Sleep Policy

We identify the importance of rest and sleep as part of a healthy lifestyle and a crucial part of children's well-being. As sleep times are an intimate, sensitive time for every child, key people and practitioners strive to make these as peaceful, pleasurable and respectful as possible. We value the importance of responding to and caring for children's sleep through the lens of children's physical and mental health, advocating for approaches which focus on attachment-informed attunement. Our responsive, non-prescriptive approach prioritises the child's physiological and emotional needs, by tending to them in a sensitive and timely manner.

All rooms provide cosy quiet areas for relaxation and rest, and the chance to sleep throughout the day. The baby room has cots, coracles and mats available all day, while the other rooms provide mats at sleep time (after lunch) and have cosy areas for children to rest in throughout the day. We see sleep times as yet another opportunity to promote children's agency and develop autonomy, by helping them to identify their tiredness cues and inviting them to be part of the process of 'getting ready' for bed.

When a child starts attending our setting, staff will ask about their home sleep routines and usual tiredness cues, in order to recognise the child's individual needs and patterns. In most cases, children will learn to fall asleep by themselves when they are developmentally ready to do so, regardless of 'training' received. As a relationship-led practice setting we will ensure babies and children have staff present with them if they need that to go to sleep. Staff will use their professional discretion in regards to children crying when they go to sleep and will not follow strict approaches which focus on 'controlled crying' or forcing children to 'push through' tiredness cues to comply with rigid sleep schedules.

In instances where Parents/Carers request to put a sleep limit in place for their child's nap at nursery, Staff will work in partnership to support the child's new sleep routine. However, we do not apply limits under 45 minutes. Again, Staff will use their professional discretion to discern whether a child is showing signs of needing a longer nap, in instances such as feeling unwell or having had less sleep than usual the night before.

The Lullaby Trust advises against babies under 1 years old sleeping in pushchairs or buggies (or any seated or inclined positions) in Early Years settings. We therefore do not typically use these for sleep times. Whilst babies are settling in to nursery, we may use reclined pushchairs and sleeping in staff members' arms as methods to facilitate their sleep. However, we will transition babies to using a cot, coracle or mat as soon as trust is built and they feel safe sleeping at nursery. Similarly, if children usually sleep in slings at home we will follow the Lullaby Trust guidelines until we can transition the child to a cot, coracle or mat. If babies who are not yet rolling are swaddled for sleep at home, we will discuss this at settling in visits and follow the Lullaby Trust guidelines.

We will include any specific sleep requirements in children's support plans if they do not align with this policy i.e. for children with special educational needs or disabilities.

March 2025

Our Smoking, Alcohol, Drugs and Substance Abuse Policy outlines that staff members will not smoke or vape whilst wearing their uniform as smoke can contribute to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

We follow latest government safety guidance around sleep from:
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/caring-for-a-newborn/reduce-the-risk-of-sudden-infant-death-syndrome/
https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/
https://www.basisonline.org.uk/
https://contact.org.uk/help-for-families/information-advice-services/health-medical-information/common-concerns/helping-you-and-your-child-sleep/

For more information, please speak to **Leila Garau Taylor** or **Cassie Holland** who are our sleep advocates and have completed sleep, baby and you training with BASIS.

Before babies and children go to sleep staff will:

- Ensure each child's sheet and blanket/sleeping bag is washed at least every 2 weeks - depending on the amount of days a child attends taking in to account holiday or absence. Bedding will be washed more regularly if a child has been poorly.
- Risk assess the sleep space; ensuring the room temperature is between 16-20 degrees Celsius, ensure cots, coracles or mats are safe, clean and free of hazards: i.e. loose bars on cot, broken/wet mattress, loose hanging wires or anything within reach which could constitute a choking hazard in the sleep space; if applicable, check the baby monitor is switched on and working correctly, check clean bed sheets are on properly and a sleep check sheet is readily available.
- Take into account the temperature and weather conditions if a child is sleeping outdoors. If children are sleeping outdoors, they will be in sheltered areas, on a firm, flat surface which is not positioned in direct sunlight.
- Ensure that children have finished their milk. Children will not independently feed themselves to sleep in a cot or coracle, staff will remove bottles out of reach as soon as they have finished their milk.

When babies and children go to sleep staff will:

- Remove children's hairclips, hairbands, dribble bibs, dummy clips or any other small items children may be wearing that could be a choking hazard.

- Decide what amount of layering with clothes is necessary for children's sleeps depending on the temperature and their blanket or sleeping bag. Trousers or tights will always be removed when children are wearing sleeping bags. If a child is using a sleeping bag, the staff member will check the tog is appropriate for the temperature and age/size of the child. Babies or children's heads will never be covered whilst sleeping. We won't use folded blankets as a folded blanket counts as two.

- Ensure children are going to sleep on a firm, flat surface i.e. a mattress or bed. We will avoid using buggies or bouncers for putting children to sleep or for

sleeping in (however, we may use them as a transitional tool whilst children are settling). The aim will always be to get children sleeping in a cot or on a bed as soon as possible. Children will not sleep on sofas or make-shift beds / cushions. When a child falls asleep in arms, the member of staff will gently transfer them onto a firm, flat surface i.e mattress /coracle. Cushions are not to be used as pillows or 'buffers' between the child and adult's body, nor to prop up mattresses.

- Not use pillows, cot bumpers or other unnecessary items in cots or beds. Essential comforters will be given to children in cots or in bed as long as they are safe (i.e. not a choking hazard).
- Ensure the space provided for sleep is safe, cosy and calm. The majority of the time soothing music or white noise will be played in the background, (ensuring it does not exceed 60 dB). Lights will be dimmed and windows will be cracked open to allow for fresh air and ventilation.
- Children will be supported to get to sleep in a variety of ways (if they need so); rocking, soothing motions on their back, stroking their hair & face or gentle patting. In line with our Positive Touch and Consent Policy, staff will respect a child's preferred way to settle down to sleep, and will model asking and responding to consent cues.
- Staff will follow children's sleep cues. If they are expressing a strong reluctance to go to sleep, or do not seem tired at the 'established sleep time', staff will make a professional judgement on whether or not to persevere with attempting to get them to sleep. Children are not made to feel forced to go to sleep; where a tired child finds settling down to nap a difficult and upsetting process, key people will support them showing professional love until they are ready to sleep.
- Place babies under 6 months (or after if they are not yet able to roll from back to front and back again) to sleep on their backs and at the foot of the cot. We have access to movement monitors that can be used for babies under 6 months old.

Whilst babies and children are asleep staff will:

- Supervise children by either being in the room with them, via monitor or within hearing distance of the children.
- Carry out sleep checks at least every 10 minutes - these will be temporarily recorded each day with the staff member's initials. (There are details of how staff members will carry out a sleep check below).
- Minimise disruption to sleep as much as possible i.e. keeping calming music playing, keeping playing children away from sleeping children (e.g. if sleeping outside or in the same space as awake children).
- Be aware of how loudly sleep music or sound is playing, occasionally check the decibel output to ensure it is below 60 decibels.
- Minimise any time children will be left unattended whilst sleeping, e.g. whilst they support a child who has woken up to settle into the play space again. On returning to the sleep space staff will carry out a sleep check.
- Regularly throughout the day check the room temperature is between 16-20 degrees and that no new risks have been identified.
- Remove blankets or clothing as necessary if the child is sweating/flushed or if their tummy feels hot to touch (it is normal for hands or feet to feel cool).

Similarly, if the child is showing signs of being cold (slightly blue lips, goose bumps etc.) they will add clothing or a blanket.

- Record the time a child has gone to sleep and woken up on the Famly app (families have access to this information), and, if necessary, passing on any noteworthy information about their sleep via Famly message or at handover.

How to carry out an effective sleep check: (for staff)

When "checking on sleepers", you are ensuring that each child is:

- Breathing normally. *Can you hear them breathing? Can you see their chest rising? Are their nose and mouth clear of obstruction? Check they haven't covered their face with their blanket or comforters*. *Check for vomit or blood (i.e. from a nose bleed) on the child's face and sheet.*
- A comfortable temperature. *Do they look flushed or sweaty? Uncover them slightly or remove socks. If the room feels cool, check they are properly covered by their blanket. If the room feels too hot, check the window is open (which it should be for ventilation) or turn down the radiator dial.*
- Check the sleep space is safe from toys, furniture or other objects within their reach which could be dangerous. This doesn't mean removing everything around them, but rather checking they haven't got objects in bed with them that they have found whilst falling asleep, or that they could pull down and land on them when they wake up.

Additional information for staff

- *Ducklings:* Each cot room and sleep area has a sleep chart. Every baby who is put to bed (whether asleep or still awake) is written onto the sleep chart. This includes babies who may have fallen asleep in arms and are sleeping somewhere in the main room. The person putting the baby in their cot/bed will sign their initials under the correct time box on the chart. Each child will be checked every 10 minutes, and the person checking will sign their initials in the relevant time box. These charts are then photographed at the end of the day for record keeping (and kept for at least 1 week).

- *Beehive & Squirrels:* every person in the sleep room is responsible for checking the children's welfare while getting them to sleep. The person who is left behind to supervise the sleep room is responsible for the 10 minute checks and will sign their name in the diary specifying what time they were in the sleep room (e.g. 12-1pm, 1-2pm, 2-3pm).