

Sleep and Rest Policy

Policy Statement

At Ringle Rainbow Nursery we recognise that appropriate sleep and rest are important for children's health, emotional wellbeing, learning and development. We provide a calm, safe and responsive environment in which children can rest or sleep according to their individual needs.

This policy reflects the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for group and school-based providers effective 1 September 2026, including the strengthened safer-sleep requirements. It also reflects current Department for Education safer-sleep guidance and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026 is retained as supplementary safeguarding good-practice guidance.

Sleep and Rest Arrangements

- Children who need to sleep are placed on an individual, clean sleep mat in the designated cosy/rest area.
- Children will normally be placed on their back to sleep unless there is a documented medical reason or other professional advice requiring an alternative arrangement.
- The sleep area will be calm, appropriately ventilated and maintained at a comfortable temperature.
- Loose, bulky or excessively warm clothing will be removed or adjusted as appropriate before sleep.
- Each child may have an appropriate comforter where this is safe and consistent with their individual needs.
- Sleep mats, bedding and the surrounding area will be kept in good condition, clean and appropriate for the child's age and size.
- Children will not be left to sleep on sofas, chairs, beanbags or other unsuitable surfaces.

Individual Sleep Routines

Children's individual sleep and rest patterns are discussed with parents/carers when they start at Ringle Rainbow Nursery and recorded on the child's All About Me information on BabysDays. The child's key person will work closely with the family to understand usual routines, comfort needs and any relevant health or developmental information.

Children's needs change as they grow. Sleep arrangements will therefore be reviewed through ongoing discussion with parents/carers rather than treated as a fixed routine.

The nursery will take parental wishes into account, including preferences about the timing or duration of naps, but the child's immediate welfare and individual need for sleep or rest will remain the primary consideration. Staff will not deliberately keep a child awake where the child is clearly tired or distressed. Where appropriate, staff may gently wake a child at an agreed time provided this can be done safely and sensitively and remains in the child's best interests.

Preparing a Child for Sleep

Before a child settles to sleep, staff will ensure that:

- the child is comfortable and, where required, has a clean nappy or has been supported to use the toilet;

- the child has had appropriate food or drink in accordance with their routine;
- any safe comforter required by the child is available;
- the sleep area is calm, safe, appropriately ventilated and comfortable;
- the child is not wearing clothing or accessories that could create an avoidable sleep risk;
- staff are aware of any individual medical, SEND, sensory or sleep-related needs.

Daytime Rest Procedure

Children may be supported to rest or nap after lunch or at another time when they show signs of tiredness. The cosy/rest area will be prepared to reduce unnecessary stimulation. Staff may read quietly, play calming music or provide appropriate reassurance and physical comfort according to the child's individual needs and professional boundaries.

If a child falls asleep while being comforted by a member of staff, they will be transferred to their individual sleep mat as soon as it is safe and practical to do so. A child who falls asleep elsewhere in the nursery will be moved to the designated safe sleep/rest area rather than being left on an unsuitable surface.

If a child does not fall asleep after a reasonable settling period, staff will not force sleep. The child may return to quiet activities and be offered another opportunity to rest later if needed.

Supervision and Sleep Monitoring

Sleeping children will always remain within sight and hearing of staff and will be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Staff supervision of the room continues throughout sleep and rest periods; recorded checks are an additional control and do not replace active supervision.

Ringle Rainbow Nursery will continue to complete and record formal sleep checks on BabysDays at least every 10-15 minutes while a child is asleep. Staff may check more frequently where a child's individual needs, health, presentation or circumstances require this.

During each formal sleep check, staff will observe the child without unnecessarily disturbing them and consider:

- the child's breathing and general appearance;
- whether the child appears too hot or too cold;
- whether the child's face and head remain uncovered;
- whether bedding, clothing or comfort items have moved into an unsafe position;
- whether the child's position, sleep mat and immediate environment remain safe;
- whether there are any signs of illness, distress or unusual presentation.

Staff should use visual observation of normal breathing and the child's general appearance. It is not necessary routinely to place a hand on a sleeping child's chest or near their mouth where breathing can be clearly observed. If staff are uncertain whether a child is breathing normally or have any concern about the child's condition, they must immediately assess the child and follow first-aid/emergency procedures as necessary.

The time the child goes to sleep, formal sleep checks and the time the child wakes will be recorded on BabysDays. Relevant information will be shared with parents/carers.

Bedding, Sleep Mats and Hygiene

- Sleep mats will be cleaned and disinfected appropriately after use.
- The nursery will provide individual bedding which is labelled or otherwise managed to prevent inappropriate sharing between children.
- Bedding will be washed regularly and immediately where it becomes soiled, wet or contaminated.
- Where a child is unwell or there is an identified infection-control risk, bedding and cleaning arrangements will be increased in accordance with the nursery's infection-control procedures.
- Parents/carers may provide an appropriate sleep bag or comfort item by prior agreement. Items must be suitable for the child and maintained in a clean and safe condition.

Children Who Do Not Sleep

Not all children aged 2 years and over will need to sleep during the nursery day. Children who do not sleep will still have opportunities for quieter periods and calm activities where appropriate. Rest may include looking at books, listening to a story or music, or relaxing in a comfortable area.

Children will not be required to remain on a sleep mat if they do not need or wish to sleep, provided this can be managed safely and without unnecessarily disturbing sleeping children.

Children with SEND, Medical or Additional Needs

Individual arrangements will be made where a child has a medical condition, SEND, sensory difference or other need affecting sleep or rest. Parents/carers and relevant health professionals will be consulted where appropriate, and an individual healthcare or risk-management plan will be used where necessary.

Any medical advice that affects the child's sleeping position, supervision or environment must be clearly recorded and communicated to relevant staff.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Open communication between the child's key person and family is essential. Parents/carers are encouraged to tell staff about changes to sleep at home, unusual tiredness, medication, illness or anything else that may affect the child's sleep or wellbeing.

Where parents request limits on sleep because of concerns about bedtime at home, staff will discuss what is reasonably practicable while continuing to prioritise the child's welfare. No child will be deprived of needed sleep as a behaviour-management strategy or solely for adult convenience.

Safeguarding and Welfare

Persistent or unusual tiredness, significant changes in sleep, difficulty waking, unexplained changes in presentation or other wellbeing concerns may have health, developmental or safeguarding significance. Staff will remain professionally curious and report concerns appropriately.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Jack Nash. Deputy DSLs are Charlotte Baldock and Penny Reidy. Any concern about a child's safety or welfare will be recorded factually and reported to the DSL in accordance with the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the EYFS and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

All sleep and rest records and relevant concerns will be documented securely on BabysDays in accordance with the nursery's data-protection and safeguarding procedures.

Staff Knowledge and Review

Staff will be made aware of this policy and the nursery's safer-sleep arrangements through induction, supervision and ongoing practice. The Nursery Manager will monitor sleep/rest practice to ensure the policy is understood and implemented consistently.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following changes to legislation or statutory guidance, a significant incident, changes to the age range of children cared for, or identified changes required to nursery practice.

By: P Reidy

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