BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Thomas Hickman School
Safe Sleeping Policy

Date of this review: Sept 2026 Date of next review: June 2027

SAFE SLEEPING POLICY

Thomas Hickman School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We are committed to ensuring that every baby and child in our care sleeps in a safe environment, and that staff responsible for supervising sleep do so in a professional manner at all times and in keeping with our BIRDS values, e.g. **Respect** and **Independence**. This policy is written in line with Department for Education (DfE) safer sleep guidance, produced with The Lullaby Trust, which supports the update to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework taking effect from September 2026. Providers are expected to meet these standards now, ahead of the framework update.

General Guidance

The guidance below sets out the safety principles that apply equally to the two-year-old nursery, preschool and Reception. Section-specific approved equipment and settling/supervision procedures for each setting follow afterwards, as these differ slightly to reflect the ages of the children and the equipment used.

1. This policy applies to all children who sleep during the school day in the two-year-old nursery, preschool and Reception. Sleeping during the school day is expected to be uncommon. It is not part of our practise within Thomas Hickman School to put children down for a nap during their session. The following guidance is for when children fall asleep unexpectedly.

2. Safer sleep reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) in babies up to 12 months and Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC) in children over 12 months. Aspects of the guidance also apply to older children in relation to suffocation, restricted airways and accidental injury.

3. Children 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.

4. Sleep spaces must only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding, firmly tucked in no higher than the child's shoulders, or a well-fitted sleep bag suitable for the child's age. Where blankets are used, the child is placed feet-to-foot with the blanket tucked in. Cots and sleep spaces must not contain toys, pillows, loose bedding, cot bumpers, wedges or straps.

5. Sofas, beanbags, cushions, bouncers, pods, car seats and other seated or inclined products must **never** be used as a sleeping surface.

6. The recommended room temperature for sleeping areas is 16–20°C. A room thermometer is provided in each designated sleeping area. Staff must consider the effect of direct sunlight, radiators, underfloor heating, excessive clothing and the number of blankets used, and must not place a child to sleep next to a direct heat source. If a child feels too hot or too cold, check their chest or the back of their neck - hands and feet are naturally cooler.

7. Children must remain within the sight and hearing of staff at all times while sleeping. All sleeping children are checked regularly, and the time, child, checks carried out and staff member responsible are recorded.

8. Once a child can move independently from their back to their front and back again, they may find their own sleeping position. Staff must continue to place them on their back initially and must continue to monitor them closely, responding immediately if a child's face or airway appears obstructed.

9. Children arriving at school already asleep will **not** be accepted without staff first being able to assess their condition and complete the usual handover with the parent or carer. Parents/carers will be asked to wake the child before leaving or the child may be assessed as not ready to learn within the nursery/school and the parent asked to take them home.

10. Any member of staff who smokes is expected to change or cover outer clothing and wash their hands before working closely with young children, in line with the school's existing smoke-free arrangements.

11. If a child seems unusually tired, unwell, or is hard to wake, we will contact their parent or carer and follow our normal illness procedures. A nap counts as "unusually long" if it goes over 20 minutes and the child still isn't ready to re-join learning afterwards. If a child wakes up but won't settle back into learning, we will call their parent or carer to collect them.

Two-Year-Old Nursery

Approved sleeping equipment

Item	Detail
Travel cots	Two, meeting BS EN 716-1:2017 or BS EN 1466:2014/2023
Mattresses	Firm mattresses supplied and approved for use with the travel cots (BS EN 16890:2017+A1:2021)
Fitted sheets	Four
Cellular blankets	Four
Room thermometer	One

Procedure for settling and supervising a sleeping child

a) Prepare the sleep space: firm, flat, clear mattress in a travel cot with a fitted sheet; cellular blanket ready; room thermometer checked and temperature confirmed as 16-20°C.

b) Place the child on their back in their own separate travel cot. Never place a child on a sofa, cushion, beanbag, bouncer, pod or in a car seat.

c) If using a blanket, position the child feet-to-foot and tuck the blanket in no higher than the shoulders. Do not add pillows, toys, bumpers, wedges or straps.

d) Remove hats, coats and excess clothing before settling the child, so they do not overheat.

e) Keep the child within sight and hearing at all times.

f) Check the child regularly: observe their position, breathing, colour and temperature (chest or back of the neck). Respond immediately if their face or airway appears obstructed.

g) Do not allow other children to disturb or climb into the sleeping area.

h) If a child appears unusually tired, unwell or hard to rouse, contact their parent/carer.

i) Record the child's name, sleep start and end time, checks carried out and the staff member responsible.

j) Clean and store equipment after use in line with the hygiene and storage arrangements below.

Preschool/Reception

Approved sleeping equipment

Item	Detail
Sleep mats or mattresses	Two firm, flat sleep mats or mattresses
Cellular blankets	Four
Washable covers / fitted sheets	Suitable washable covers or fitted sheets
Room thermometer	One

Travel cots are not used in Preschool or Reception because of the age, size and manual handling risks involved. Reception's emergency sleeping equipment is for exceptional use only, where a child becomes unwell or unexpectedly falls asleep while waiting to be collected. A named adult must supervise the child continuously, remaining in the room, until the child wakes or is collected. Other children must not be allowed to disturb or climb into the sleeping area.

Emergency sleep procedure

a) Prepare a firm, flat sleep mat or mattress with a washable cover or fitted sheet; room thermometer checked and temperature confirmed as 16–20°C.

b) Settle the child on their back in a clear space away from other children's activity. Never place a child on a sofa, cushion, beanbag or other soft furniture.

c) If using a blanket, tuck it in no higher than the shoulders. Do not add pillows, toys, bumpers, wedges or straps.

d) Remove hats, coats and excess clothing before settling the child, so they do not overheat.

e) A named adult must remain in the room and supervise the child continuously for the whole period of sleep. Because this is exceptional, emergency use, continuous supervision is used in place of the periodic checks used in the nursery and preschool.

f) Watch the child's position, breathing, colour and temperature (chest or back of the neck) throughout. Respond immediately if their face or airway appears obstructed.

g) Do not allow other children to disturb or climb into the sleeping area.

h) Contact the child's parent/carer, as this is an unplanned sleep and the child may be unwell or in need of collection.

i) Record the child's name, sleep start and end time, and the staff member who supervised.

j) Clean and store equipment after use in line with the hygiene and storage arrangements below.

Equipment, Storage and Training

13. All sleeping equipment is purchased new unless its history, condition and compliance can be fully verified. Mattresses must be firm, flat and waterproof (or protected by a waterproof cover), fit the sleeping space correctly with no gaps, be cleaned between users, have their purchase date recorded, and be replaced if damaged, misshapen, torn or no longer firm. Freshly washed bedding is used for each child; used bedding is removed promptly and washed before reuse, and each child's bedding is stored separately where practical.

14. Travel cots and bedding are stored close to the designated sleeping areas, inaccessible to children, without creating a climbing or falling-object risk, and without requiring staff to lift equipment above shoulder height. A manual handling assessment is completed before any wall-mounted or raised storage is used.

15. Separate risk assessments are maintained for the two-year-old nursery, preschool, and Reception's emergency sleeping arrangements, and are reviewed regularly.

16. Relevant Early Years staff complete certified safe sleep training (the National College safe sleep course), covering current guidance, safe sleeping environments, unsafe sleep practices, effective communication and an end-of-course assessment. Staff watch the training together and each complete the assessment individually.

Further Guidance

- Department for Education, *Safer sleep* — Help for early years providers (help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk)
- NHS, *Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)* (www.nhs.uk)
- The Lullaby Trust — safer sleep information (www.lullabytrust.org.uk)
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, DfE
- 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE

Monitoring and reviewing the policy

We aim to review this policy regularly, and in any event once the EYFS statutory framework update takes effect in September 2026, to ensure it continues to reflect current national guidance.