



BERKHAMPSTEAD SCHOOL

Kindergarten Sleep Policy

1. Purpose of this Policy

At Berkhampstead Kindergarten, we recognise that young children may require sleep or periods of rest during the day. We are committed to providing a safe, comfortable and appropriate environment in which children can rest or sleep, while respecting each child's individual needs and routines.

The safety and wellbeing of children is our highest priority. All sleep arrangements will follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory requirements and current Department for Education safer sleep guidance.

The updated EYFS requirements, effective from 1 September 2026, make safer sleep arrangements an explicit part of the statutory framework. The guidance emphasises that babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely and that sleeping children must be appropriately supervised and checked.

This policy applies to all children who attend the Kindergarten, including children who:

- have an agreed sleep or rest routine;
- become tired during the session;
- fall asleep unexpectedly;
- fall asleep during travel or an activity;
- have additional needs or medical requirements that affect their sleep;
- require an individual sleep arrangement agreed with parents/carers.

2. Our Approach to Sleep and Rest

We recognise that children have different sleep needs and that some children may require a daytime sleep while others may simply benefit from a quiet period of rest.

Sleep will never be used as a form of behaviour management or as a means of restricting a child's participation in activities.

Children will not be required to sleep. Where a child does not sleep, they will be offered an appropriate quiet and restful alternative.

Staff will work in partnership with parents/carers to understand each child's individual sleep needs, routines and preferences.

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Where a child regularly sleeps at Kindergarten, this will be discussed with parents/carers and recorded appropriately.

We provide a designated sleep and rest area for children who require daytime sleep. The sleep area is situated within the Kindergarten room and is separated from the main learning environment by a curtain. The curtain is used to create a calm and restful environment while ensuring that children remain appropriately supervised.

The sleep area will not be treated as a completely closed or inaccessible room. Staff must be able to maintain effective supervision of sleeping children at all times, and children must remain within the sight and hearing of staff.

3. Safe Sleep Environment

The sleep area will:

- be maintained at a comfortable temperature;
- be clean, uncluttered and free from unnecessary hazards;
- be appropriately risk assessed;
- allow staff to see and supervise sleeping children;
- be kept free from loose items that could present a suffocation or overheating risk.

4. Sleep Position

Children will be placed to sleep in an appropriate and safe position in accordance with their age and individual circumstances.

Staff will never intentionally place a child in an unsafe sleeping position.

If a child moves position independently while sleeping, staff will assess whether they remain safe and take appropriate action if necessary.

5. Sleep Equipment

The Kindergarten uses individual fold-out sleep mats. Each child will have their own sleep mat, and children will not share mats. Before use, staff will check that each mat:

- is clean and dry;
- is in good condition and free from damage;
- provides a firm, flat sleeping surface;
- is positioned safely on the floor;
- is positioned so that staff can effectively supervise the child.

Mats will be cleaned after each use, and damaged or unsuitable mats will be removed from use immediately.

All sleep equipment used by the Kindergarten will be:

- suitable for the child's age and developmental stage;
- safe, clean and well maintained;
- checked regularly for damage;

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- appropriately risk assessed.

Children will not be placed to sleep in unsuitable equipment such as:

- beanbags;
- sofas;
- armchairs;
- cushions or soft furnishings.

If a child falls asleep unexpectedly in an unsuitable location, staff will assess the situation and, where appropriate and safe to do so, move the child to a suitable sleep space.

Sleep mats will be positioned individually with sufficient space around each child to allow staff to carry out checks safely.

Children will be placed on their back to begin their sleep, unless an individual medical or care plan, supported by appropriate professional advice, requires an alternative arrangement. Children will not be placed to sleep face down.

If an older child independently changes position while asleep, staff will monitor the child and ensure that they remain safe and that their face and airway are not obstructed.

Only appropriate lightweight bedding will be provided where required. This will consist of a blanket that will be individual to each child which will be laundered at the end of each week, or immediately if soiled.

Bedding must not cover a child's head or face and must not create a risk of overheating.

Children must not sleep with:

- pillows;
- duvets or quilts;
- large or heavy blankets;
- loose objects that could obstruct breathing.

6. Supervision and Checking of Sleeping Children

Sleeping children must be appropriately supervised and checked to ensure that they remain safe.

The Kindergarten Lead must assign responsibility to one member of staff for each period so that there is no uncertainty about who is supervising the sleeping children.

- a member of staff will have responsibility for supervising sleeping children;
- sleeping children will be checked frequently and at intervals determined by the child's age, individual needs and the setting's risk assessment;
- checks will be recorded where required;
- staff will check that the child's breathing, position, temperature and general wellbeing appear normal;
- staff will ensure that the child's face and head remain uncovered;
- staff will ensure that bedding has not moved into an unsafe position;

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- staff will respond immediately if a child appears distressed, unwell or otherwise unsafe.

The mats in the sleep area must be arranged so that staff can maintain effective supervision. Staff must not rely solely on listening for a child. Physical visual checks must take place regularly. The member of staff responsible for the sleeping children will enter the sleep area to carry out the check rather than relying on observation from outside the curtain.

7. Sleep Checks

Each sleep check should consider:

1. Is the child breathing normally?
2. Is the child's face and head uncovered?
3. Is the child in a safe position?
4. Is the child too hot or too cold?
5. Is the sleep space clear of unnecessary items?
6. Is the child showing any signs of distress or illness?
7. Is the sleep equipment being used safely?

Any concerns will be acted upon immediately and reported to the Kindergarten Lead or Head of Early Years.

Where sleep monitoring records are used, staff will record:

- child's name;
- time the child fell asleep;
- time of each sleep check;
- child's position/wellbeing where appropriate;
- time the child woke;
- any concerns or action taken;
- name/initials of the member of staff completing the check.

8. Room Temperature and Clothing

The sleep environment will be kept at a comfortable temperature. Staff will be alert to signs that a child may be too hot or too cold. Children will not sleep wearing excessive layers of clothing; outdoor clothing such as coats, hats and scarves will always be removed before a child sleeps.

9. Comforters and Personal Items

Some children may have a comforter or familiar item that helps them settle. Where appropriate, a small comforter may be used provided that it does not create a sleep safety risk.

10. Individual Sleep Needs

Before a child begins attending Berkhamstead Kindergarten, parents/carers will be asked about their child's sleep routine and needs where relevant.

Information may include:

- usual sleep times;
- typical length of sleep;
- preferred settling routine;
- comforter;

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- signs of tiredness;
- usual sleeping position;
- any relevant medical or developmental information;
- any sleep-related concerns.

Where a child has a specific medical, developmental or additional need affecting sleep, an individual risk assessment and/or care plan will be completed where appropriate. This will be agreed with parents/carers and shared with all staff.

11. Children Who Fall Asleep Unexpectedly

Children may occasionally fall asleep during the session, particularly after a busy morning or during quiet activities.

If a child unexpectedly falls asleep:

1. A member of staff will assess the child's immediate safety.
2. The child will be moved to an appropriate safe sleep space where this is necessary and safe to do so.
3. Staff will ensure the child's head and face remain uncovered.
4. Appropriate supervision and sleep checks will begin.
5. The child's sleep will be recorded where required.
6. Parents/carers will be informed if the child's sleep is unusual, prolonged or otherwise relevant to their child's wellbeing.

If the child appears unwell, unusually drowsy, difficult to rouse or displays any concerning symptoms, staff will follow the setting's illness and first aid procedures and seek appropriate medical assistance where necessary.

12. Sleeping During Activities or Travel

Children may occasionally fall asleep during a journey or while participating in an activity. Staff will ensure that children are not left sleeping in unsafe locations.

If a child falls asleep while travelling, staff will follow the relevant safer sleep guidance and transport risk assessment.

13. Safe Sleep Environment Checks

Staff will carry out regular checks of the sleep environment. These checks will consider:

- condition and cleanliness of sleep equipment;
- suitability of bedding;
- room temperature and ventilation;
- visibility and supervision;
- potential hazards;
- suitability of the sleep area.

Any damaged or unsuitable equipment will be removed from use immediately.

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14. Infection Prevention and Cleaning

All bedding and sleep equipment will be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Where bedding is provided for individual children, it will be appropriately labelled and stored. Bedding will be laundered regularly and immediately if soiled.

Sleep mats will be cleaned immediately after use with anti-bacterial cleaner. Children will not share bedding.

15. Safeguarding

Sleep is considered part of our safeguarding and welfare responsibilities. Staff must remain alert to any concerns relating to a child's sleep, including:

- unexplained changes in sleeping patterns;
- unusual or excessive tiredness;
- repeated difficulty waking;
- concerns raised by parents/carers;
- unsafe sleeping practices;
- inappropriate use of sleep equipment;
- concerns about a child's care outside Kindergarten.

Any safeguarding concern will be dealt with in accordance with Berkhamstead School's Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must never take photographs or videos of sleeping children unless there is a specific, authorised safeguarding or care-related reason in accordance with school policy.

16. Staff and Training

All staff who may be responsible for sleeping children will be familiar with this policy and the setting's safer sleep procedures.

Staff will receive appropriate information and training on:

- safer sleep;
- supervision of sleeping children;
- recognising signs that a child may be unsafe or unwell while sleeping;
- the use of sleep equipment;
- emergency procedures;
- individual children's sleep plans where applicable.

New staff will be made aware of the policy as part of their induction.

17. Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that parents/carers know their child best and will work collaboratively with families to support appropriate sleep and rest routines.

Parents/carers will be informed about:

- the Kindergarten's safer sleep arrangements;
- how their child's sleep is supervised;

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- any significant changes to their child's sleep;
- any concerns regarding their child's sleep or wellbeing.

Parents/carers will not be able to request a sleep arrangement that staff consider unsafe or that does not comply with statutory requirements or current safer sleep guidance.

Where there is disagreement, the Kindergarten Lead will discuss the concern with the family and explain the reasons for the setting's approach.

18. Record Keeping

The Kindergarten will maintain appropriate records relating to children's sleep.

Records may include:

- parental information regarding sleep;
- individual sleep plans;
- risk assessments;
- sleep monitoring records;
- incidents or accidents;
- concerns and actions taken;
- relevant communication with parents/carers;
- staff training records.

Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with the school's data protection procedures.

19. Monitoring and Review

The Kindergarten Lead will regularly monitor sleep practice to ensure that:

- staff understand and follow the policy;
- sleep spaces remain safe;
- sleep checks are being completed appropriately;
- equipment remains suitable;
- staff training remains current;
- individual children's needs are reviewed;
- practice remains consistent with the current EYFS statutory framework and DfE safer sleep guidance.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there are changes to legislation, EYFS requirements, national guidance or the needs of children attending the Kindergarten.

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