

THE HEATH ACADEMY TRUST

Safe Sleep Policy and Procedure

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2026	September 2026	Creation of new policy in line with DfE guidelines and EYFS Statutory Framework

Safe Sleep Policy and Procedure

Children Aged 2 Years and Over

This document has been created in line with Department for Education (DfE) Safer Sleep Guidance and EYFS Requirements, effective September 2026. It applies to the following nurseries in the Heath Academy Trust:

St Ives Primary and Nursery School
St James CE First School and Nursery
St Mary's CE First School and Nursery
Sixpenny Handley First School and Nursery
Oakhurst Community First and Nursery School
Three Legged Cross First and Nursery School

Policy Name: Safe Sleep Policy and Procedure

Applies to: All staff, volunteers, students and agency staff

Age Range: Children aged 2 years and over

Review Date: Annually or following any change in legislation or guidance

Responsible Person: as designated by each school

1. Policy Statement

Our schools and nurseries are committed to providing a safe, secure and suitable environment for all children during periods of rest and sleep. We recognise that sleep is essential for children's wellbeing, development and learning, and we will ensure that all sleep arrangements minimise risks and promote children's safety at all times.

This policy reflects the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and the Department for Education's (DfE) safer sleep guidance, developed in collaboration with The Lullaby Trust, which is incorporated into the EYFS statutory framework from September 2026.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- Provide a safe sleeping environment for all children
- Ensure children are appropriately supervised while sleeping
- Reduce risks associated with sleep-related injury and sudden unexpected death in childhood (SUDC)
- Meet statutory safeguarding and welfare requirements
- Work in partnership with parents and carers regarding children's sleep routines and individual needs
- Ensure all staff are trained and competent in safer sleep practices

3. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy is based on:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework
- Department for Education (DfE) Safer Sleep Guidance (2026)
- NHS Safer Sleep Guidance

- The Lullaby Trust Safer Sleep Recommendations
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

4. Safe Sleep Principles for Children Aged 2 Years and Over

Although the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is primarily associated with babies under 12 months, safe sleeping practices remain important for older children to reduce the risk of:

- Suffocation
- Entrapment
- Overheating
- Falls
- Medical emergencies during sleep
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC)

The school and nursery will therefore ensure that:

Sleeping Areas

- Sleep areas are clean, quiet, well ventilated and maintained at a comfortable temperature between 16-20 degrees Celsius. Professional judgement and guidance will be used during periods of extreme temperatures
- Children sleep on individual sleep mats on the floor
- Sleep equipment is regularly checked for safety and cleanliness
- Pathways remain clear for safe supervision and emergency evacuation

Bedding

- Each child has individual bedding where required
- Bedding is suitable for the room temperature
- Bedding is lightweight and free from hazards and firmly tucked in around the child no higher than their shoulders to prevent head covering
- Pillows are only used where developmentally appropriate and agreed with parents and will be covered within the nursery's risk assessment
- Weighted blankets, sleep positioners, wedges or restraint devices are not used.

5. Supervision During Sleep

Children will never be left unsupervised while sleeping.

The school and nursery will ensure:

- Sleeping children remain within sight and/ or hearing of staff at all times
- Regular visual checks are carried out at least every 10 minutes
- Sleep checks include observation of:
 - Breathing
 - Skin colour
 - Temperature
 - Sleep position
 - Overall wellbeing
- Checks are recorded where children sleep for any period or where individual risk assessments require monitoring

Checks and monitoring records will be signed off by a senior member of staff on a weekly basis

Schools and nurseries will retain records and these will be kept for the period of one academic year

Staff will immediately investigate if a child appears unwell, unusually difficult to rouse, or displays any signs of distress.

6. Individual Sleep Requirements

The school and nursery recognises that children have different sleep needs.

Parents and carers will be consulted regarding:

- Normal sleep routines
- Sleep preferences
- Comfort items
- Medical needs
- Existing sleep difficulties

Most children will have their sleep as a part of their planned, daily nursery routine.

An individual sleep care plan will be completed where a child:

- Has a medical condition
- Has SEND needs affecting and/ or requiring sleep
- Requires medication related to sleep
- Has a history of seizures, respiratory difficulties or other relevant health concerns

The nursery reserves the right to amend parental requests if they conflict with current safer sleep guidance or place a child at risk.

7. Comforters and Sleep Aids

Children may use their own comforter if it:

- Is age appropriate
- Does not create a strangulation or suffocation hazard
- Is kept clean and in good condition

The following are prohibited:

- Items with cords, ribbons or loops
- Unsafe sleep aids
- Electrical comfort devices unless risk assessed and approved

Staff will assess individual items before use and consult with parents/ carers.

8. Temperature and Clothing

Staff will ensure children do not become overheated during sleep. Aims to maintain a comfortable temperature between 16-20 degrees Celsius

- Rooms will be comfortably ventilated
- Rooms will have a temperature monitor system in place
- Heavy, bulky clothing will be removed where appropriate
- Outdoor clothing and coats will not be worn during sleep
- Children showing signs of overheating will be monitored and adjusted accordingly

The DfE highlights the importance of preventing children from becoming too hot or too cold during sleep. Temperature will be checked by feeling the child's chest or back of their neck. If the skin feels clammy or sweaty a layer of clothing or bedding will be removed.

9. Children Who Fall Asleep Unexpectedly

If a child falls asleep outside designated sleep times:

- Staff will check the child's wellbeing
- The child will be moved to a suitable sleep area if safe/ suitable to do so
- Supervision procedures will be followed
- Parents will be informed if/ where appropriate
- If unusual sleep patterns emerge, observations will be discussed with parents and a suitable future plan recorded

10. Medical Emergencies During Sleep

If staff are unable to rouse a child or have concerns regarding a child's breathing or condition:

- Call for immediate assistance
- Follow first aid procedures
- Contact emergency services (999) if required
- Contact parents immediately
- Complete accident, incident and safeguarding records
- Notify relevant authorities where required
- Notify the CEO

11. Staff Training

All staff will receive training and updates covering:

- Safer sleep practices
- EYFS requirements
- Recognising signs of distress or medical emergency
- First aid and paediatric first aid
- Record keeping and supervision requirements

Training records will be maintained by the Responsible Person.

12. Risk Assessment

The nursery will regularly risk assess:

- Sleep area
- Sleep positioning
- Bedding and furnishings
- Staffing supervision and training needs
- Temperature and clothing
- Individual children's sleep needs
- Emergency procedures

Risk assessments will be reviewed:

- Annually
- Following an incident

- When equipment changes
- When a child's needs change

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Nursery Manager/ teacher

- Ensures implementation of this policy
- Reviews procedures and risk assessments- supported with responsible person
- Ensures staff training is up to date- supported with responsible person

Staff

- Follow the policy at all times
- Complete required monitoring checks
- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain accurate records

Parents and Carers

- Share relevant information regarding sleep routines and medical conditions
- Notify the nursery of any changes affecting their child's sleep
- Ensure any sleep aids etc brought in are suitable for use

14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed:

- Every 12 months
- Following changes to legislation or DfE guidance
- Following any sleep-related incident or safeguarding concern

References

Department for Education, *Safer Sleep Guidance for Early Years Providers* (2026) and planned EYFS updates effective September 2026 [Help for early years providers : Safer sleep](#)

The Lullaby Trust *Safer Sleep Recommendations* [Home](#) | [The Lullaby Trust](#)

Early Years Alliance, *Safe Sleep* [Safe sleep](#) | www.eyalliance.org.uk