Lullaby Trust](#).

Caterpillars Nursery operates a comprehensive Safer Sleep Policy which specifies the “Back to Sleep” position in line with current safer sleep guidance. Our policy requires that the key person or manager discusses the Safer Sleep Policy with a child’s parent or guardian before admission. Parents must sign a statement confirming they have received and understood the policy. All practitioners working within the nursery are required to receive induction and ongoing training on safer sleep practices.

When introducing or sharing the policy with parents, the following will be discussed:

- Asking about the baby’s usual sleep routine and sleep position at home
- Explaining the nursery’s “Back to Sleep” policy, implemented to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Explaining that safer sleep guidance is recommended by [The Lullaby Trust](#) and current Department for Education guidance
- Informing parents that babies are safest sleeping on their backs and that there is a higher risk of SIDS when babies are placed on their stomach or side to sleep
- Explaining that babies must sleep in a clear, flat, firm sleep space with no loose bedding, pillows, toys, pods or sleep positioners
- Discussing room temperature guidance and appropriate clothing for sleep
- Explaining that babies must not routinely sleep in car seats, pushchairs, bouncy chairs, swings or sofas
- Explaining nursery supervision and sleep monitoring arrangements
- Some babies may have medical conditions requiring alternative sleep arrangements. If a parent requests an alternative sleeping position, written medical advice from a healthcare professional must be provided and kept on file. A copy will also be provided to the child’s key person.
- Parents will be signposted to further information on safer sleep where required
- Regular reviews of the baby’s sleep arrangements and sleep policy will take place with parents

Safer Sleep Policy

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexpected death of a baby where no cause can be found. Research shows that adopting safer sleep practices significantly reduces the risk of SIDS.

At Caterpillars Nursery, we are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure all babies and young children sleep safely while in our care.

Here at Caterpillars Nursery we will practice the following safer sleep procedures:

- All practitioners will receive training on safer sleeping practices, including SIDS risk reduction, recognising overheating, safe sleep environments and supervision requirements.
- Babies under 12 months will always be placed on their backs to sleep unless written medical advice states otherwise.
- Once a baby can independently roll from back to front and front to back, they may adopt their own sleep position.
- Babies under 12 months will always sleep in a cot with a sleep mattress that is firm, flat, waterproof and in good condition.
- Sleep surfaces will be kept completely clear. Soft toys, pillows, quilts, cot bumpers, sleep nests, pods, positioners and loose bedding will not be used.
- Babies' feet will be positioned at the foot of the cot ("feet to foot" position) where appropriate.
- Blankets, if used, will be lightweight, securely tucked in and no higher than the baby's shoulders.
- Children's heads and faces will never be covered while sleeping.
- Swaddling is not permitted within the setting.
- Babies and children must not routinely sleep in car seats, pushchairs, bouncy chairs, swings or sofas. If a child falls asleep in a car seat or pushchair during transport, they will be moved to a safe sleep space as soon as possible.
- Sleeping children will always be visually supervised and never left unattended.
- Staff will complete and record regular sleep checks at least every 10 minutes. Checks will include:
 - Monitoring breathing and chest movement
 - Checking skin colour
 - Checking body temperature
 - Ensuring the child remains in a safe sleeping position
 - Ensuring the sleep environment remains safe
- Senior staff and management will complete regular monitoring checks during sleep times, particularly where staff are lone working.
- Room temperatures will be maintained between 16–20°C where possible and monitored regularly.
- Babies will be dressed appropriately for sleep to prevent overheating. Staff will avoid overwrapping or overdressing children.
- Sleeping areas will be calm, ventilated, clean and physically separate from active play where possible.
- Beds and sleep mats will be positioned safely to maintain airflow and reduce the risk of children touching each other while sleeping.
- Awake babies will be provided with supervised tummy time daily to support physical development.
- If a dummy forms part of a child's sleep routine, it will be used consistently at sleep times in partnership with parents. Dummies will never be forced on a child or reinserted once the child is asleep.
- Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere on the nursery premises. Staff who smoke or vape must ensure their clothing and breath are free from smoke exposure before caring for babies and children.

- All parents of babies cared for within the nursery will receive a written copy of the Safer Sleep Policy before admission.
- Individual sleep routines and comforters will be discussed and recorded with parents to ensure children's needs are met safely and consistently.
- Sleep records will be maintained for all children, recording sleep times, checks completed and any concerns identified.
- Any concerns regarding a child's sleep pattern, breathing, temperature or wellbeing will be reported immediately to management and parents.