

Rest and Sleep at Nursery Policy 2025

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, agency staff and students or anyone else working on behalf of St Giles Nursery School and St Giles Nursery School Pre2s.

The importance of rest and sleep

Rest and sleep are two different things.

Rest is about times when the body can relax and stay fairly still, but the brain remains active and continues to concentrate on what is happening.

Sleep allows both the body to rest and the brain to change its pattern of activity.

Not having sufficient sleep can have a significant, negative impact on children's development:

- Difficulty in concentrating and learning
- Difficulties in managing feelings and emotions
- Impulsivity / difficulty in self-regulating
- Spatial awareness affected
- Difficulty in processing and remembering information
- Immune system may not be effective
- Higher chance of becoming overweight

At St Giles Nursery School, we recognise that young children can become very tired during the day and that it is necessary to provide all children with the opportunity to rest or sleep during their session. We believe that every child's needs are different and this is why we aim to provide flexibility and opportunities for children to take rests and naps as they need and desire.

The purpose of this policy is:

- To make parents and staff aware of our approach to sleep and rest opportunities at nursery and to ensure that all children get all the sleep they need whilst in our care.

St Giles Nursery School recognises that:

- The welfare of the child is paramount;
- It is very important for young children to get all the sleep they need;
- Parents' and carers' wishes should be respected with regard to their children's sleep requirements, provided that the child's welfare is not compromised; and
- Comfort blankets and soft toys bring enormous comfort and reassurance to small children, especially when they are new to nursery and during rest and sleep times.

In order to achieve the aim of this policy we adhere to the following:

Rest Areas

Within all the nursery phases there are quiet carpeted rest areas with soft cushions where children can go if they wish to rest and relax at any time of the day.

Comforters and comfort blankets

- The nursery shall not provide dummies for children nor shall the nursery introduce a child to a dummy if they have not used one before at home. Parents are permitted to bring in a dummy from home for their child to use when at nursery and we recognise a dummy can provide great comfort for a child during rest and sleep times.
- If parents do provide dummies from home for their children to use at nursery, they shall also be asked to provide a hygienic dummy pot in which the dummy can be sealed to store when not in use.
- Dummies are usually restricted to sleep and rest times. They are not encouraged at other times as they can hamper a child's speech, interaction with others and are a major cause of speech delay.

Staff

- Staff are fully aware of the fact that children need rest and sleep.
- Staff have accessed training relevant to their role.
- Staff appreciate that children have individual needs and routines which vary as they grow and develop.
- Children are encouraged to indicate and say when they are tired and need to rest and are also encouraged to take a nap or a rest after lunch each day.

Parent's wishes

- The preferences and wishes of parents are always valued and staff work closely with them to ensure each child's individual needs are carefully met.
- Some parents prefer their children to only have a short sleep, fearing that a longer sleep will infringe on their child's night-time sleep. Any parent's wishes will be taken into account provided that these wishes are in the child's best interests.

Sleep Records

- Records for under 3 year olds are completed each day to record how long each child has slept for whilst at nursery. We use Tapestry to share this information.

What is SIDS?

Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of a baby where no cause is found. The vast majority of SIDS deaths happen when babies are less than 6 months old; with the highest number happening at 2-4 months old. There is no advice that guarantees the prevention of SIDS but parents and carers should be informed that by following advice, it is possible to lower the chance of this tragedy occurring. It's important to remember that SIDS can happen at any time, not just at night, so the advice given in this procedure should be followed for all sleep periods. Further information regarding SIDS can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/caring-for-a-newborn/reduce-the-risk-of-sudden-infantdeath-syndrome/>

Sleeping children Under One and from 1-2 years.

St Giles Nursery School provides a dedicated sleep space for our youngest children.

Staff are trained using the Safer Sleep training. The school uses the guidance from the Sleep Audit to quality assure the provision and practice.

Prior to sleep/rest time, staff will ensure the following;

- The baby/child has had a nappy change with a fresh, clean nappy
- Outer clothing is removed (thick cardigans with zips/buttons)
- The baby/child has been fed and had a drink
- Bibs are removed
- The room is the right temperature (not too hot/cold)
- White noise or soft lullaby music is playing, and lights are dimmed where possible

We will;

- ensure new staff will be trained on our Safer Sleep & Rest Policy and SIDS risk reduction at induction.
- talk to parents about their child's home sleep routine and develop a personalised care plan which replicates this. The care plan will ensure that the sleep routine is carried out with each child's preferences in mind, ensuring the comfort and security of every child. This will be regularly reviewed with the parent and any changes in routine noted.

During sleep time, children are;

- Provided with their own, individual clean bedding. Parents must provide sleep bags.
- Placed on their back on a sleep mat, pram or cot (no babies are to be left to sleep in bouncy chairs, buggies or car seats at any time)
- Sleep a baby on their back (known as the supine position) at the beginning of every sleep period significantly reduces the risk of SIDS.
- Babies' will always be placed on their backs to sleep unless there is a signed sleep position risk assessment on file. A copy of the risk assessment will be placed on the baby's cot. If the child is under six months of age, this risk assessment must be signed by the child's doctor; a parent or guardian's signature is accepted for children over the age of six months.
- Intervene, if a practitioner finds that a baby has rolled onto their stomach, the baby should be turned onto their back again. Babies will learn at some point to roll onto their front. When the baby can roll from back to front and back again, on their own, then they can be left to find their own position.
- Given a comforter if applicable
- Not left to cry
- Supported by their key person/ adult to sleep (cuddled, rocked, patted)
- Checked continuously that no comforters are covering the child's face. Ensure visual and auditory supervision is required at all times.

0-3 years

- Our Flowerpot, Explorers and Garden Room have the benefit of a separate quiet room which is used for peaceful activities and afternoon naps.
- Our younger children are encouraged to sleep after lunch, but the facilities are available for them to sleep at other times of the day if needed; in either the Quiet Room or the Cosy spaces.
- If a child is brought in to sleep after lunch but does not fall asleep within 20 minutes, they will be asked whether they would like to join those children who are playing in the room, rather than remain in the 'up and away' sleep room.
- Familiar staff settle the children down for their naps, reading them a story and playing quiet classical music. A member of staff remains either in the sleep room or just outside the door with the door propped open, within earshot at all times when children are sleeping. Children are checked every 10 minutes.
- Toddlers who do not need (or whose parents do not wish them to) nap after lunch enjoy "quiet time" when they share a quiet story whilst resting with friends for 20 minutes and then return to the classroom.

Preschool (Castle Room)

- Our preschool children are able to come through to the Hedgehog Nest or 'Sleepy Hollow for a sleep after lunch if this is still needed.
- All preschool children also have the opportunity to sleep, relax or sit quietly at any times of day in the preschool book corner; hedgehog nest; castle communication space, which contains a large rug, lots of cushions, soft toys, blankets and books.
- After school club, 2.30-5.30pm supports the children to have a calm and restful 45 minutes between 2.30 and 3.15pm, in the Kindness Cabin or Explorer's Room. Those children who wish to have a sleep will be supported at this time.

The importance of rest and sleep

St Giles Nursery School ensures that all children receive the rest and sleep that they need during the nursery day and regard it to be a highly important part of their personal and developmental needs.

Sleep restrictions

Some parents may not want their child(ren) to sleep while they are at nursery and this will be discussed during settling in sessions, between the parents and the child's key person.

We will not stop children under 2 1/2 years old from sleeping if they are tired.

We will gently distract and discourage children, over 2 1/2 years old, not to sleep if the parent has specifically requested that, however we will never physically keep your child from falling asleep. We will allow the children a minimum of 45 minutes sleep. Similarly, if the child does not want to sleep, we will not force them and they will be provided with appropriate activities during the quiet, rest times.

When waking children after their sleep limit (if parents have requested to set one) we shall do so calmly and slowly as to not shock the child. Blankets may be removed and lights may be slightly brightened but children will not be physically woken up by staff (lifting child up etc). Children should be allowed to wake up naturally and in their own time.