

SAFE SLEEP POLICY



Policy Rationale:

At Ireleth St Peter's we believe that all pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. We embed the teachings 'treat others as you wish to be treated'.

Matthew 7:12

So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them.

Introduction

At Ireleth St. Peter's, we recognise that children aged three years and over may occasionally need to sleep or rest during the school day. This may be due to their individual sleep pattern, tiredness, illness, additional needs, a particularly long day, or changes in their usual routine.

We aim to ensure that any child who sleeps or rests while in our care does so in a **safe, comfortable and appropriately supervised environment**.

This policy has been written in accordance with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026**, including the strengthened requirements relating to safer sleeping arrangements.

Our Values

We are committed to enabling every child to flourish and we recognise that sleep and rest are essential for children's health, wellbeing, growth and development. We are committed to providing a safe, comfortable and nurturing environment where children can rest or sleep according to their individual needs.

Aims:

We will:

- respond to each child's individual need for sleep and rest;
- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- never force a child to sleep;
- provide children who are tired with an appropriate opportunity to rest;
- ensure sleeping children are appropriately supervised;
- ensure sleeping children remain within **sight and hearing of staff at all times**;
- carry out frequent checks while a child is asleep;
- provide a safe, clean and suitable sleep or rest space;
- maintain children's dignity, comfort and wellbeing; and
- consider children's medical, developmental and SEND needs when making individual arrangements.

Sleep and rest arrangements for children aged 3+

Children aged three and over will not routinely be expected to sleep as part of the school day. However, we recognise that some children may still require daytime sleep and that children's needs vary considerably.

Where a child needs to sleep, staff will provide an appropriate sleep space. This may include a suitable individual bed, sleep mat or mattress placed on a **clear, firm and flat surface** in an appropriate area.

The sleep area will:

- be clean, calm and appropriately ventilated;
- be maintained at a comfortable temperature;
- be free from obvious hazards;
- allow staff to see and hear the sleeping child;
- allow sufficient space around the child for safe access and supervision;
- be positioned away from heaters, radiators, trailing cords and other potential hazards; and
- not obstruct doors, walkways or emergency evacuation routes.

Supervision of sleeping children

In accordance with the EYFS statutory framework from September 2026:

All sleeping children will be frequently checked and will always remain within sight and hearing of staff.

Sleeping children will therefore **not be left alone in an unsupervised room or area.**

Staff will maintain active awareness of sleeping children while carrying out their other duties. **At Dalton St Mary's staff will check sleeping children every 10 minutes.**

Checks will be frequent and proportionate to the child's needs. During checks, staff will observe the child to ensure that:

- they appear comfortable;
- their breathing appears normal;
- their face and head remain uncovered;
- they have not become too hot or too cold;
- their sleep position and environment remain safe; and
- there are no signs of illness, distress or difficulty.

Where there are concerns about a child's wellbeing, staff will respond immediately and follow the school's first aid, medical emergency and safeguarding procedures as appropriate.

Bedding and equipment

Any equipment used for sleep or rest will be suitable for the child's age, size and individual needs.

Mattresses or sleep mats will be:

- firm, flat and in good condition;
- appropriately maintained;
- cleaned between children in accordance with the school's hygiene procedures; and
- stored hygienically when not in use.

Where bedding is provided, it will be clean, lightweight and appropriate for the child and room temperature.

Children will not share bedding unless it has been appropriately laundered between uses.

Staff will ensure that children's faces and heads are not covered while they sleep.

Children who fall asleep unexpectedly

Children may occasionally fall asleep unexpectedly, for example in the book area, during a quiet activity or while travelling on a school outing.

Staff will respond sensitively and will not unnecessarily distress the child.

Where appropriate and safe to do so, the child will be moved or supported to transition to the designated sleep/rest area and placed on their own suitable, clear, flat and firm sleep surface.

If a child falls asleep while travelling in a vehicle, staff will follow current safer sleep guidance and transfer the child to an appropriate separate sleep space as soon as practicable on return to the setting.

Individual needs

Staff will discuss children's sleep and rest needs with parents and carers, particularly when a child:

- regularly needs to sleep during the school day;
- has recently changed their sleep routine;
- has additional or medical needs affecting sleep;
- is unusually tired;
- is difficult to wake;
- sleeps considerably longer than usual; or
- demonstrates a significant change in their usual behaviour or level of alertness.

Where necessary, an individual care plan or risk assessment will be agreed with parents/carers and relevant professionals.

Staff will follow any healthcare plan relating to a child's medical needs.

Partnership with parents and carers

Where a child sleeps during the school day, staff will inform parents/carers in accordance with the school's normal communication procedures.

Where appropriate, information recorded may include:

- the time the child fell asleep;
- the time they woke;
- the approximate length of sleep;
- any relevant observations; and
- any concerns about the child's wellbeing.

If a child begins regularly requiring sleep during the school day when this is unusual for them, staff will discuss this with parents/carers.

Sleep Records

A sleep record will be maintained for children who sleep at the setting.

Records may include:

- Time settled to sleep.
- Sleep checks completed.
- Time woken.
- Duration of sleep.
- Any observations or concerns.

Sleep information will be shared with parents and carers as appropriate.

Waking children

Children will normally be allowed to wake naturally where this is compatible with their individual needs and the organisation of the school day.

If a child needs to be woken, staff will do this gently and sensitively and allow the child time to become fully alert before returning to activities.

Parents' wishes regarding sleep routines will be taken into account where these are compatible with the child's welfare and safe practice.

The child's welfare will always be the overriding consideration.

Illness and unusual sleepiness

A child's need to sleep may occasionally indicate illness.

Staff will be particularly alert when a child:

- is unusually sleepy or lethargic;
- falls asleep unexpectedly;
- is difficult to wake;

- appears unwell before or after sleeping; or
- displays behaviour that is significantly different from what is normal for them.

In these circumstances, staff will follow the school's illness and first-aid procedures and contact parents/carers as appropriate.

Emergency medical assistance will be sought immediately where staff have serious concerns about a child's condition.

Rest Opportunities for Older Children

Not all children will sleep during the day; however, all children will have opportunities to rest and relax.

Quiet activities may include:

- Reading books.
- Listening to stories or calming music.
- Looking at books independently.
- Relaxing in a quiet area.

Children will never be forced to sleep or prevented from resting when they are tired.

Safeguarding

Sleep arrangements will always support effective safeguarding.

Children will never be placed to sleep in a location where staff cannot adequately supervise them.

The privacy and dignity of children will be respected while ensuring that safeguarding requirements take priority.

Staff must report immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) any concern about practice that may place a sleeping child at risk.

Staffing

The school will ensure that staffing arrangements enable the requirements of the EYFS to continue to be met while a child is sleeping.

A sleeping child remains the responsibility of the setting and must continue to be appropriately supervised.

Staff deployment will therefore ensure that:

- sleeping children remain within sight and hearing;
- frequent checks can be undertaken;
- the supervision of other children is not compromised; and
- required staff-to-child ratios continue to be met.

Risk assessment

The sleep/rest area and arrangements will be included within the school's risk-assessment procedures.

Staff will consider:

- positioning of sleep equipment;
- room temperature and ventilation;
- access and emergency evacuation;
- cleanliness and infection prevention;
- supervision and staff deployment;
- individual medical or SEND needs; and
- any environmental hazards.

Any identified hazards will be addressed promptly.

Emergency evacuation

Sleeping children will be included within the school's emergency evacuation arrangements.

Staff must know how a sleeping child will be safely evacuated in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Sleeping arrangements must never obstruct evacuation routes.

Staff responsibilities

All EYFS staff are responsible for implementing this policy.

The EYFS Lead will ensure that:

- staff understand the September 2026 EYFS safer sleep requirements;
- new staff are made aware of this policy during induction;
- sleep areas and equipment are appropriately risk assessed;
- concerns or incidents relating to sleep are reviewed; and
- practice is monitored to ensure that sleeping children remain safe.

Key guidance

This policy has regard to:

- **Department for Education – Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026**
- **Department for Education – Help for Early Years Providers: Safer Sleep**
- NHS safer sleep guidance
- The Lullaby Trust safer sleep guidance

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, following any significant incident, or whenever safer sleep guidance is updated.

Signature of Headteacher *S E Kidson*

Signature of Governor *S Orrell*

Date of Review September 2027