SAFE SLEEP POLICY

Applies to all children who sleep or rest while attending Dots & Tots Day Nursery and all staff at the setting.

Policy Statement

At Dots & Tots Day Nursery, we recognise that sleep is essential for children's health, wellbeing, growth and development. We are committed to providing a safe, comfortable and nurturing sleep environment for every child. All sleep arrangements will be planned and delivered in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), NHS safer sleep advice and guidance from The Lullaby Trust.

The safety of every sleeping child is our highest priority. Safe sleep requirements will always take precedence over individual preferences or home routines where these are not consistent with safer sleep guidance.

Aim

This policy aims to:

- ensure all children sleep and rest safely while attending the nursery;
- reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) and Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC);
- meet statutory safeguarding, health and welfare requirements;
- provide clear and consistent procedures for staff supervising sleeping children;
- work in partnership with parents and carers to understand each child's individual sleep routine while maintaining safe practice;
- ensure staff are trained, assessed and confident in safe sleep procedures; and
- ensure sleep equipment, bedding and sleep areas remain clean, suitable and free from hazards.

Safe Sleep Environment

Every sleeping child will have their own individual sleep space. Sleep spaces will be appropriate for the child's age, development and needs, and will be positioned so that staff can supervise children safely.

- Cots and sleep equipment will meet current applicable safety standards and will be checked before use.
- Mattresses will be firm, flat, waterproof, in good condition and correctly fitted to the cot or sleep equipment.
- Sleep areas will be calm, well ventilated and free from unnecessary noise, obstructions, toys and loose items.
- Children will not share cots, mattresses, sleep mats, bedding or sleep bags.
- Children over 12 months may sleep on sleep mats where this is developmentally appropriate and agreed with parents or carers.
- For babies born prematurely, baby safer-sleep guidance will continue until 12 months after the child's expected due date rather than 12 months after their actual date of birth; the expected due date will be recorded in the child's sleep information.
- Sleeping children will always remain included within statutory staff-to-child ratios.

Children Aged 12 Months and Under

Children aged 12 months and under will always:

- sleep in an individual cot which meets current applicable safety standards;
- be placed on their back for every sleep;
- be placed in the feet-to-foot position, with their feet at the foot of the cot;
- sleep on a firm, flat, waterproof mattress with an appropriately fitted sheet;
- use only an appropriately fitted sleep bag suitable for their age, size and the room temperature; and
- never be placed on their side or tummy to sleep.

If a child rolls during sleep but is not yet able to roll independently from back to tummy and from tummy to back, staff will gently reposition them onto their back. Once a child can independently roll in both directions, they may be left to find their own sleeping position after initially being placed on their back.

Cots for children aged 12 months and under will remain clear and will not contain:

- pillows, duvets, quilts or loose blankets;
- cot bumpers, nests, pods, wedges or sleep positioners;
- soft toys, comforters or any other loose item;
- hot-water bottles, electric blankets or weighted sleep products.

Children under 12 months will sleep in an area where a member of staff is physically present and able to observe them directly throughout the sleep period.

Children Aged Over 12 Months and Under 2 Years

Children aged over 12 months and under two years may sleep on a sleep mat where this is developmentally appropriate and has been discussed with parents or carers. For children born prematurely, the enhanced baby safer-sleep arrangements continue until 12 months after their expected due date.

Where lightweight bedding or blankets are used:

- bedding will be suitable for the child and meet safer sleep requirements;
- blankets will be firmly tucked in;
- blankets will sit no higher than the child's shoulders;
- the child's head and face will remain uncovered; and
- staff will ensure the child is not overheated.

Children sleeping on sleep mats will be positioned head-to-toe in relation to the mat beside them, with ample space maintained between mats so that children are not breathing directly towards one another. The layout will also allow staff safe access to every child.

Children aged over 12 months and under two years who sleep on mats will always remain within sight and sound of staff and will receive enhanced monitoring throughout their sleep period.

Bedding, Storage and Hygiene

The nursery will provide ample fitted sheets. Each fitted sheet, blanket or sleep bag will be allocated to one child and stored in that child's individual sleep storage bag, which will remain at the nursery.

Fitted sheets, blankets and sleep bags will normally be used by that child for the week and laundered at the end of the week. They will be removed and washed sooner whenever they become wet, soiled, contaminated or otherwise require cleaning.

Individual storage and allocation reduce the risk of cross-contamination while also supporting environmentally responsible practice by avoiding unnecessary laundering after every sleep.

- Sleep mats, cot frames and waterproof mattress surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected between different users and whenever visibly soiled.
- Bedding will be stored clean, dry and securely away from contamination.
- Damaged, worn or contaminated sleep equipment will be removed from use immediately.

Temperature and Clothing

Sleep areas will be maintained between 16°C and 20°C wherever possible. Staff will use professional judgement and respond to the individual child, environmental conditions and current health guidance.

Before sleeping, staff will:

- monitor and record the room or sleep-area temperature where required;
- remove hats and shoes;
- remove or adjust loose, heavy or excessively baggy clothing;
- ensure clothing does not cover the child's face or restrict breathing;
- avoid excessive layers and overheating;
- follow the sleep-bag manufacturer's size and tog guidance; and
- check the child remains comfortable throughout the sleep period.

Supervision

Sleeping children will be continuously supervised. Supervision arrangements will reflect the child's age, development, health and individual risk assessment.

- Children aged 12 months and under will sleep in an area where a member of staff is physically present throughout the sleep period.
- Children aged over 12 months will remain within sight and sound of staff throughout the sleep period.
- Physical sleep checks will be completed at least every 10 minutes and more frequently where age, illness, medication, medical need or an individual care plan requires this.
- Staffing arrangements will ensure sleeping children remain included in statutory ratios and that awake children continue to be supervised safely.

Dots & Tots will not use audio, video, movement or breathing monitors as a substitute for supervision. We believe direct observation and physical checks provide the safest method of monitoring children in the nursery environment.

Sleep Checks and Records

Sleep checks will be completed in person and logged in real time through the nursery management app. Staff will not complete records retrospectively unless an emergency has prevented immediate recording, in which case the reason will be documented.

Each physical check will include:

- observing the rise and fall of the chest and the child's breathing;
- checking the colour of the child's skin and lips;
- ensuring the child's head and face remain uncovered;
- checking the child's temperature, comfort and general wellbeing;
- ensuring the child remains in a safe sleep position and appropriate sleep space;
- checking that bedding remains safely positioned; and
- ensuring the sleep environment remains free from obstructions, toys and other hazards.

The sleep record will include:

- the child's name;
- the time the child settled to sleep;
- the time of every observation;
- the initials or electronic identification of the staff member completing each check;
- the time the child woke; and
- any concern, action or information shared with parents.

Any concern about breathing, colour, temperature, responsiveness, positioning or general wellbeing will be acted upon immediately and reported to the Nursery Manager.

Individual Sleep Routines and Parent Partnership

Parents and carers will be consulted during registration and whenever a child's needs change. Information gathered will include:

- the child's usual sleep routine and typical sleep duration;
- sleep cues and preferred settling techniques;
- use of a dummy or suitable comfort item;
- allergies, medical conditions and medication;
- recent changes in health, behaviour or sleep patterns; and
- any advice provided by a healthcare professional.

We will aim to follow familiar routines where these are safe and practical. Safer sleep guidance and the nursery's safeguarding responsibilities will always take priority.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any changes to sleep routines with their child's Key Person. Daily sleep information will be shared through the nursery app and verbally where appropriate.

Comforters and Dummies

A dummy may be used where it forms part of the child's usual sleep routine. Dummies will be clearly labelled, stored hygienically and never shared. **If a dummy falls out once a child is asleep, staff will not routinely reinsert it**.

Soft comforters are not permitted in the cot of a child aged 12 months and under. For older children, a comfort item may be considered only where it is age appropriate, does not present a suffocation, strangulation or choking risk, and has been agreed with parents. Staff may remove any item that becomes unsafe during sleep.

Settling Children

Staff will use responsive, nurturing and age-appropriate methods to support children to settle, including:

- gentle reassurance and comforting words;
- quiet voices and a calm environment;
- gentle back patting where appropriate;
- familiar routines and consistent sleep cues; and
- soft lullaby music where appropriate.

Children will not be placed to sleep with bottles propped in the cot or with food, jewellery, bibs, hooded clothing or other items that could create a hazard.

Illness, Medication and Medical Needs

Children who are unwell, have a temperature, display respiratory symptoms or have recently received medication that may affect alertness will be monitored more frequently.

Where there is any question about whether it is safe for a child to sleep, parents will be contacted and the concern discussed with them and the manager. If required, the child will not be settled to sleep until the Nursery Manager is satisfied that doing so is safe. The nursery's sickness and exclusion procedures will be followed where appropriate.

Children with reflux, respiratory conditions, epilepsy, disabilities, complex medical needs or any condition affecting sleep will have an individual risk assessment and, where required, a healthcare plan developed with parents and relevant healthcare professionals. Any professional advice that changes standard sleep arrangements must be provided in writing and reviewed by the Nursery Manager before implementation.

Smoking and Vaping

Dots & Tots operate a strict no-smoking and no-vaping policy throughout the nursery building, outdoor areas and grounds. Staff will not smoke or vape while responsible for children or while identifiable as representing the nursery.

Parents are encouraged to inform the nursery of relevant changes or concerns relating to a child's exposure to smoke or vaping so that appropriate health and safer sleep information can be discussed sensitively.

Car Seats, Buggies and Travel Equipment

If a child arrives at nursery asleep in a car seat, the nursery will be unable to admit the child until they are awake and alert. Parents or carers will be asked to remain responsible for the child until they are fully awake. This allows staff to establish that the child has not become unusually sleepy or lethargic because they were unwell before arriving at the setting.

Dots & Tots does not provide car seats and does not use its own vehicle to transport children.

If a child falls asleep in a buggy while on a nursery walk, or while being rocked or comforted, staff will continue to supervise them closely and will transfer them to an appropriate safe cot or sleep mat as soon as they return to the setting. Buggies, swings, rockers, bouncers and car seats will not be used as routine sleep spaces.

Swaddling

Swaddling is not permitted at Dots & Tots Day Nursery. Children must be able to move freely, and staff must be able to observe their breathing, colour and position clearly.

Staff Training and Competency

No member of staff may supervise sleeping children independently until they have:

- completed safe sleep training;
- completed safeguarding training;
- completed paediatric first aid training; and
- been observed in practice and formally signed off as competent by a member of the management team.

Safe sleep procedures form part of staff induction. Refresher training, supervision and competency reassessment will be provided where practice changes, concerns arise or guidance is updated.

Emergency Procedures

If a child appears unresponsive or is not breathing normally:

1. Call for assistance immediately.
2. Begin paediatric first aid without delay.
3. A second member of staff will call 999 and follow the emergency call handler's instructions.
4. Inform the Nursery Manager or most senior person on site.
5. Contact the child's parents or carers immediately.
6. Preserve relevant information and complete a full factual incident record as soon as possible.
7. Notify Ofsted, the local authority and any other relevant agencies where required.

The child will not be left unattended at any stage. Staff will continue resuscitation and emergency care until instructed otherwise by emergency services or until the child shows signs of recovery.

Risk Assessment

Daily opening and ongoing risk assessments will include checks of:

- sleep areas;
- cots, mattresses and sleep mats;
- bedding and sleeping bags;
- room temperature and ventilation;
- supervision and staffing arrangements;
- cleanliness and storage; and
- Any individual medical, developmental or care need affecting sleep.

The core Dots & Tots risk assessment will also address sleep arrangements, supervision and individual medical needs. Any hazard identification will be addressed and removed immediately. Equipment that does not meet requirements will be taken out of use.

Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager will:

- review safe sleep practice through observation and supervision;

- review any unsafe practice, concern, near miss or incident;
- ensure sleep equipment remains free from damage and continues to meet safety requirements;
- ensure staff training and competency records remain current;
- take prompt action where practice does not meet this policy; and
- update the policy in response to changes in the EYFS, NHS advice, Lullaby Trust guidance or learning from incidents.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where guidance, legislation, practice or the needs of the setting change.

Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Administration of Medication Policy
- Infection Prevention and Control Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Sickness and Exclusion Policy

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Signed

Christie Patton

Company Owner