



Safer Sleep Policy

Designated Member of Staff	Headteacher
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Frequency of Review	Every 2 years

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
1	September 2026	Introduction of policy

Contents:

Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Roles and responsibilities
3. Ensuring a safer sleep space
4. Sleeping positions
5. Medical needs
6. SEND considerations
7. Communication
8. Supervision
9. Emergencies
10. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) awareness

Statement of intent

This policy is written to underpin our school ethos to ensure that Saint John's Church of England Primary School is a place "where we all flourish".

Saint John's CE Primary School understands the importance of sleep in a child's development and growth. This policy underlines the school's approach to ensuring safer sleeping practices are maintained throughout the setting through robust staff training, regular risk assessing and open communication with parents and among colleagues.

These practices have been put in place to enhance the awareness of safer sleep and to eliminate the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) caused by a lack of awareness of safer sleep practices.

The school welcomes any questions parents may have about safer sleep – please contact the office to raise any queries about safer sleep or concerns regarding the school's safer sleep practices.

Additionally, parents can find more information on safer sleeping practices via the following websites:

- NHS - Safer sleep
- The Lullaby Trust

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Children Act 1989
- The Childcare (Disqualification) and Childcare (Early Years Provision Free of Charge) (Extended Entitlement) (Amendment) Regulations 2018
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE 'Early years foundation stage statutory framework'
- NHS 'Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)'

This policy also operates in conjunction with safer sleep guidelines published by The Lullaby Trust.

This policy operates in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy

2. Roles and responsibilities

The headteacher will be responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining a safer sleep culture throughout the school.
- Ensuring that the importance of safer sleep is fully understood by all school staff.
- Ensuring that staff are well-trained and are clear on the procedures outlined in this policy.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that safer sleep procedures are designed in accordance with guidance from the NHS, Lullaby Trust and EYFS statutory framework.
- Fostering a culture in which staff feel empowered to raise concerns about unsafe sleep practices.
- Carrying out a risk assessment of sleeping spaces and safer sleeping protocols and ensuring that this is regularly reviewed.
- Conducting regular audits of the school's potential sleep areas to ensure compliance with safety standards.
- Working closely with parents to share good practice and ensure that safer sleeping extends beyond the school.
- Ensuring that relevant staff are trained in paediatric first aid (PFA).

Relevant school staff will be responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the procedures and practices outlined in this policy.
- Undertaking training relevant to the oversight of safer sleeping in school settings.
- Monitoring children during sleep to ensure they are safe and comfortable.
- Ensuring that they are able to act on their training and are prepared to respond to emergencies.
- Being prepared to administer first aid if they are a PFA certified.
- Being aware of any children with medical or SEND requirements and how to meet their needs.

Parents will be responsible for:

- Ensuring they are contactable whilst their child is at the school.
- Familiarising themselves with safer sleep guidelines.
- Ensuring safer sleep practices continue in their child's home.

3. Ensuring a safer sleep space

When considering the creation of a safer sleeping space in the school, staff will maintain an awareness of both the physical and emotional aspects that ensure a safe and comfortable sleeping environment for children.

Staff will have a good understanding of each individual child's sleeping routines and needs.

Staff will ensure that sleeping spaces are clear of items such as toys and pillows to minimise the risk of choking or smothering.

The sleeping environment will be spacious, well-ventilated and arranged to allow for clear supervision.

Staff will check whether a child is too hot or too cold by feeling their chest or the back of their neck. If a child's skin feels clammy or sweaty, one or more layers of clothing will be removed. Staff will use their professional judgement during periods of extreme temperatures.

4. Sleeping positions

Staff will be clear on the correct sleeping positions for children and the association between SIDS and incorrect sleeping positions.

Staff will ensure that:

- Children are encouraged to sleep on their back – unless the parent has been advised otherwise by a medical professional. Children are not placed to sleep on their side or front.
- Airways are kept open.
- Children keep their chins off of their chest and sleep in a position that allows for an open airway.
- Sleep surfaces are kept flat and are not inclined, tilted or propped.

If a child falls asleep in a sitting position, a practitioner will ensure that they are moved onto a flat, firm surface to sleep on their back with a clear airway.

Staff will be aware that children will learn to move freely overtime and will keep track of each child's moveability during sleep through observation and liaison with parents.

5. Medical needs

Staff will be familiar with children's individual health care plans and the associated hazards applicable to each child's medical condition.

Staff will be able to use their training in responding to signs of distress or breathing difficulties that may arise during a child's sleep.

Staff will be aware of any children taking medication and how this may impact their sleep or create additional risks.

Staff will be aware of any children who may be at higher risk of SIDS, e.g. if the child was premature or of low birth weight.

6. SEND considerations

Staff will be aware of the additional sleep support that may be required for children with SEND.

The school will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that a safe and comfortable sleeping environment is available for children with SEND, this may include:

- Using specialist equipment for children with mobility issues, with staff receiving training on the use of any specialist equipment required for use by children with mobility issues.

- Providing additional supervision for children with breathing difficulties or sensory issues that may affect their sleep.
- Implementing sleep routines that cater to the individual needs of children with SEND.

7. Communication

The school will work with parents in order to raise awareness of the importance of safer sleeping practices for small children and to promote safer sleep practices that extend beyond the school.

The school will involve parents in discussions about their child's sleep and ensure that the specific needs of their child are met and understood. The headteacher will assess any specific risks associated with a child's sleep.

When interacting with parents about safer sleep, staff will focus on:

- Ensuring that they have a strong understanding of each child's sleep experiences and any changes in this area.
- Acting on any communication received from parents about their child's sleep needs or issues in sleeping patterns.
- Providing support and guidance about safer sleep practices where any questions have been raised.

All staff will ensure that there are ongoing discussions to help ensure that all children's sleep needs and any specific requirements are consistently met.

School leaders and staff with experience will be expected to provide guidance and support to newer colleagues, ensuring that they are well-aligned with the school's approach to safer sleeping - by offering advice on aspects such as sleep checks and handling the specific needs of each child.

The school will encourage open communication regarding safer sleeping practices; any staff member or parent should feel confident in asking questions or raising concerns about the school's practices.

Colleagues will support each other and provide feedback and guidance on safer sleep practices whilst promoting a supportive culture in which all staff feel confident in their responsibilities.

8. Supervision

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

Supervision will not involve children being continuously watched whilst they are sleeping; however, staff will remain in close proximity at all times to check up on each child and respond to any basic needs or emergencies.

Staff will regularly check each child's breathing and ensure that they are comfortable.

When a child awakes from their sleep, staff will swiftly come to attend to them and remove them from the sleeping area.

9. Emergencies

In the event that an emergency event unfolds whilst a child is sleeping, staff will utilise their training to take prompt action.

The headteacher will take into account the number of children, staff, and the layout of the premises to ensure that a PFA certified practitioner is able to respond to emergencies quickly.

All staff will be able to recognise a situation in which emergency procedures need to be followed and will be trained to recognise signs of distress or breathing difficulties. In the event of an emergency occurring during children's sleep, staff will take a rapid response and follow the school's emergency procedures.

At least one PFA certified practitioner will be present at all times to deal with emergency situations when they unfold. A list of staff who have a current PFA certificate will be available in the office.

The emergency services will be contacted as part of the school's emergency response.

The nearest practitioner will dial 999 if a child:

- Stops breathing.
- Will not wake up.
- Is struggling for breath.
- Is stiff, shaking, or jerking.
- Displays sudden symptoms of pale, blue or grey colours on their lips, tongue, face or on the palms of the hands or soles of the feet.
- Becomes limp, floppy or not responding as normal.

10. Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) awareness

The school will ensure all sleeping practices follow safer sleep evidence-based guidance approved by The Lullaby Trust. The school will not seek guidance from any unregulated self-proclaimed 'sleep experts'.

Parents will be informed about the school's safer sleep practices and will be encouraged to follow safer sleep guidance at home.

All staff will be aware of the safer sleeping practices that should be used to reduce and mitigate the risk of SIDS. They will adhere to the procedures and controls set out in these documents and understand their importance in mitigating the risk of SIDS.