



Leigh Academy Bearsted

EYFS Safer Sleep Policy

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1. Introduction & Core Purpose

At Leigh Academy Bearsted, we are committed to ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of every child in our care. This policy establishes mandatory procedures to provide a safe sleeping environment and minimise the risks of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC).

This policy operates in strict accordance with the DfE Early Years Provider Guidance, Statutory Framework for the EYFS, and advice from The Lullaby Trust.

2. Scope of Provision

This localised policy applies directly to our academy's specific provisions:

- Little Bears Nursery (Ages 3–4)
- Reception Classes (Scotney & Sissinghurst) (Ages 4–5)

3. Safe Sleep Practices & Environments

All staff, students, and volunteers must strictly adhere to the following setup rules:

3.1 The Sleeping Position

- Children must **always** be placed on their backs to sleep.
- If a child has a known medical condition preventing back sleeping, a signed **Individualised Health/Safer Sleep Plan** from a medical practitioner must be on file before the child's first sleep session.
- Once a child can roll from front to back and back to front independently, staff will still place them on their back but allow them to find their own comfortable sleeping position.

3.2 The Sleep Environment

- **Mattresses & Mats:** Every child must sleep on a firm, flat, clean mattress or designated sleep mat covered by a waterproof, wipeable layer. No soft padding, toppers, or makeshift bedding are permitted. Mattresses must comply with British Standards.
- **Clear Space Zone:** Sleep spaces must be completely free of toys, soft comforters, pillows, cot bumpers, wedges, and positioners.
- **No Sitting Devices:** Children must never be left to sleep in car seats, prams, bouncers, or highchairs. If a child falls asleep in an unapproved device, they must be gently transferred to an approved flat sleep space immediately.

3.3 Clothing & Temperature

- Outdoor coats, snowsuits, hats, and hoodies must be removed before sleep.
- Staff must ensure the sleep room is well-ventilated. Room temperature will be tracked using a wall thermometer and ideally maintained between **16°C and 20°C** wherever possible.

3.4 Primary Academies, Nursery Classes (Ages 3 to 4) & Reception Classes (Ages 4 to 5)

While scheduled napping is not part of the standard daily routine for our Little Bears Nursery pupils or Reception-age pupils, younger children frequently fall asleep spontaneously due to exhaustion, particularly during the Autumn term or following periods of illness.

The statutory EYFS safer sleep requirements apply to these children without exception. Primary academies must explicitly enforce the following protocols:

- **Prohibition of Soft Seating for Sleep:** Under no circumstances must a child be allowed to remain asleep on a classroom sofa, beanbag, cushion, or within a soft-furnished "reading corner." These environments present acute trapping and suffocation hazards.
- **Transition to Approved Sleep Spaces:** If a Reception child falls asleep, staff must either gently wake the child or immediately transition them to an approved, flat, firm surface (such as a designated floor mat).
- **Mandatory Supervision and Logging:** A sleeping Reception child must never be left unmonitored in a corner of the classroom. Staff must initiate the **10–15 minute physical check routine** and formally log each check on a classroom sleep sheet until the child wakes.
- **Removal of Uniform Layers:** Before allowing a child to rest, staff must remove heavy school jumpers, cardigans, blazers, and outdoor coats to prevent overheating. Hoods must be checked to ensure they are clear of the neck.

4. Supervision and Monitoring Procedures

Sleeping children must never be left unmonitored. Audio or video baby monitors do not replace physical, in-person checks.

The Physical Check Routine

1. **Execute Close-Quarters Visual Check:** Every 10 to 15 minutes.
Walk up directly to the sleeping child. Visually confirm that their chest is rising and falling rhythmically to verify breathing.
2. **Inspect Face Clearance:** Simultaneous.
Check that the child's face, mouth, and nose are completely uncovered. Ensure blankets (if used) are tucked securely no higher than shoulder level.
3. **Monitor Temperature & Clamminess:** As required.
Feel the skin on the child's chest or the back of their neck. If they feel hot, sweaty, or clammy, remove a layer of clothing or adjust room ventilation.
4. **Log the Check on the Sleep Record:** Immediate.
Immediately document the exact time of the check, the child's condition, and your initials on the clipboard mounted next to the sleeping area.

5. Specialist SEND & Medical Accommodations

Any sleep provisions needed by SEND pupils, or those with a medical need will be discussed and outlined in an agreed **Individualised Health/Safer Sleep Plan**.

6. Staff Training & Policy Compliance

- All staff working within the listed EYFS and SEND departments must read this policy as part of their induction, signing a declaration of compliance.
- Refresher training on safer sleep guidelines and SIDS reduction is mandatory every 12 months.

7. Partnership with Parents & Carers

- A copy of this policy is provided to all parents/carers during the intake process.
- We recognise that sleeping routines at home vary. However, Leigh Academy Bearsted will not compromise on statutory safety guidelines.
- If a parent requests that their child sleep in a manner that contradicts this policy (e.g., sleeping on their stomach, using loose quilts, or holding on a large soft toy), staff will explain our legal duty of care and **decline the request**.