



Safer Sleep Policy

Statement of intent

Playhouse Pre-School recognises the importance of sleep for children's health, wellbeing, growth, development and ability to learn.

We recognise that babies and young children have individual sleep needs and routines. We work in partnership with parents and carers to understand each child's usual sleep routine and respond to their individual needs wherever possible.

The safety of children while sleeping is paramount. Playhouse Pre-School follows the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safer sleep requirements and Department for Education guidance developed in collaboration with The Lullaby Trust.

Aims

Playhouse Pre-School aims to:

- Provide every child with a safe, comfortable and suitable environment for sleep.
- Respond to children's individual sleep needs and routines.
- Never force a child to sleep.
- Allow children to sleep when they are tired and, wherever possible, allow them to wake naturally.
- Follow current safer sleep guidance to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) and other sleep-related accidents.
- Ensure children are appropriately supervised and regularly checked while sleeping.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers regarding children's individual sleep arrangements.

Sleep routines

Before a child starts at Playhouse Pre-School, parents and carers are asked to provide information about their child's usual sleep routine and needs.

Staff will follow the child's established sleep routine as far as reasonably possible while they are at Playhouse. This may include information about:

- Usual sleep times.
- How the child is comforted.
- Whether the child uses a dummy.
- Any particular sleep routine used at home.
- Any medical or developmental needs that may affect sleep.

Children's sleep needs may change as they grow and develop. Staff will communicate with parents and carers about any changes observed and discuss how the child's needs can best be supported.

Safe sleep environment

Children will always have access to a suitable sleep space.

For children under two years of age:

- Children will be placed to sleep on their back.
- Each child will have their own separate sleep space.

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- The sleep surface will be clear, flat and firm.
- Sleep spaces will be kept away from hazards, including cords, wires, blinds and other items that could present a risk.
- Sleep spaces will not block fire exits or emergency routes.
- Children will be within the sight and hearing of staff while sleeping.
- Staff will carry out frequent checks throughout the sleep period.

Babies aged 12 months and under

In accordance with the EYFS safer sleep requirements, babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a suitable cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot.

The sleep space will have:

- A firm, flat, waterproof mattress.
- Lightweight bedding that is firmly tucked in and no higher than the child's shoulders, where bedding is used; or
- A well-fitting baby sleep bag that is appropriate for the child and used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

The cot will be kept clear and will not contain:

- Pillows.
- Duvets or quilts.
- Cot bumpers.
- Soft toys.
- Loose bedding.
- Sleep positioners.
- Wedges or straps.
- Comforters or other unnecessary items.

Babies' heads will remain uncovered.

Babies aged 12 months and under will always be placed on their back at the beginning of each sleep.

Once a baby can independently move from their back to their front and back again, they may find their own sleeping position. Staff will continue to place the baby on their back at the beginning of each sleep and will not reposition them if they independently move themselves during sleep, unless there is a specific safety or medical reason to do so.

Children over 12 months

Children over 12 months will continue to be provided with their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface.

Where a sleep mat or suitable mattress is used for a child over 12 months, it will be suitable for the child's age and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Children will continue to be placed on their back to sleep.

A suitable comforter may be used for children over 12 months where this forms part of their individual routine and is safe to use.

Bedding and clothing

Children will be dressed appropriately for the temperature of the room and will not be overdressed for sleep.

Lightweight bedding will be used where required.

Children will not sleep with:

- Duvets or quilts where these are unsuitable for their age.
- Heavy or bulky bedding.
- Weighted blankets or weighted sleep products.
- Pillows where these are unsuitable for their age.
- Hats or outdoor clothing.

Staff will check children for signs of overheating by feeling the child's chest or the back of their neck. Children's hands and feet may feel cooler and this is normal.

If a child's skin feels hot, clammy or sweaty, staff will remove an appropriate layer of clothing or bedding.

Room temperature

For babies aged 12 months and under, the recommended room temperature is 16-20°C.

A room thermometer will be used where babies are sleeping.

Staff will use professional judgement during periods of extreme temperatures and will take appropriate action to ensure children do not become too hot or too cold.

Supervision and checks

Children must always be within the sight and hearing of staff while sleeping.

Staff will carry out frequent checks during every sleep period.

Checks will include observing:

- The child's breathing.
- The rise and fall of the chest.
- The child's skin colour.
- Whether the child appears too hot or too cold.
- The child's position and the safety of their sleep environment.
- Whether anything has entered the child's sleep space that could present a risk.

Staff will respond immediately if they have any concern about a child's breathing, colour, temperature, position or general condition.

A baby monitor may be used for children over six months where appropriate, but it must allow the child to be seen and heard at all times. A monitor does not replace the requirement for appropriate supervision and frequent checks.

Children who fall asleep outside the sleep area

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Staff will monitor children who become tired and will encourage them to use the appropriate sleep area.

If a child falls asleep somewhere that is not an appropriate sleep space, staff will move them to a suitable sleep space as soon as it is safe to do so.

Babies aged 12 months and under who fall asleep while travelling must be transferred to their cot when they return to the setting.

If a baby or child falls asleep in a car seat, they must be transferred to their separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting.

Staff will remove coats, hats and unnecessary outdoor clothing when children return indoors and before sleep, where appropriate.

Children arriving asleep at Playhouse

For safeguarding and welfare purposes, children must be awake and seen to be responsive when they arrive at Playhouse Pre-School.

If a child arrives asleep in a car, pushchair, buggy or other means of transport:

- Parents/carers will be asked to wake the child before they leave the setting.
- Staff will ensure that the child is awake, responsive and appears well before accepting them into the session.
- Staff will check that the child is appropriately dressed and not at risk of becoming too hot or cold.
- Hats and unnecessary outdoor clothing will be removed when the child comes indoors, even if this means waking the child.
- If a child has fallen asleep in a car seat, they must not remain asleep in the car seat. Parents/carers should wake the child before leaving, or, where the child is to sleep at Playhouse, staff will transfer them to an appropriate sleep space in accordance with this policy.
- Staff will not accept a child into the session while they remain asleep, as this would prevent staff from appropriately establishing the child's immediate wellbeing and responsiveness at the point of arrival.
- If a child is unusually difficult to wake, appears excessively sleepy, is unresponsive, or staff have any concern about their health or wellbeing, the child will not be accepted into the session and the Manager/DSL will be informed immediately. Appropriate medical advice or emergency assistance will be sought where necessary.

Parents/carers are asked to ensure that children arrive at Playhouse awake and ready to participate in the session, wherever possible.

This procedure is a safeguarding and welfare measure and does not prevent children from having appropriate sleep or rest periods once they are safely admitted to the setting.

Sleep while being held or comforted

Staff may provide appropriate physical reassurance and comfort to help a child settle to sleep, such as holding their hand or gentle touch where this is appropriate to the child's individual needs.

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If a child falls asleep while being held or nursed by a member of staff, they will be transferred to an appropriate sleep space as soon as it is safe and practical to do so.

For babies aged 12 months and under, this will be their suitable cot or other permitted cot-type sleep space.

If a child wakes during the transfer, staff will respond sensitively and provide reassurance. The child will not be forced to return to sleep.

Comforters and sleep toys

For babies aged 12 months and under, the sleep space must remain clear and must not contain soft toys, comforters or other unnecessary items.

For children over 12 months, a safe comforter may be used where appropriate and agreed with the parent or carer.

Staff will ensure that any comforter brought from home is safe and suitable for the child's age.

Dummies

Where a child uses a dummy, staff will follow the child's individual routine in accordance with the Dummy and Bottle Policy.

Dummies will be checked to ensure they are in good condition and will be stored safely when not being used.

Dummies must not be attached to children during sleep using cords, ribbons, clips or other attachments that could present a risk.

Hygiene and cleaning

All sleep equipment will be kept clean and maintained in good condition.

Mattresses and sleep mats will have a suitable waterproof, wipe-clean covering and will be cleaned and sanitised after use in accordance with the manufacturer's cleaning instructions.

Sleep equipment will be checked regularly for damage.

Any mattress, cot, sleep mat or other sleep equipment that is damaged, worn or no longer safe will be removed from use and reported to the Manager.

Each child will have clean bedding as required.

Smoking and vaping

Playhouse Pre-School operates a smoke-free environment.

Children must be kept away from tobacco smoke and vaping.

Staff must follow the setting's Smoke-Free and Health and Safety Policies.

Staff who smoke must take appropriate steps to ensure that children are not exposed to smoke or smoke residue while being cared for.

Responding to individual needs

Some children may have individual medical, developmental or additional needs that affect their sleep.

Where a child has a specific medical or developmental need, staff will work with parents, carers and relevant health professionals where appropriate to agree safe arrangements.

Any agreed arrangements will be recorded where necessary and shared with relevant staff.

Where professional medical advice differs from the usual safer sleep arrangements, the setting will seek appropriate advice and ensure that any agreed arrangements are clearly documented.

If a child becomes unwell while sleeping

Staff will pay particular attention to children who are unwell, including children with coughs, colds or respiratory symptoms.

If staff have concerns about a child's breathing, colour, temperature, responsiveness or general wellbeing, they will respond immediately and follow the setting's First Aid, Health and Safety and Safeguarding procedures as appropriate.

If a child requires urgent medical attention, staff will seek emergency medical assistance.

Staff responsibilities

All staff who care for children who sleep at Playhouse must be familiar with this policy and current safer sleep guidance.

Staff must:

- Follow the child's agreed sleep routine wherever possible.
- Follow safer sleep requirements at every sleep.
- Never place a baby to sleep on their front or side unless there is specific medical advice requiring this.
- Ensure sleep spaces remain safe and clear.
- Complete and record appropriate sleep checks.
- Never leave a sleeping child outside the required supervision arrangements.
- Never force a child to sleep.
- Report damaged or unsafe sleep equipment immediately.
- Report any concerns about a child's sleep or health to the Manager and parent/carer as appropriate.

Partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss their child's sleep routine and individual needs with the key person.

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Parents and carers will be informed if there are significant changes in their child's sleep pattern, difficulties settling to sleep or concerns about their child's sleep or wellbeing.

Playhouse will work with parents and carers to ensure that sleep arrangements are consistent, safe and appropriate for the child's age and developmental needs.

This policy was agreed by the staff of Playhouse Pre-school Broadwater.

Adopted on 23rd April 2015 and will be reviewed annually.

Reviewed on 30th September 2026 by Z. Munford