Cornerstone Nurseries
Safe Sleep policy

Purpose of this policy

At Cornerstone Nurseries, we understand that sleep and rest are important for children's health, wellbeing, growth and development. We recognise that individual children have different sleep needs and routines.

We provide children with appropriate opportunities to sleep or rest during the day and ensure that all children are cared for in a safe, comfortable and suitable environment.

Cornerstone Nurseries follows the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and the Department for Education's safer-sleep guidance.

Cornerstone Nurseries does not force children to sleep and does not force children to remain awake. We recognise that sleep is an individual need and will provide appropriate opportunities for both sleep and rest.

Where a child does not wish to sleep, staff will provide reassurance and an opportunity to settle. If the child does not settle or clearly does not wish to sleep, a suitable quiet activity or restful alternative will be provided.

Equally, where a child is tired and falls asleep naturally, staff will not deliberately prevent them from sleeping simply because a parent/carer has requested that they remain awake.

The safety, health and wellbeing of the child will always take priority over a request from a parent/carer where that request would conflict with safer-sleep requirements or the child's individual needs.

Safer sleep requirements

For children under 2 years of age, Cornerstone Nurseries will ensure that children are placed down to sleep:

- on their back;
- in their own separate sleep space;
- on a clear, flat and firm surface;
- with an appropriate firm, flat and waterproof mattress;
- with only appropriate lightweight bedding, firmly tucked in no higher than the child's shoulders, or a correctly fitted baby sleep bag;
- with no unnecessary items in the sleep space; and
- with their head uncovered.

Babies aged **12 months and under** will only be placed to sleep in a suitable cot.

Children must always be within the **sight and hearing of staff** while sleeping. Babies under **6 months** must have an adult with them **in the same room for every sleep**. A baby monitor does not replace this requirement.

For children over 6 months, a baby monitor may be used where appropriate, Children will continue to be physically checked frequently.

Individual sleep arrangements

All children under 12 months of age at Cornerstone Nurseries will be allocated their own named cot for their use at nursery. All other sleeping children will have their own separate sleep mat at each sleep time.

Staff will take account of each child's individual sleep needs, age, development, health, usual routine and information provided by parents/carers. Parents/carers may discuss their child's sleep routine and preferences with their child's key person or the Nursery Manager.

Parents/carers' requests regarding sleep will be followed wherever reasonably practicable, provided that the request does not conflict with the EYFS safer-sleep requirements or the child's safety, health and wellbeing.

Safe sleeping position

Babies and children under 2 years of age will always be placed on their back to sleep.

Babies will be positioned with their feet towards the bottom of the cot where blankets are being used.

Once a baby is able to move independently from their back to their front and from their front to their back, they may find their own sleeping position. Staff will nevertheless continue to place the baby on their back when initially putting them down to sleep.

<u>Staff will never deliberately place a baby on their front to sleep.</u>

We do not ‘swaddle’ babies as this is classed as ‘restraint’.

When children are on beds and cots next to each other children must be top and tailed, this ensures that they are not breathing on each other in close proximity to prevent cross infection.

Sleep spaces and bedding

All sleep spaces for children under 2 years must be clear, flat and firm.

The sleep space will contain only:

- a firm, flat, waterproof mattress;
- appropriate lightweight bedding firmly tucked in no higher than the child's shoulders; **or**

- a correctly fitted baby sleep bag used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Where blankets are used, the child will be positioned feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot and the blanket will be firmly tucked in.

Children's heads must never be covered while sleeping.

Cots must not contain unnecessary items such as:

- pillows;
- toys;
- soft toys;
- loose bedding;
- cot bumpers;
- wedges;
- straps; or
- other items that could present a risk.

Sleep comforters

Sleep comforters may only be used for children over 12 months of age.

Babies aged 12 months and under must not have comforters, soft toys or other unnecessary items placed in their sleep space. Parents/carers cannot request an exception to this requirement for babies under 12 months. (Comforters does not include dummies/pacifiers)

Any comforter used by a child over 12 months must be safe and appropriate for the child's age.

Dummies must be UK standard in size and shape and meet safety requirements. If dummies are present for sleep time they must have no separate attachments, clip on parts or cords/straps.

Clothing and head coverings

Before a child sleeps, staff will check that clothing is appropriate and does not create a safety risk.

The following will be removed before sleep where applicable:

- hats;
- hoods;
- bibs;
- shoes;
- dummy cords;
- clothing that could cover the child's face or head;
- items that could become wrapped around the child; and
- any other item identified through the sleep-space safety check as presenting a risk.

Staff will pay particular attention to children who fall asleep while travelling or outdoors and will remove or adjust excess clothing as necessary to prevent overheating.

Sleep equipment

All cots, beds, mattresses and other sleep equipment used by Cornerstone Nurseries must be suitable for the age and developmental stage of the child and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Babies aged 12 months and under will only be placed to sleep in a suitable cot. Floor beds, coracles and sleep pods will **not** be used for babies aged 12 months and under.

The Department for Education recommends that providers check that relevant sleep products meet appropriate British Standards. Sleep equipment will be routinely inspected. Any damaged or unsuitable equipment will be removed from use and reported to the Nursery Manager.

Sleep checks and supervision

All children who sleep at Cornerstone Nurseries will be checked **at least every 5 minutes**.

The five-minute check is Cornerstone Nurseries' minimum setting standard and is in addition to the EYFS requirement that children are “checked frequently”.

During checks, staff will observe the child for:

- breathing;
- movement;
- sleeping position;
- signs of overheating or being too cold;
- signs of distress or illness; and
- any other concern relating to the child's safety or wellbeing.

Additional checks will be carried out where required according to the individual needs of the child or the circumstances.

All sleeping children must remain within the **sight and hearing of staff**.

Babies under 6 months must have an adult present **in the same room for every sleep**.

Where a member of staff needs to leave a sleep room, responsibility for the sleeping children must be clearly handed over to another appropriate member of staff before they leave.

If staff need to leave the room for any reason, another member of staff must take responsibility for the sleeping children before the original staff member leaves.

Sleep room temperature and overheating

The recommended room temperature for babies aged 12 months and under is 16–20°C. The baby sleep room temperature will be monitored using the electronic thermometer provided.

The temperature will be recorded on the sleep record in accordance with Cornerstone Nurseries' monitoring arrangements. Staff will use professional judgement where temperatures fall outside the recommended range and will take appropriate action to ensure children do not become too hot or too cold.

Staff will check a child's chest or the back of their neck if there is concern that they may be too hot or cold. If a child's skin feels clammy or sweaty, staff will remove one or more layers of clothing or bedding as appropriate.

During periods of extreme temperature, staff will use professional judgement and the Nursery Manager will consider whether additional measures or a risk assessment are required.

Sleep while travelling/Sleeping in pushchairs

All children dropped off at nursery must be awake, we will not accept sleeping children without first rousing them to ensure they are fit and well enough to attend nursery.

Babies aged 12 months and under - If a baby or child falls asleep in a car seat on their journey into nursery, they must be transferred to their appropriate separate sleep space as soon as they return to the setting.

Children over 12 months who fall asleep while travelling should, where possible, be transitioned to their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface when they return.

A lie-flat pram or pushchair must not be used as a child's main separate sleep space.

Coats, hats and blankets must be adjusted as necessary to prevent overheating. Hats and unnecessary extra clothing will be removed when children come indoors, including where this means waking the child.

Bedding and hygiene

All nursery bedding is washed at least weekly and whenever necessary in between.

Children's own blankets or other washable comfort items, where permitted and appropriate for the child's age, will be sent home regularly for cleaning. At least weekly. Children will not share bedding.

Where cots are shared by different children at different times, all bedding will be completely removed after each child's sleep and clean bedding will be provided before another child uses the cot. Cots, mattresses and beds will be cleaned in accordance with Cornerstone Nurseries' cleaning procedures and whenever necessary.

Mattresses will be cleaned by spraying with disinfectant and wiping when bedding is changed and at least weekly. Any bedding or equipment contaminated by bodily fluids will be cleaned or removed from use immediately in accordance with the nursery's infection-control procedures.

With separate sleep rooms, the door must be propped open to air the room at the end of the day. At the end of the week the mattresses are stood up on their end to air over the weekend.

Cot plans

Where cots need to be shared by different children at different times due to numbers in the baby unit, Cornerstone Nurseries will operate a cot plan.

The cot plan will ensure that:

- each child has a designated sleep space;
- bedding is removed after each child's sleep;
- clean bedding is provided for the next child;
- the cot and mattress are cleaned as required; and
- staff know which child is using each sleep space.

Children will never share a cot at the same time.

Children's individual sleep needs and parental requests

Cornerstone Nurseries recognises that children have individual sleep needs. Some children may need a daytime sleep, while others may prefer to rest without sleeping.

Staff will provide children with appropriate opportunities to sleep and rest and will respond to each child's individual needs.

Children who do not wish to sleep

Where a child appears tired but does not wish to sleep, staff will provide reassurance, comfort and an appropriate opportunity to settle and sleep.

Staff may use the child's usual sleep routine, such as a quiet environment, familiar comfort and calming interaction, to encourage sleep. **However, children will never be forced or made to sleep.**

If a child does not settle or clearly does not wish to sleep, staff will respect their wishes and provide a suitable quiet activity or restful alternative, provided this is appropriate for the child and does not disturb other children who are sleeping.

Parents requesting that a child stays awake

Parents/carers may request that their child does not sleep at nursery or that their child's sleep is limited. Cornerstone Nurseries will listen to and discuss parents' wishes and will

work with families wherever possible. However, **staff will not deliberately keep a child awake if the child is tired or falls asleep naturally.** We will not force, repeatedly disturb or otherwise prevent a child from sleeping in order to comply with a parental request for the child to remain awake.

If a child becomes tired and falls asleep despite reasonable efforts to engage them in an appropriate activity, the child's health, wellbeing and individual needs will take priority.

Similarly, staff will not wake a sleeping child simply because a parent has requested that the child only sleeps for a particular length of time, unless there is a genuine health, safety, safeguarding or other appropriate reason to do so.

Sleep limits

Where parents/carers request a specific sleep limit, staff will discuss this with them and explain that the nursery cannot guarantee that a child will remain awake or wake at a particular time. The nursery will not force a child to wake if they do not wake easily.

Any unusual difficulty waking a child will be treated as a health and wellbeing concern and reported to the Nursery Manager.

Safer-sleep requirements and the child's health and wellbeing will always take priority over parental requests regarding whether a child should sleep or remain awake.

Children who no longer require a daytime sleep

Children who no longer require a daytime sleep will be offered appropriate quiet activities and opportunities for rest while other children sleep.

Staff will not pressure a child to sleep simply because it is the nursery's usual sleep period.

Equally, staff will not require a tired child to remain awake simply because they are considered to have outgrown a daytime sleep or because this has been requested by a parent/carer.

Where a child becomes tired and wishes to sleep, an appropriate safe sleep arrangement will be provided in accordance with this policy.

Sleep safety checks

Before leaving a child to sleep, staff will carry out a visual safety check of the sleep space.

This will include checking that:

- the child is positioned appropriately;
- the child is on their back when initially placed down to sleep;
- the child's head and face are uncovered;
- bedding is secure and no higher than the shoulders;
- there are no unnecessary items in the cot or sleep space;
- clothing is safe and appropriate;

- the child is not too hot or cold;
- bags and other objects are out of the child's reach;
- there are no cords, straps or other hazards; and
- the sleep environment is suitable.

Sleep records

A sleep record will be completed for every child who sleeps at nursery.

Staff will record:

- the time the child was put down to sleep;
- the time of each five-minute check;
- observations made during the check;
- the time the child woke;
- any concerns or unusual observations; and
- the name/signature or identification of the member of staff completing the check.

All sleep charts must be completed accurately and signed/identified by the staff member who carried out the check.

Any concern about a child's sleep, breathing, temperature, behaviour, illness or wellbeing must be reported immediately to the Nursery Manager or appropriate senior member of staff.

Sleep records will be retained for **3 months**, in line with Cornerstone Nurseries' existing policy arrangements, unless another policy or legal requirement requires them to be retained for longer.

Staff responsibilities

All staff are responsible for following this policy and ensuring that safer-sleep arrangements are maintained.

Staff must:

- be familiar with the safer-sleep requirements;
- follow the individual sleep arrangements for children;
- provide opportunities for both sleep and rest;
- never force a child to sleep;
- never deliberately keep a tired child awake;
- carry out and record the required sleep checks;
- ensure that children remain within sight and hearing;
- ensure that babies under 6 months have an adult in the same room for every sleep;
- check the sleep environment before leaving a child to sleep;
- respond promptly to signs of overheating, illness or distress;
- report concerns immediately;
- ensure clear handovers when responsibility for sleeping children changes; and
- never knowingly place a child in an unsafe sleep environment.

The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that staffing arrangements allow the policy to be implemented safely.

Parents and carers

Parents/carers will be informed of Cornerstone Nurseries' sleep and safer-sleep arrangements. Parents/carers are encouraged to share relevant information about their child's usual sleep routine, sleep patterns and any individual needs. The nursery will work with parents/carers to support children's individual sleep needs wherever possible.

Parents/carers should understand that:

- the nursery will not force their child to sleep;
- the nursery will provide a quiet activity or restful alternative if their child does not wish to sleep;
- the nursery will not deliberately keep their child awake if they are tired or fall asleep naturally;
- the nursery cannot guarantee a particular sleep duration; and
- safer-sleep requirements and the child's health and wellbeing will always take priority.

Parents/carers will be informed where a change to their child's sleep arrangements is necessary for safety reasons.

Further information and guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers – applicable from 1 September 2026;
- Department for Education Safer Sleep guidance;
- NHS advice regarding safer sleep and sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS);
- The Lullaby Trust safer-sleep guidance;
- Cornerstone Nurseries' Safeguarding Policy;
- Cornerstone Nurseries' Health and Safety Policy; and
- Cornerstone Nurseries' Infection Control procedures.

The DfE safer-sleep guidance should be checked regularly for updates.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- the EYFS statutory framework changes;
- DfE safer-sleep guidance changes;
- new safety information becomes available;
- there is an incident or concern relating to sleep arrangements; or
- Cornerstone Nurseries changes its sleep environment or procedures.

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