

Oyster Bay Nursery

Sleep and Rest Policy

Date written: October 2026

Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

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Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

Oyster Bay Nursery recognises that sleep and rest are essential to children's health, wellbeing, growth, learning and development. Every child has individual sleep patterns and rest needs, which may change as they grow.

We are committed to providing a calm, comfortable and safe environment where children can sleep or rest according to their individual needs. We work in partnership with parents and carers to understand each child's routine while ensuring that safer sleep guidance and safeguarding requirements are followed at all times.

The safety of babies and children is paramount. Staff will follow current safer sleep guidance from the Department for Education, the NHS and The Lullaby Trust to reduce the risk of sleep-related harm, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Parents' wishes and cultural practices will be considered, but the Nursery cannot follow a request that conflicts with essential safety guidance. Where a child has a medical condition that affects their sleep or sleeping position, the Nursery will work with the parents and appropriate healthcare professionals to agree a documented individual care plan.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Provide every child with opportunities to sleep and rest when needed.
- Follow current safer sleep guidance for babies and young children.
- Provide suitable, clean and well-maintained sleep equipment.
- Ensure sleeping children are appropriately supervised and monitored.
- Respect each child's individual routine, comfort and emotional needs.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and know how to respond to concerns or emergencies.
- Record and communicate children's sleep patterns accurately.

3. Individual Sleep Routines and Settling In

When a child starts at Oyster Bay Nursery, the Key Person will discuss their sleep and rest routine with the parents or carers and record relevant information on the child's individual routine sheet.

Information may include:

- Usual sleep times and duration.
- Signs that the child is tired.
- Their usual settling routine.
- How they prefer to be comforted.
- Whether they use a dummy, in accordance with the Nursery's Use of Dummies Policy.
- Any relevant medical conditions, allergies or additional needs.
- Any concerns about sleep, breathing or previous sleep-related advice.
- Any arrangements agreed with parents and healthcare professionals.

Staff will share relevant information with colleagues who care for the child so that routines are followed consistently.

Parents should inform the Nursery of any significant changes to their child's sleep pattern, health or medical advice.

If a parent requests a sleeping position or practice that differs from safer sleep guidance, staff will explain the Nursery's approach and discuss the concern with the Nursery Manager. Any medically necessary alternative must be supported by appropriate professional advice and a written individual care plan before it is implemented.

4. Safer Sleep for Babies

4.1 Sleeping position

Babies must be placed on their backs for every sleep, including daytime naps.

Babies must not routinely be placed on their side or front to sleep. If a baby can independently roll from their back to their front and back again, staff must still place them on their back initially and follow current safer sleep guidance.

Any exception required for a medical reason must be supported by appropriate healthcare advice and a documented individual care plan agreed with the Nursery Manager.

4.2 Suitable sleep space

Babies aged 12 months and under must sleep in a suitable cot that meets the relevant safety requirements.

Every baby must have their own separate sleep space with:

- A firm, flat, waterproof mattress that fits correctly.

- Clean, suitable bedding.
- No gaps where the baby could become trapped.
- No raised or inclined sleeping surface.
- No pillows, duvets, cot bumpers, nests, pods, positioners or soft toys.
- No loose items that could cover the baby's face or cause overheating.

Babies must not be put down to sleep on sofas, armchairs, beanbags, bouncy chairs, swings, inclined seats or other unsuitable products.

If a baby falls asleep in a car seat or other unsuitable seated product, staff must transfer them to their appropriate separate sleep space as soon as they arrive at the Nursery or it is safe and practicable to do so.

4.3 Bedding and clothing

Where a blanket is used, it must be lightweight, securely tucked in and positioned no higher than the baby's shoulders, with the baby's feet near the bottom of the cot.

A well-fitting baby sleeping bag may be used where appropriate and in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Staff must ensure that it is the correct size and that the baby cannot slip inside it.

Staff must remove bibs, hats, outdoor clothing and any items that could present a risk during sleep. Babies must not be overdressed or overwrapped.

Bedding must not be allowed to cover the baby's face or head.

4.4 Comforters, toys and dummies

Babies under 12 months must not have comforters, soft toys or other loose objects in their sleep space.

For children aged over 12 months, any comfort item must be suitable for their age, size and developmental stage and must not create a risk of suffocation, entanglement or overheating.

Dummies may be offered in accordance with the Nursery's Use of Dummies Policy. Dummy clips, cords and other attachments must not be used during sleep.

4.5 Room temperature and ventilation

Staff will ensure that sleep areas are comfortable, well ventilated and free from obvious hazards.

For babies, the Nursery will aim for a room temperature of approximately 16–20°C where practicable, while using professional judgement in unusually hot or cold weather.

Staff will check whether a baby is too hot or too cold by feeling their chest or the back of their neck. Sweating, clammy skin or a very hot chest may indicate overheating. Hands and feet may feel cooler than the rest of the body and are not, on their own, a reliable indication of temperature.

Staff will adjust clothing, bedding and the environment as needed. Babies must not sleep wearing hats indoors.

5. Preparing Babies for Sleep

Before settling a baby, staff will consider their comfort and immediate needs. This may include:

- Checking whether a nappy change is needed.
- Ensuring the baby has had an appropriate feed or drink according to their individual feeding routine.
- Removing bibs, hats and unnecessary outer clothing.
- Ensuring the baby is dressed appropriately for the room temperature.
- Checking that the sleep space is clean, safe and ready.
- Removing items that are not permitted in the cot.
- Following the baby's individual settling routine.

Staff will provide calm, responsive reassurance. This may include speaking gently, singing quietly, reading a short story or offering a cuddle while the baby is awake.

Babies must not be left to cry for prolonged periods as a method of getting them to sleep. Staff will respond to each baby's cues and needs.

If a baby has not settled after approximately 15 minutes, staff should reassess their needs and consider whether a different settling approach or another sleep opportunity would be more appropriate. This is a guide rather than a rigid rule and must not override a child's wellbeing or medical needs.

If a baby falls asleep while being held, staff must place them on their back in their appropriate sleep space as soon as safely possible. Staff must never fall asleep while holding a baby or leave a baby sleeping on an adult's body, sofa or chair.

If a baby falls asleep unexpectedly before staff have completed routine preparations, their immediate safe sleep position and environment take priority. Staff must transfer the baby to their appropriate sleep space, remove any unsafe items and attend to any outstanding care needs as soon as safe to do so.

6. Sleep Monitoring and Supervision

All sleeping babies and children must be closely supervised. Children must remain within the sight and hearing of staff, and supervision arrangements must reflect their age, needs, health and the layout of the room.

6.1 Monitoring arrangements

- For babies over six months, staff may use a suitable dedicated sleep room or another arrangement that ensures frequent, effective monitoring, with children remaining within sight and hearing.
- Sleeping children must be checked at least every 10 minutes as Nursery practice. More frequent checks must be undertaken whenever a child's age, health, individual care plan or circumstances require them.
- Staff must ensure that responsibility for checks is clearly allocated and that checks continue during staff breaks, room changes and handovers.
- Staff must never assume that another colleague has completed a check without confirming this where necessary.

6.2 What staff must check

During each check, staff must assess the child's wellbeing and sleep environment, including:

- Their sleeping position and whether their face and head are uncovered.
- Their breathing and general appearance.
- Whether bedding or clothing is creating a hazard.
- Whether the child appears too hot or too cold.
- Whether the sleep space remains safe and clear.
- Whether the child appears distressed, unwell or in need of attention.

Checks must be meaningful observations, not simply a glance at a register. Staff should avoid unnecessarily disturbing a sleeping child, but must respond immediately if anything gives cause for concern. If a child's breathing, colour or responsiveness appears abnormal, staff must assess them immediately and follow the Nursery's emergency and first aid procedures.

6.3 Recording sleep checks

Staff must record sleep times and required monitoring checks in accordance with the Nursery's procedures. Records must be completed accurately and at the time of the check wherever practicable.

The Nursery uses the Ovivio App to record and communicate each child's daily sleep pattern to parents and carers. Staff must ensure that entries are accurate, complete and shared with the appropriate family members.

Any unusual sleep behaviour, concern, incident or deviation from the child's normal routine must be reported to the Nursery Manager and recorded in accordance with the relevant procedures.

7. Sleep and Rest for Older Children

Children's sleep needs vary. Some children may need a daytime nap, while others may benefit from quiet rest without sleeping.

Oyster Bay Nursery will provide age-appropriate opportunities for children to sleep or rest throughout the day. These may include:

- A quiet, comfortable area with books.
- A suitable sleep mat or low bed where appropriate.
- A calm environment with reduced noise and stimulation.
- Reassurance and comfort from a familiar member of staff.

Children under two years must be placed down to sleep on their backs in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface, following current EYFS safer sleep requirements. Children aged 12 months and under must use a suitable cot sleep space.

For older children, staff will use appropriate, safe sleep equipment and ensure that children cannot become trapped, fall or be exposed to unsuitable bedding or objects.

Children will not be forced to sleep, prevented from sleeping when they need rest, or routinely woken solely to fit an adult timetable. Staff will balance parental preferences with the child's wellbeing, individual needs and safe practice.

If a child repeatedly struggles to settle, appears unusually tired or shows a significant change in their sleep pattern, the Key Person will discuss this with the parents and, where appropriate, the Nursery Manager.

8. Safe Sleep Equipment and Hygiene

The Nursery Manager will ensure that cots, mattresses, sleep mats and other sleep equipment are appropriate, clean and maintained in a safe condition.

Staff must:

- Check sleep spaces before use.
- Ensure mattresses are firm, flat, clean, waterproof and in good condition.

- Use clean bedding for each child and change it whenever it becomes wet or soiled.
- Clean and disinfect sleep equipment in accordance with the Nursery's hygiene procedures.
- Check cots and other equipment regularly for damage, loose parts, broken fastenings or other hazards.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and relevant safety standards.
- Remove damaged or unsuitable equipment from use immediately and report it to the Nursery Manager.

Sleep equipment must be stored hygienically when not in use. Bedding must not be shared between children without being laundered.

9. Waking and Responding to Children

Children should be allowed to wake naturally wherever possible. Staff will respond sensitively when a child wakes and provide reassurance if needed.

If a child becomes distressed, staff will comfort them and consider whether they need a nappy change, drink, food, attention or a change of environment.

Staff must not leave a child distressed for a prolonged period or use sleep as a punishment or behavioural management technique.

If a child is unusually difficult to rouse, appears unwell or shows signs of breathing difficulty, staff must follow the Nursery's emergency procedures immediately.

10. Partnership with Parents and Carers

The Nursery recognises that consistent communication helps children feel secure and supports their wellbeing.

Parents and carers are encouraged to share information about:

- Changes to sleep routines at home.
- New settling methods or comfort needs.
- Illness, medication or medical advice that may affect sleep.
- Concerns about their child's sleep or tiredness.

The Key Person will discuss sleep patterns with parents as needed. Daily sleep information will be recorded and shared through the Ovivio App.

If parents request a practice that conflicts with safer sleep guidance, staff will explain the reasons for the Nursery's approach and work with the family to find a safe and

appropriate alternative. The Nursery will not adopt an unsafe sleep practice solely because it is used at home.

11. Staff Training and Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that:

- Staff understand and follow this policy.
- Staff who care for babies receive appropriate safer sleep training.
- New staff receive sleep safety guidance during induction.
- Sleep spaces and equipment are regularly checked.
- Monitoring and recording arrangements are followed.
- Concerns are addressed promptly and procedures are reviewed when necessary.

All staff are responsible for:

- Following safer sleep guidance at every sleep period.
- Maintaining active supervision.
- Completing sleep checks and records accurately.
- Reporting unsafe equipment, unusual behaviour or concerns immediately.
- Following individual care plans and communicating relevant information during handovers.
- Never using their own preferred sleep practices in place of Nursery procedures.

12. Emergencies and Safeguarding Concerns

If a child appears unresponsive, has abnormal breathing or shows signs of a medical emergency, staff must act immediately.

Staff must:

1. Assess the child and seek help from another member of staff.
2. Call 999 where an emergency is suspected.
3. Begin appropriate first aid or CPR in accordance with their training and the emergency dispatcher's instructions.
4. Ensure another staff member contacts the parents or carers and meets the emergency services.
5. Record the incident and notify the Nursery Manager.

6. Complete any required safeguarding, regulatory or other notifications.

Staff must not delay emergency action while attempting to contact parents.

Any concern that a sleep practice, equipment issue or failure to supervise may have placed a child at risk must be reported to the Nursery Manager and recorded in accordance with the Nursery's safeguarding and incident-reporting procedures.

13. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if safer sleep guidance, statutory requirements or the Nursery's procedures change.

The review will consider staff training, sleep monitoring records, equipment checks, incidents and feedback from parents and staff.