Safe Sleeping and Rest Policy

Our nature is to nurture.

Setting	Jubilee Childcare Centre | children aged 2–4 years
Policy owner	Nursery Manager / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Effective date	19 October 2026 (subject to provider approval)
Review date	October 2027, or sooner following guidance changes or an incident

1. Purpose and scope

Jubilee Childcare Centre provides a calm, nurturing and safe environment for rest and sleep. We respect each child's individual needs, routines, dignity and preferences while applying consistent safety measures. This policy applies to all practitioners, temporary staff, volunteers and children attending the setting. Our current registered age range is 2–4 years; arrangements for children younger than two would require a reviewed policy and age-appropriate equipment before admission. The specific EYFS requirements for babies aged 12 months and under, including cot-only sleeping arrangements, do not apply to Jubilee's current 2–4-year-old provision. If Jubilee expands its registered age range to include younger children, the policy, equipment, staff training and risk assessments will be reviewed and updated before those children attend to incorporate all applicable age-specific EYFS requirements, including requirements for children under two.

2. Legal and guidance framework

This policy is informed by the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026, particularly section 3.86 (Sleeping arrangements); Department for Education (DfE) safer-sleep guidance (updated 17 August 2026); and The Lullaby Trust guidance. The EYFS requires children to be placed down to sleep safely, to be frequently checked while sleeping, and to remain within sight and hearing of staff. Jubilee's more specific arrangements below, including a maximum 10-minute documented check interval, are additional setting procedures and are not presented as an EYFS-mandated interval.

3. Individual rest arrangements

- At admission, staff discuss sleep patterns, comfort needs, allergies, medical conditions, medication, additional needs and family preferences. Record important arrangements in the child's care plan and review when needs change.
- Children are not forced to sleep or kept awake against their reasonable needs. Quiet alternatives, such as books or calming activities, will be offered to children who do not sleep.
- Staff seek parental agreement for typical nap times but make decisions in the child's immediate best interests. No parent request overrides safe sleeping practice.
- Any medical or disability-related position or equipment must have an individual written risk assessment and, where necessary, advice from an appropriate health professional.

4. Safe sleep environment and equipment

- Use each child's own suitable, firm, flat, clean sleep mat or age-appropriate bed in a designated, risk-assessed rest area. Follow manufacturer instructions and inspect items for wear or damage before use.
- Place sleep mats with adequate separation to allow unobstructed staff access and minimise contact between children. Keep doors, fire exits, walkways and evacuation routes clear.
- Never use sofas, beanbags, soft play equipment, pushchairs or car seats as routine sleeping places. If a child falls asleep elsewhere, gently and safely transfer them as soon as practicable to an appropriate sleep surface.
- Keep the area well ventilated and at a comfortable temperature. Check children for overheating or chilling; remove outdoor coats, hats, scarves and restrictive clothing before rest.
- Avoid loose cords, blind pulls, plastic bags, excessive bedding, weighted blankets and items that could obstruct breathing. Any comfort item for a child over 12 months must be age-appropriate, checked for hazards and not cover the face.
- Use individual, clean bedding where required, labelled or otherwise allocated to each child. Do not share unwashed bedding.

5. Positioning and safe settling

Children aged 2–4 may settle in a comfortable, safe position appropriate to their development. Staff ensure that their nose and mouth remain unobstructed, the sleeping surface is clear and firm, and their head and face are not covered. Staff must not restrain children to make them sleep, nor leave a child asleep in an unsafe position or setting.

Where a child has an identified clinical positioning need, follow their approved individual care plan.

6. Supervision and sleep checks

- All sleeping children must remain within sight and hearing of staff at all times. Jubilee allocates a member of staff to be physically present in the sleep room throughout rest time. The setting maintains effective active supervision and the applicable EYFS staffing ratios, including during staff breaks, handovers and when colleagues leave the room.
- At Jubilee Childcare Centre, one designated member of staff is allocated to remain in the room with the children throughout their sleep or rest period. This practitioner actively monitors all sleeping children, ensuring they remain within direct sight and hearing, and carries out and records the required sleep checks. The designated practitioner must not leave the room unless another suitable staff member has taken over supervision in person. Sleeping children must never be left unattended. Where the number or needs of children require additional staff to meet EYFS ratios or provide safe supervision, further staff will be allocated.
- Practitioners visually check each sleeping child frequently, including normal breathing, skin colour, position, unobstructed airway, bedding and temperature cues. Jubilee sets a maximum of 10 minutes between recorded individual checks; checks are more frequent where risk assessment or concern requires.
- Record the child's name, sleep start and end times, each check time, initials and any concern/action on the Sleep Monitoring Record. Documentation complements—but never replaces—continuous sight-and-hearing supervision.
- If a child seems unwell, has unusual breathing, is hard to rouse, becomes unusually pale or blue, or staff have any other concern, respond immediately under section 9.

7. Hygiene, infection prevention and storage

- Clean and disinfect mats and reusable sleep surfaces according to the manufacturer's instructions and setting cleaning schedule, including between different users and after contamination.
- Store clean bedding dry and separately to prevent cross-contamination. Launder used bedding regularly and immediately if soiled, using applicable infection-control procedures.
- Children wash hands as appropriate after toileting and before returning to routine activities. Staff follow the setting's infection prevention and intimate care policies.

8. Illness, additional needs and safeguarding

An unwell child who requires more than normal rest is assessed in accordance with the Illness and Exclusion Policy and parents are contacted where needed. Sleeping must not be used in place of assessing worsening illness. For children with additional needs, the SENDCO, key person and parent/carer agree reasonable adjustments and an individual risk assessment. Any unexplained injury, unsafe practice, supervision breach or safeguarding concern is reported promptly to the DSL and recorded under the setting's safeguarding and incident procedures.

9. Emergency response

If a child is unresponsive or is not breathing normally, call for help, telephone 999 immediately, and begin age-appropriate CPR in accordance with current paediatric first aid training and the emergency dispatcher's instructions. Send another staff member for the first aid kit/AED if available, and notify the parent/carer as soon as this can be done without delaying emergency care. If the child is breathing but unresponsive, follow current first aid/999 advice, maintain the airway and monitor breathing continuously. Never shake a child to wake them. Record the event, preserve relevant evidence, and follow required notification procedures (including Ofsted and local safeguarding partners where applicable).

10. Parent communication and record keeping

Parents and carers are told about the setting's approach at enrolment. Key persons share significant changes in rest patterns, concerns and relevant sleep information at collection or through the approved parent communication system. Sleep monitoring records and individual risk assessments are stored securely, accessed only by authorised personnel, and retained under Jubilee's records retention and data protection arrangements.

11. Staff responsibilities, training and review

- The Nursery Manager ensures the area and equipment are risk assessed, sufficient trained staff are available, and this policy is implemented.
- All staff, including agency staff, receive induction on the sleep area, supervision expectations, emergency procedures and recording; paediatric first aid coverage meets current EYFS requirements.
- The Nursery Manager investigates any missed check, unsafe sleeping arrangement or near miss, implements corrective action and reviews this policy at least annually or after relevant statutory changes.

Appendix A. Rest-time safety checklist

☐ Individual sleep needs and any care plan reviewed

☐ Clean, firm, flat and suitable surface; equipment inspected

☐ Rest area clear, ventilated and evacuation routes unobstructed

☐ Child's face uncovered; clothing and bedding appropriate

☐ Designated staff member present in the sleep room; handover/cover confirmed

☐ Child remains in sight and hearing; regular checks recorded

☐ Sleep end time, parent updates and cleaning completed

Appendix B. Sample sleep monitoring record

Child	Sleep start	Check time	Breathing / position / comfort	Initials / action	Wake time

Reference sources (accessed October 2026)

DfE: EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (1 September 2026): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2

DfE: Safer sleep (updated 17 August 2026): https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/safer-sleep

DfE: Changes to the EYFS from 1 September 2026: https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/support-for-practitioners/changes-to-the-eyfs-framework

The Lullaby Trust: Safer sleep in early years settings: https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/professionals-hub/promoting-safer-baby-care/safer-sleep-in-early-years-settings/

Approval: _____ Date: _____ Next review: _____