ST.ANNE'S COPP CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL, GREAT ECCLESTON

SAFER SLEEP POLICY



"Let us love, not in word, but in truth and action." (1 John 3:18)

SEPTEMBER 2026

Approved by GB: September 2026
Next review due: September 2027

In building solid foundations for every unique individual and putting God's love at the centre of all we do, our children learn to embrace our diverse world. We encourage our children to learn universally in order to understand our heritage and roots as a village, town, region and nation. Through strong community links, our children grow in compassion and understanding, promote justice and possess commitment and aspire to make a positive difference. We offer an ambitious curriculum that ignites curiosity along with high personal expectations that fosters resilience and which enables them to flourish. Our children are easily distinguished by the courage they show when making brave choices and understand the importance of becoming the very best versions of themselves.

1. Purpose

At St. Anne's Copp CE Primary School, we recognise that sufficient, good-quality sleep is important for children's health, development, emotional wellbeing, behaviour and readiness to learn.

We recognise that individual children's sleep needs vary according to their age, stage of development and individual circumstances. We work in partnership with parents and carers to understand each child's sleep routines and needs while ensuring that all sleep arrangements within school are safe and comply with current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

The safety and wellbeing of young children when sleeping is paramount. Our practice is informed by the Department for Education's Safer Sleep guidance, the EYFS statutory framework, NHS advice and evidence-based guidance from The Lullaby Trust.

The DfE's safer-sleep guidance aims to reduce the risk Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC) in children over 12 months.

2. Safer sleep principles

Staff will ensure that:

- Young children are dressed appropriately for the room temperature to prevent overheating.
- Young children in Pre-School are never placed to sleep with a bottle for self-feeding.
- Children who fall asleep while being held or cared for by a practitioner are transferred to an appropriate, safe sleep surface as soon as practicable.
- Children who fall asleep in a car seat or other sitting device are transferred to an appropriate separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting.

3. Sleep supervision

Children must always remain within the sight and hearing of staff while sleeping. Children will be closely supervised through appropriate staff presence and frequent checks.

Staff will:

- visually check sleeping children regularly;
- check that the child's breathing is normal by observing the rise and fall of the chest;
- check the child's sleep position;
- check that the child's face and head remain clear;
- check that the child is not too hot or cold;
- ensure that the sleep environment remains safe and free from hazards;
- record required sleep checks in accordance with the school's agreed recording system.

Children will never be left unsupervised in a separate room.

Where individual children require a higher level of monitoring because of age, medical needs, developmental needs or an identified risk, this will be clearly recorded in their individual care arrangements.

4. Safe sleep environment

The school will provide a sleep environment that is:

- clean, calm and appropriately ventilated;
- free from unnecessary hazards;
- maintained at an appropriate temperature;
- appropriately lit to enable effective supervision;
- free from smoking and vaping;
- free from loose objects, unnecessary bedding and items that could obstruct a child's airway;
- arranged so that staff can easily access and observe sleeping children.

Sleep equipment will be checked regularly and before use to ensure that they are clean, safe and in good condition.

5. Bedding and clothing

The school will ensure that:

- bedding is clean and appropriate for the individual child;
- soft toys and unnecessary items are not placed in sleeping areas;
- children are dressed appropriately for the temperature;
- hats and excessive outdoor clothing are removed when children come indoors, even if this means waking the child.

Staff will monitor children for signs of overheating or being too cold and adjust clothing or bedding appropriately.

6. Sleep equipment

All sleep equipment will be suitable for the child's age and developmental stage and will be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The school will not use:

- sleep pillows;
- cot bumpers;
- beanbags as sleep surfaces;
- car seats as routine sleep spaces;

7. Individual sleep routines

Parents and carers will be asked to provide information about their child's usual sleep routine when the child starts school.

This information may include:

- usual sleep times;
- typical sleep duration;
- settling routines;
- comfort objects, where appropriate;
- preferred sleep environment;
- relevant medical or developmental information;
- any changes to the child's usual sleep pattern.

This information will be reviewed periodically and whenever there is a significant change in the child's circumstances.

We recognise that parents and carers know their child well and will work collaboratively with families wherever possible. However, the school will always prioritise safe sleeping practices and statutory requirements.

Where a family's requested sleeping arrangement is inconsistent with current safer-sleep guidance, staff will discuss this with parents/carers and explain the school's approach.

8. Individual medical or developmental needs

Where a child has a medical, developmental or additional need that affects their sleep, the school will work with parents/carers and relevant health professionals to establish safe and appropriate arrangements.

Any agreed variation from the school's usual practice must be supported by appropriate professional advice where necessary and recorded within the child's individual care or medical plan.

Staff will not implement an alternative sleeping position or arrangement solely on the basis of parental preference where this would conflict with current safer-sleep guidance.

9. Pre-School Children

Pre-School children may use age-appropriate sleep equipment in accordance with their developmental stage and the school's risk assessment.

Where children over 12 months sleep on a mattress or other suitable surface, the environment will remain clear, flat, firm and free from unnecessary hazards.

Where a child falls asleep unexpectedly, staff will assess whether they should remain asleep or be gently roused according to their individual needs, the circumstances and the school's arrangements.

10. Sleep and children's wellbeing

The school recognises that insufficient sleep can affect children's:

- emotional regulation;
- behaviour;
- concentration;
- attention;
- communication;
- physical wellbeing;
- ability to engage in learning.

Staff will share relevant observations with parents/carers where a child appears consistently tired or their sleep pattern appears to be affecting their wellbeing or participation.

Where there are persistent concerns about a child's sleep, families may be signposted to appropriate health or early years professionals.

11. Children will not be forced to sleep

Children will never be forced to sleep. Equally, staff will not deliberately prevent a child from sleeping when they are genuinely tired and it is safe and appropriate for them to sleep.

Staff will respond sensitively to individual sleep needs while maintaining safe supervision and appropriate routines.

Where a child regularly falls asleep outside their usual sleep period, staff will discuss this with parents/carers and consider whether further support or advice is required.

12. Sleeping after travel

Any child who falls asleep while travelling, including in a car seat, they will be transferred to an appropriate safe sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface on a clear as soon as they return to school.

13. Safeguarding and staff responsibilities

Safe sleep is a safeguarding responsibility.

All staff involved in caring for young children must understand and follow this policy. Any concern about the safety of a child's sleeping arrangements must be reported immediately to the appropriate member of the school's leadership or safeguarding team.

The school will maintain appropriate records of sleep arrangements and relevant checks and will review its practice regularly.

14. Partnership with parents and carers

We recognise that families have established routines and that children's sleep patterns vary considerably.

We will:

- listen to parents and carers;
- share relevant information about children's sleep;
- discuss significant changes in sleep patterns;
- provide clear information about the school's safer-sleep arrangements;
- work collaboratively with families to support children's wellbeing;

- explain clearly where the school is unable to accommodate a requested arrangement because it would conflict with statutory requirements or safer-sleep guidance.

15. Related guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school-based providers, effective from September 2026;
- DfE Safer Sleep guidance for early years providers;
- NHS guidance on reducing the risk of SIDS;
- the school's First Aid Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Medical Conditions Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Risk Assessment procedures.

DfE: Safer sleep – Help for early years providers
DfE: Changes to the EYFS framework from 1 September 2026
NHS: Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
The Lullaby Trust: Early Years safer-sleep resources