SAFER SLEEP POLICY

At Stepping Stones we recognise that sleep and rest times are key times in the day for being close and promoting security and are an important part of a child's unique and individual care. Younger children will need to sleep but older children do not usually need to. No child is made to sleep. Our sleep and rest procedures at Stepping Stones comply with the EYFS and the latest available safety guidance.

Partnership with families

As part of a child's settling in we will ask about their usual sleep and rest preferences and routines. As far as possible we will follow their usual routine, however, children's routines may change once they are in the setting, and we will respond flexibly.

If a child is not ready to sleep, they are never forced to. If we feel a child is ready to sleep or it is their usual sleep time, we will settle a child to sleep and soothe them, if after 15 minutes they are not sleeping they will be encouraged to rest or go and play as appropriate. Under no circumstances is a child ever physically restrained whilst trying to settle them to sleep. We allow children to sleep for a cycle appropriate to their age and stage as this promotes their development and wellbeing needs.

Parents/carers may provide a suitable sleeping bag for their child if preferred, providing there is no risk of it causing a child's temperature to rise. Sleeping bags must be of an appropriate size for the child and must not be used with any other bedding. We can only use sleeping bags that meet European safety standards. This will be shown on the label as BS EN 16781:2018.

Staff training

At Stepping Stones all staff in our Blue and Green room complete Safer sleep training with our training provider.

Children asleep on arrival at the setting

If a child arrives at the setting asleep, they are sensitively woken whilst the parent/carers are still present. Outdoor clothes are removed, and the child is settled on a sleeping mat, if they are still sleepy, but otherwise well.

Implemented: Oct 2026
Next Review: Oct 2027

If a child does not show signs of going back to sleep after being woken, they are welcomed and settled into the session at their own pace.

The sleep environment

A daily check is carried out when the mats have been put out for sleeping to ensure they are spaced out correctly and not near any hazards.

There is a room thermometer in the sleep area that is checked when settling a child to sleep.

The sleeping environment must be:

- Be clean and uncluttered.
- There must be no shelves or objects above where the child is sleeping.
- The room temperature should be between 16–20C monitored by a thermometer in the sleep area. This must be recorded on the sleep checklist when children go to sleep
- The room should be well ventilated.
- Children aged over 12 months must be placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a clear, flat, firm surface such as a cot, bed or suitable mattress on the floor.
- Children must sleep head to toe to reduce the spread of infection.
- Every child has their own clean bedding, consisting of a fitted bottom sheet and cotton cellular blanket in good clean condition.
- Pillows, cot bumpers and duvets, are not used

Supervision of sleeping children

- A sleeping or resting child is always within sight and hearing of staff.
- Every 10 minutes staff to check sleeping children and carry out an active check on their well-being.
- Each active sleeping check is recorded with the time, and date of the check and is signed by the staff member making the check.
    - Placing a hand on the child's chest or near their mouth to check they are breathing.

- Visual check: do they look different to usual? Check the colour of their lips and if you gently press their fingernail does blood rush back? For children with dark skin does their palm look yellow?
- Temperature check: ensure the child is not too hot or too cold. This must be done by putting your hand on the skin on their chest or at the back of their neck.
- Check that sheets or blankets are not wrapped around the child or covering their face.

Young children

- Young children sleep on rest mats and have their own personalised bedding.
- Nappies are changed and heavier clothing is removed.
- Hair accessories with parts that may come lose or detached and pose a choking hazard are removed before sleep/rest time.
- A separate area of the room is made as quiet as possible, perhaps with some soft music playing and blinds closed.
- Young children are settled and soothed to sleep. Staff may stroke or very gently pat children.
- Sleeping children are always supervised within sight and hearing of staff.