



SAFER SLEEP POLICY

2026-27

Our Mission

As a family with God in our hearts, we love, laugh and learn.

Our three consistencies

Love of others • Love of self • Love of learning

Policy owner	Headteacher
Person responsible	Grace Middleton
Headteacher	Luke Gilhooly
Governor	Teresa McNeice
Adopted	September 2026
Review date	September 2027
Key statutory guidance	EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers, applicable from 1 September 2026



Safer Sleep Policy - EYFS

1. Purpose

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Otley recognises that some children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) may need to sleep or rest during the school day. Sleep can be an important part of meeting an individual child's physical, emotional and developmental needs.

The school will provide a safe, suitable and calm environment for children who need to sleep, while ensuring that sleeping arrangements comply with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, applicable from 1 September 2026.

The school's priority is always the safety and wellbeing of the child.

The EYFS requires sleeping children to be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. From 1 September 2026, the EYFS also sets out specific safer-sleep requirements for children under two years of age. We have no children under two years of age in our setting, however due to different SEND and developmental needs some of our children still have a sleep in the Reception year.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

all children receiving EYFS provision at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Otley who may sleep during the school day;

all EYFS teachers, teaching assistants, support staff, lunchtime staff, supply staff and volunteers who may have responsibility for a sleeping child;

any other member of staff who may supervise a child while they are sleeping.

3. Principles

The school will:

recognise that children have individual sleep and rest needs;

work in partnership with parents and/or carers to understand each child's normal sleep patterns and needs;

provide a safe, clean, comfortable and appropriately supervised sleep environment;

ensure that staff understand and consistently implement safer-sleep procedures;

consider the child's age, development, individual needs, medical needs and any relevant SEND when planning sleep arrangements;

never require a child to sleep if they do not need or want to sleep;

never use sleep as a form of behaviour management or punishment;

ensure that sleeping children remain appropriately supervised;

regularly review sleeping arrangements and associated risks.



These arrangements support the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements, including requirements relating to health, safety, premises, equipment and risk management.

4. Individual sleep arrangements

Before a child who may regularly need to sleep starts at the school, parents and/or carers will be asked about:

the child's usual sleep routine;

usual sleep position;

approximate sleep duration;

comfort objects, where appropriate and safe;

any medical or additional needs affecting sleep;

any known sleep difficulties;

arrangements used successfully at home;

any relevant information from health professionals, where appropriate.

The school will use this information to plan appropriate arrangements for the individual child.

Parents/carers will be informed that school staff may need to adapt the child's usual routine where necessary to comply with safer-sleep requirements.

Where a child has a medical condition or specific additional need that affects sleeping arrangements, the school will seek appropriate professional advice and incorporate relevant requirements into the child's individual healthcare, SEND or risk-management arrangements.

5. Sleep environment

The school will provide a designated area or clearly identified space suitable for children who need to sleep or rest.

The sleep area will:

be clean, comfortable and appropriately ventilated;

be maintained at a comfortable temperature;

be free from hazards and unnecessary objects;

have suitable, age-appropriate sleeping equipment;

have clear access for staff to check children;

not obstruct fire exits, evacuation routes or access to emergency equipment;

be included within the school's relevant health and safety and risk-assessment arrangements.

Sleeping children must be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Sleeping mats and blankets will

6. Children aged two and over

For children aged two and over, the school will provide a safe and appropriate sleep or rest space.



Where a child sleeps, the school will, wherever possible, provide the child with their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat and firm surface, such as an appropriate bed, or suitable mattress on the floor.

Children will not routinely be allowed to sleep on:

sofas;

armchairs;

beanbags;

soft furnishings;

cushions or other surfaces that could increase the risk of suffocation, entrapment or overheating.

If a child falls asleep unexpectedly, staff will assess the situation and, where appropriate, move the child to a suitable separate sleep space.

7. Positioning and bedding

Staff will follow the child's age-specific safer-sleep requirements.

Children's heads must never be covered.

Bedding must be appropriate to the child's age and the temperature of the environment.

No additional blankets, toys, pillows or comfort items will be placed in the sleep space of a child under two unless specifically permitted by the relevant safer-sleep guidance and the child's individual circumstances.

8. Sleep checks and supervision

A member of staff will be responsible for supervising sleeping children.

Sleeping children will be frequently checked.

Checks will include consideration of:

the child's breathing and general appearance;

their sleeping position;

whether their face or head is covered;

whether they are too hot or cold;

whether they have become trapped or entangled;

whether the sleeping environment remains safe;

whether bedding or equipment has moved;

whether the child requires assistance.

Checks must be sufficiently frequent to identify a change in the child's condition promptly. The frequency of checks will take account of the child's age, individual circumstances and any identified risks.

The school will determine an appropriate checking interval through its risk assessment and individual child's needs. Checks must not be treated as a substitute for the statutory requirement to provide appropriate supervision.

9. Recording sleep

The school will maintain an appropriate record of sleep where this is necessary to demonstrate safe practice and to support communication with parents/carers. This will be reported on CPOMS.

The record may include:

time the child went to sleep;

time the child woke;

staff member responsible for supervision;

required sleep checks;

any concerns or unusual observations;

any action taken;

information that needs to be shared with parents/carers.

Parents/carers will be informed of any significant concern or unusual incident relating to their child's sleep.

10. Unexpected sleep

If a child unexpectedly falls asleep during the school day, staff will:

Check that the child is safe.

Assess the child's age and individual circumstances.

Follow the relevant safer-sleep requirements.

Move the child to an appropriate sleep space where necessary and safe to do so.

Ensure appropriate supervision and frequent checks.

Record the incident where appropriate.

Inform the parent/carer if the sleep is unusual, prolonged or otherwise significant.

A child must never be left sleeping in an unsafe position simply because they fell asleep unexpectedly.

11. Children who do not settle or wake

Children will not be forced to sleep.

If a child does not settle, wakes naturally or becomes distressed, staff will respond sensitively to their needs.

Quiet activities may be offered where appropriate, provided this is consistent with the child's individual needs and the normal EYFS routine.

The child's emotional wellbeing will be considered alongside their physical safety.

12. Health, SEND and individual needs

The school recognises that some children may have medical, developmental, sensory or additional needs affecting sleep.



Where appropriate, staff will work with:

parents/carers;

the child's key person/class teacher;

the SENCO;

the Designated Safeguarding Lead;

relevant health professionals or other specialists.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate, while maintaining the child's safety and complying with the EYFS.

Any specialist equipment must be suitable, safe, maintained appropriately and used in accordance with relevant professional advice and manufacturer's instructions.

13. Staff responsibilities and training

All staff responsible for EYFS children must understand this policy and their responsibilities for safer sleep.

The EYFS leader will ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate induction and updates.

Staff must:

know which children may require sleep;

know each child's agreed sleep arrangements;

understand age-specific safer-sleep requirements;

know how and when sleep checks are undertaken;

report any concerns immediately;

follow risk assessments and individual plans;

never improvise unsafe sleeping arrangements.

Staff should be able to demonstrate that safer-sleep guidance is understood and consistently implemented in practice.

Ofsted's updated inspection approach from September 2026 specifically includes whether statutory guidance for safer sleeping arrangements is well understood and implemented effectively.

14. Infection prevention and hygiene

Sleep equipment and bedding will be cleaned and maintained to an appropriate hygienic standard.

Bedding will not be shared between children without appropriate laundering.

Staff will follow the school's infection-control procedures when handling bedding, bodily fluids or other materials.

15. Safeguarding

Safer sleep is part of the school's safeguarding and welfare arrangements.



Any concern that a child has been placed in an unsafe sleeping environment, that safer-sleep procedures have not been followed, or that equipment is unsafe must be reported immediately to the EYFS leader and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Where an incident may constitute a safeguarding concern, the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed.

16. Monitoring and review

The EYFS leader will monitor implementation of this policy through:

- staff discussion and supervision;
- checks of sleep areas and equipment;
- review of sleep records where used;
- review of incidents and near misses;
- consultation with parents/carers where appropriate;
- review of relevant DfE, NHS and Ofsted guidance.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if statutory requirements or government safer-sleep guidance changes.

17. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Health and Safety Policy;
- Risk Assessment Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Intimate Care Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Infection Prevention and Control procedures;
- Educational Visits/Transport procedures.

The policy should also be read alongside the EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers applicable from 1 September 2026 and the DfE safer-sleep guidance.

Key statutory reference

EYFS statutory framework – group and school-based providers (GOV.UK)

DfE safer sleep guidance for early years providers



Policy responsibility and review

Headteacher	Luke Gilhooly
School responsibility	Luke Gilhooly
Governor	Colleen Jackson
Review date	September 2027