

Sleeping and Resting in Nursery

At St. Michael's Nursery we aim to ensure that all children have enough sleep to support their development and natural sleeping rhythms in a safe environment.

It is our duty to safeguard all children in our care; to deprive a child from sleep or indeed to force a child to sleep at nursery is considered a child protection issue, and therefore our practice is to ensure all children have sufficient natural sleep.

We ask parents to read this policy before their child joins us at nursery and consider any changes to your sleep routine to ensure we are able to follow the Safer Sleep Policy.

If a child is asleep when they arrive at nursery

All children must be awake before being accepted at nursery, to ensure they are in good health and there are no pre-existing concerns.

If the child then needs to return to sleep, we are able to provide their safe sleeping area.

A space for babies to sleep;

Children under 12 months old sleep in cots and will have an allocated cot at nursery, ensuring familiarity with each visit and sleep time, enabling a feeling of security. A child may like to bring in their own comforters such as muslins, dummies or cuddly toys to further encourage a feeling of familiarity at times of rest or when feeling unsettled.

If you prefer your child to use a sleeping bag, we ask parents to provide these – meeting British Safety Standards and appropriate to the seasonal temperature.

To sleep safely, babies and children's comforters (except dummies) will be removed for their sleeping area once they are asleep, as per DfE Safe Sleep Guidance and children under 12 months do not take comforters to sleep.

Our baby cot room is monitored with video /audio watched by staff in the playroom and babies are checked every 10 minutes by a member of staff with Paed. First aid.

Premature Birth

For sleep purposes (as well as to track milestones) we will use a neonatal age corrected for preterm birth. Therefore a baby may use a cot for a longer period, until they have reached 12 months corrected age.

Babies sleeping safely at nursery (Under 12 months)

We adopt a policy of practice recommended by The Lullaby Trust to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death (SIDS)

Babies are placed on their back to sleep, reducing the risk Babies/toddlers will never be put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed	When the baby is old enough to roll over they should not be prevented from doing so. (back to bed).
Babies under 6 months old will sleep in a cot in the main playroom , with an adult nearby at all times.	Babies are placed with their feet at the bottom of the cot and bedding is tucked under their arms and around the mattress. This will prevent a baby wriggling beneath their bedding.
Babies/toddlers will be monitored visually when sleeping, checks are recorded every 10 minutes This check is to be carried out by a regular member of staff with paediatric first aid.	Baby monitors (video and audio) are used continuously for the baby cot room, this is not instead of physical checks. Older aged children sleep within sight and hearing of a member of staff and are checked every 10 minutes.
We will increase the monitoring of a sleeping baby to every 5 minutes or a child who is unwell or in the event of a heatwave .	When monitoring sleeping children, the staff member will look for the rise and fall of the chest, and the child's skintone /lip colour .

We provide a safe sleeping environment by:

Temperature of environment	Ideal 16 – 20 degrees	Adjustments are made accordingly such as opening windows/ cooling fans/ heating on/ bedding removed	Babies do not sleep next to a radiator or in direct sunlight Prams (on a walk) need a hood/ parasol
Bedding	Clean, light bedding to avoid overheating For babies, tucked under their arms		Remember a folded blanket counts as two blankets

	and around the mattress to prevent it being pulled over their head , or wriggling beneath		
Sleeping bags	These are provided by families and must be appropriate TOG rating for the seasonal temperature – this will be checked by the team	Sleeping bags must be well fitted to ensure children will not wriggle beneath the bag. Sleeping bags must meet safety requirements	
Sleep Space	Babies under 12 months sleep in a cot with firm, flat mattress with waterproof cover	Children over 12months sleep on purpose made Snooze mats, firm flat and waterproof	Babies under 12 months may sleep in a travel cot at times Cots, beds and travel cots meet safety requirements.
Clear cot/ bed	Cots do not have bumpers / pillows or soft toys to clutter the sleep space	Comforters are removed when a child is asleep	Dummies must be checked for damage before every use All other comforters are removed from the sleep space when the child is asleep
Clear sleep area	Areas to be clear of hanging objects , blind cords are held back by high cleats.	Drawstring bedding bags are not within in reach of children	A risk assessment to remove any other hazards
Restrictive clothing	Bibs , necklaces, ribbons etc are removed before bedtime to avoid strangulation	Earrings, and removable hair bands/ ties will be removed to prevent choking hazards	Hats and coats are removed on children who have slept on a walk.
Walks	Babies/children who fall asleep on a walk – to lay the	Loosen any clothing that may restrict breathing/	On return , sleeping children must have coats

	pushchair as flat as possible. And begin 10 minute checks.	over heat the child	and hats removed and to be transferred to a firm, flat mattress.
Illness	Sleeping children who are unwell should be checked every five minutes and have an adult with them if they present as unwell.	If they are especially sleepy, wake them regularly for fluids and ensure they are not too hot.	Children with a temperature or unusual sleep pattern– contact parents and send home.
Smoking	There is no smoking/ vaping on site (indoors and outdoors)	Staff who smoke should change out of uniform to do so and not return to babies until 20 minutes later.	
Rocking / cradling to sleep	We understand that babies may need comforting to sleep or may fall asleep on an nursery nurse's lap during the day.	When asleep on an adult the baby should be laid as flat as possible onto the adult's lap, away from their body heat and clothing removed to keep their body and head cool. Ten minute sleep checks must be recorded for this child.	To move on to a firm, flat sleeping cot or mat as soon as possible for safe sleep.
Extreme heat / cold	See separate policy		

Getting to know your child's routine

When children are settling into the nursery we ask families to write and chat about their home routine, which we will try to mirror as much as possible at nursery. This can take time as the baby / child adjusts to nursery environment. We ask families to update us as the routine changes.

For safe sleep reasons, babies are always put to bed on their backs at nursery , not on their tummies.

Some parents may provide a sleep apnoea alarm to make them feel more reassured about their baby sleeping at nursery.

Sleep routines and requests from parents and carers

When a child first joins our nursery the family and child will be invited to attend settling in sessions, convenient to the family and nursery. The visits to nursery will be short in length initially with parents (and sometimes extended family) able to remain in nursery.

During the early visits the family will discuss with their key person, their child's daily routine and individual needs, including sleep routines and how their baby or child sleeps best.

Home sleep routines , limiting sleep and staying awake (for all ages)

We recognise that parents' knowledge of their child in regards to sleep routines and will, where possible, work together to ensure each child's individual sleep routines and well-being continues to be met.

However we understand it is not best practice to deprive a child of sleep and the following practice in this area has the child's needs at heart.

In light of NHS and professional recommendations for best practice, we prefer not to limit the children's sleeps at nap time by waking them up, as this is best for the children's health, safety, learning and development. We will, however, gently encourage slow and natural waking after an appropriate period by pulling up the blinds to let the light in, introducing gentle background noises, turning the lights on, talking to other children and team etc. If a child is unable to be roused from sleep with a gentle approach, we will return to them within a few minutes to try again.

In the same light, if a child is becoming sleepy and unable to stay awake, they will have opportunity to rest as is the best practice, rather than encouraging them to stay awake and then, after an appropriate time, take a gentle approach to rouse them to wake in a natural way.

All children will be encouraged to rest through the day as is appropriate, usually after lunch for older children. If a child, after a period of rest, is not showing any signs of sleep they will be encouraged to take part in quiet activities such as looking at books, making puzzles etc. Staff will not insist a child goes to sleep.

Staff will discuss any changes in sleep routines at the end of the day and share observations and information about children's behaviour when they have not had enough sleep.

We understand a late afternoon sleep can disrupt a child's bedtime routine in the evening. If your child is tired towards the end of the nursery day, we discuss with parents the recommendation of a late morning sleep. It is important to know that sleep promotes sleep and that cutting out the daytime nap too soon is not always the answer to a better night time routine.

Children have a sleep cycle, reaching various stages during this time, over a period of 90 minutes. Information about the cycle can be found

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/sleep-information-sheets/sleep/>

Sleeping twins

We follow the advice from The Lullaby Trust (formally FSIDs) regarding sleeping twins and will not put them together in the same cot to sleep (however their cots can be next to each other) If they are using snooze mats, they will be able to sleep next to each other.

Sleeping in a pram/pushchair

Children do not sleep in prams or pushchairs in the nursery playrooms, following the Lullaby Trust guidance, children must sleep on firm, flat surfaces (cots or sleepmats)

Sleeping outdoors

We appreciate that children sleep well in outdoor fresh air and it is possible we will encourage children to sleep on snooze-mats outside, with staff in attendance at all times. The garden is locked and beds will be in the shade, bedding appropriate to the outdoor temperature. Clothing will be loosened to not be restrictive, and appropriate to outdoor temperature. Extreme heat or cold weather will prevent outdoor sleeping.

Children with underlying medical needs

Staff are made aware of children who may be prone to seizures and these children will be monitored closely at sleep checks.

If the child is showing signs/symptoms which are known to precede a seizure or seem generally unwell, their parents will be contacted. We are prepared to call emergency medical services if needed.

Sleep and Rest Policy January 2023

Reviewed January 2024

Reviewed March 2025

Reviewed April 2026

References

- Letter from Minister for Early Years re safe sleep and changes to EYFS(April 2026)
[MD Letter](#)
- NHS, Best Start in Life - baby safer sleep advice
<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/baby-basics/newborn-and-baby-sleeping-advice-for-parents/safe-sleep-advice-for-babies/>
- Lullaby Trust , Safe Sleep Guide for Professionals.
[Professionals-guide.pdf](#)
- EYFS Statutory Framework for School Base and Group Providers
- Sleep Information for Kids (Specialist Children's Services)
<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/sleep-information-sheets/sleep/>

Sleeping at nursery

Name of child.....Today's date

I have read the sleep and rest policy for babies and children at St. Michael's Nursery and understand the procedures in place.

Signed.....Name of parent.....

Please let us know if you have any special requests for your baby for rest;

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My child uses the following soother

Signed.....

Print name.....

Date.....

