



Safer Sleep Policy

Policy statement

At Enya's Childcare, we recognise that sleep and rest are essential for children's health, wellbeing, growth, learning and development. We are committed to providing a safe sleeping environment for every child and reducing the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), suffocation, overheating and other sleep-related incidents.

We follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework applicable from 1 September 2026, Department for Education safer sleep guidance and recommendations from The Lullaby Trust.

The safety and welfare of every child are paramount. We work in partnership with parents and carers to understand individual sleep routines, medical needs and preferences while ensuring that safe sleep practices are always followed.

This policy applies to all staff, students, agency workers and other adults involved in the care of children at Enya's Childcare.

Our aims

We aim to:

- Provide a safe, comfortable and hygienic environment for sleep and rest.
- Follow current statutory requirements and recognised safer sleep guidance.
- Ensure that babies and children are appropriately supervised whenever they sleep.
- Reduce the risk of overheating, airway obstruction, falls and other sleep-related accidents.
- Respect children's individual sleep needs and routines.
- Maintain accurate sleep records and communicate relevant information to parents.
- Ensure that all staff understand and follow the nursery's safer sleep procedures.

Individual sleep routines and partnership with parents

Before a child starts at Enya's Childcare, we will discuss their usual sleep routine with their parents or carers.

Information will include:

- Usual sleep times and duration.
- Signs that the child is tired.
- The child's preferred settling routine.
- Any relevant medical conditions, developmental needs or additional risks.
- Any advice from a healthcare professional that may affect sleep arrangements.

This information will be recorded in the child's individual care records and shared with the relevant staff.

Sleep routines will be reviewed regularly and whenever the child's needs change.

We understand that some parents may prefer their child not to sleep during nursery hours or may request that a child sleeps for a particular length of time. We will discuss these requests with parents and consider the child's age, development, wellbeing and individual needs.

However, we will not deliberately deprive a tired child of needed sleep, force a child to sleep or compromise safe sleep practices to meet a requested schedule. Where a child appears tired, staff will respond appropriately and provide a suitable opportunity for rest.

Children who do not wish to sleep will be offered quiet, age-appropriate activities in a safe environment.

Safe sleeping arrangements for babies aged 12 months and under

In accordance with the EYFS requirements effective from 1 September 2026, babies aged 12 months and under will only sleep in a suitable cot, carrycot, Moses basket or travel cot that meets the applicable British safety standards and is used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The sleep space must have:

- A firm, flat mattress.
- A clean, waterproof mattress cover.
- A freshly laundered, appropriately fitted sheet where required.
- Sufficient space for the baby to sleep safely.
- No damage, gaps or hazards that could trap or injure the baby.

Floor beds, sleep pods and other products that do not meet the EYFS cot requirement will not be used for babies aged 12 months and under.

Babies must never be routinely put to sleep in bouncy chairs, swings, car seats, pushchairs, beanbags, sofas, cushions or other seated, inclined or unsuitable surfaces.

If a baby falls asleep in a car seat or another unsuitable sleep product, staff will transfer the baby to an appropriate cot as soon as it is safe to do so.

All equipment will be checked regularly, cleaned appropriately and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Safe sleeping position

Babies will always be placed on their backs at the beginning of every sleep, including daytime naps.

Staff will:

- Place babies with their feet towards the foot of the cot where appropriate.
- Ensure that the baby's head and face remain uncovered.
- Avoid placing babies on their side or front to sleep.
- Never use wedges, straps, positions or other devices to hold a baby in a particular sleeping position.

If a baby can independently roll from their back to their front and from their front to their back, staff will continue to place the baby on their back initially but may allow the baby to adopt their own sleeping position.

Staff will ensure that the sleep space remains clear and safe.

If a healthcare professional has provided specific medical advice affecting a child's sleep position or arrangements, the Manager will review the advice with the parents and relevant healthcare professional and agree a documented plan that complies with applicable requirements.

Bedding, clothing and comfort

Babies' sleep spaces will be kept clear of unnecessary items.

For babies, the nursery will not provide:

- Pillows or duvets.
- Cot bumpers.
- Soft toys or bulky comforters.
- Loose bedding that could cover the baby's face.
- Products designed to restrict movement or hold the baby in a sleeping position.

Where bedding is used, it must be appropriate for the baby's age and comply with safer sleep guidance. A correctly sized baby sleeping bag may be used where suitable.

Alternatively, appropriately fitted and securely tucked bedding may be used in line with current guidance, ensuring it cannot cover the baby's head.

Staff will not use heavy blankets or excessive layers. Babies will not wear outdoor clothing, thick coats or hats while sleeping indoors.

Bibs will be removed before sleep, and staff will ensure that clothing, fastenings and other items do not pose a risk.

For children aged over 12 months, bedding and comfort items will be assessed according to the child's age, development and individual needs. Sleep spaces must remain safe, clean and free from items that could cause suffocation, entrapment or overheating.

Room temperature and ventilation

The nursery will maintain a comfortable sleeping environment and take steps to prevent children from becoming too hot or too cold.

For babies, we will aim to maintain a room temperature of approximately 16-20°C, in line with The Lullaby Trust's guidance.

Staff will:

- Monitor the temperature of sleeping areas.
- Adjust clothing and bedding according to the room temperature.
- Ensure that rooms are appropriately ventilated without exposing children to unsafe draughts.
- Keep babies away from direct heat sources.
- Check for signs of overheating, such as sweating, flushed skin or a hot chest.

Children will not be overdressed for sleep, and additional bedding will not be used simply because a child has cold hands or feet.

Feeding and preparation for sleep

Staff will follow each child's individual feeding and sleep routine.

Before sleep, staff will ensure that the child is comfortable, appropriately dressed and has had their nappy changed where necessary.

Children will be offered food and drinks in accordance with their usual routine and individual needs. They will not be forced to eat or drink before sleeping.

Babies must never be left with a bottle propped up or placed in a cot with a bottle. Feeding will be carried out safely, with appropriate supervision.

If a child appears unwell, has difficulty breathing, vomits repeatedly or displays any other concerning symptoms, staff will assess the situation and follow the nursery's illness, medication and emergency procedures.

Dummies and settling techniques

Where a child uses a dummy, staff will ensure that it is clean, intact and appropriate for the child's age.

Dummy clips, cords, ribbons and attachments must not be worn or used during sleep because they can pose a strangulation risk.

Staff will not attach a dummy to the child's clothing or cot during sleep. If a dummy falls out during sleep, it does not need to be replaced.

Children may be supported to settle through calm reassurance, gentle patting or other appropriate settling techniques, provided these do not compromise safe sleep practices.

Staff will not use unsafe sleep aids, weighted products or restrictive devices.

Children will never be left to cry for prolonged periods as a settling method. Staff will respond sensitively to their needs.

Sleep supervision and physical checks

Children must be closely supervised throughout sleep.

For babies under six months of age, a member of staff must remain in the same room while the baby is sleeping.

For babies over six months, staff will maintain appropriate supervision, ensuring that the baby remains within sight and hearing. A member of staff may remain in a dedicated sleep room or carry out frequent monitoring in accordance with the nursery's risk assessment and current guidance.

For older children, staff will ensure that supervision arrangements are appropriate to their age, development, health and individual needs.

At Enya's Childcare:

- Staff will remain alert and able to respond promptly to any change in a child's condition.
- Physical checks will be carried out and recorded at least every 10 minutes as the nursery's routine monitoring standard, with more frequent checks where an individual risk assessment or the child's needs require them.

- Checks will include observing the child's breathing, position, face and general wellbeing.
- Staff will ensure that the child's face is not covered and that there are no hazards in the sleep space.
- Any concerns will be acted upon immediately and reported to the Manager.
- Staff will not rely solely on electronic monitors or listening devices as a substitute for appropriate supervision and physical checks.

Sleep checks must be recorded accurately, including the time of each check and any concerns or actions taken.

Staff must ensure that supervision is maintained when colleagues take breaks or responsibilities change. No child may be left without appropriate supervision.

Sleep for children aged over 12 months

Children aged over 12 months will be provided with a suitable, separate sleep space appropriate to their age and developmental needs.

This may include an appropriate cot, bed or suitable mattress on the floor, provided the arrangement is safe and consistent with current guidance.

The sleep space must be firm, flat, clean and free from hazards. Staff will assess risks relating to climbing, falls, entrapment, bedding and the child's ability to move independently.

Children who fall asleep in a seated or inclined product will be moved to an appropriate separate sleep space as soon as possible.

Children will be supervised in accordance with their individual needs and the nursery's risk assessment.

Sleep during outings and transport

Staff will plan outings so that children's sleep needs and safety can be managed appropriately.

If a baby aged 12 months and under falls asleep during transport or an outing, staff will transfer the baby to a suitable cot once they return to the nursery.

If an older child falls asleep during transport, staff will, where possible, transfer the child to an appropriate separate sleep space when they return.

Car seats are for transport and must not be used as routine sleep spaces.

Staff will ensure that children are not left sleeping unattended in vehicles or other unsuitable locations.

Children with additional needs or medical conditions

Some children may have medical conditions, disabilities or developmental needs that affect their sleep.

The Manager will work with parents and, where appropriate, healthcare professionals to establish an individual care plan and risk assessment.

Any specific medical advice must be documented, communicated to relevant staff and reviewed regularly.

Staff must not introduce alternative sleeping positions, specialist equipment or changes to routine without appropriate assessment and advice.

Where the nursery cannot safely meet a child's needs, the Manager will discuss the situation with the parents and relevant professionals to agree suitable arrangements.

Unexpected illness or an emergency during sleep

Staff will remain alert to any signs that a child may be unwell or in difficulty.

If a child is unresponsive, is not breathing normally, appears to be choking or shows signs of a serious medical emergency, staff must:

1. Act immediately and assess the child's condition.
2. Shout for assistance and ask another member of staff to call 999.
3. Begin appropriate first aid and resuscitation in accordance with their training and the emergency call handler's instructions.
4. Use an automated external defibrillator if indicated and available.
5. Continue emergency care until emergency services take over or the child recovers.
6. Contact the child's parents or carers as soon as possible.
7. Record the incident and notify the Manager.

Staff must not delay calling 999 while attempting to contact parents.

Following an incident, the Manager will review the circumstances, record the actions taken, make any required notifications and identify any changes needed to the nursery's procedures.

Hygiene and cleaning

All cots, mattresses, bedding and sleep equipment will be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Staff will:

- Provide clean bedding for each child.
- Change bedding between children and whenever it becomes soiled.
- Clean and disinfect sleep equipment as appropriate.
- Inspect mattresses regularly for damage, sagging or deterioration.
- Remove damaged or unsafe equipment from use immediately.
- Follow the nursery's infection prevention and control procedures.

Bedding and personal sleep items will be stored hygienically and separately to prevent cross-contamination.

Staff training and responsibilities

All staff responsible for putting children to sleep or supervising sleeping children must understand this policy and receive appropriate instruction before undertaking these duties.

Training and supervision will cover:

- Current EYFS safer sleep requirements.
- The Lullaby Trust's safer sleep recommendations.
- Safe positioning, bedding and temperature.
- Appropriate sleep supervision and physical checks.
- Recognising signs of illness or distress.
- Emergency response and paediatric first aid.
- Accurate recording and communication with parents.

The Manager is responsible for ensuring that staff understand their duties and that the nursery's sleeping arrangements meet statutory requirements.

Staff must report unsafe equipment, missed checks, changes in a child's condition or any breach of this policy immediately.

Communication with parents and carers

This policy will be shared with parents and carers, and staff will discuss safer sleep arrangements during settling-in sessions.

Parents will be encouraged to share changes in their child's sleep routine, health or medical needs.

Staff will communicate relevant information about sleep duration, settling difficulties, waking, illness or concerns at collection and through the nursery's usual communication systems.

Where a parent's request conflicts with safer sleep guidance or the child's welfare, staff will explain the reason for the nursery's approach and discuss an appropriate alternative.

Monitoring, records and review

The Manager will ensure that:

- Individual sleep information is recorded and kept up to date.
- Sleep checks are completed and recorded in accordance with this policy.
- Equipment and sleeping areas are inspected regularly.
- Staff follow safe sleep procedures consistently.
- Incidents and near misses are recorded and reviewed.
- Parents are informed of significant concerns.
- The policy is reviewed at least annually and whenever statutory guidance, professional advice or the needs of children change.

Legal framework and guidance

This policy is informed by:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Department for Education, *Help for Early Years Providers: Safer Sleep*.
- The Lullaby Trust, *Safer Sleep in Early Years Settings*.
- Applicable British Standards and manufacturers' instructions for sleep equipment.
- Relevant health and safety, first aid and infection prevention requirements.

Official guidance:

- EYFS statutory framework: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
- Department for Education safer sleep guidance: <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safer-sleep>
- The Lullaby Trust safer sleep guidance for early years settings: <https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/professionals-hub/promoting-safer-baby-care/safer-sleep-in-early-years-settings/>

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