**Safe Rest & Sleep Policy**

**Purpose of Policy**

At Rainbow Nursery we aim to ensure that all children have enough sleep to support their development and natural sleeping rhythms in a safe environment. The safety of children sleeping is paramount therefore our policy follows the advice provided by The Scottish Cot Death to minimise the risk of Sudden Infant Death. This policy aims to make parents and staff aware of our approach to sleep and rest opportunities at nursery and to ensure that all children get all the sleep they need whilst in our care.

**Responsibility**

This policy applies to all staff, including senior managers, paid staff, volunteers and sessional workers, agency staff, students or anyone else working on behalf of Rainbow Nursery. Parents’ and carers’ wishes should be respected with regard to their children’s sleep requirements, provided that the child’s welfare is not compromised; and

**Implementation**

Staff will only use safety-approved cots or other suitable sleeping equipment (i.e. sleep mats) that are compliant with British Standard regulations, and mattress covers are used in conjunction with a clean fitted sheet. Mattresses should be completely covered in a waterproof fabric such as PVC. All mattresses should be regularly inspected for signs of damage to the waterproof fabric and if punctured, cracked or torn, should be replaced immediately.

Travel cots and prams with a firm base and mattress are also suitable. However, beanbags, bouncy chairs, swings, sleep nests (pods) and sofas should never be used as a sleep surface as all increase the risks of cot death.

The nursery will not use cot bumpers or clutter cots with soft toys, although comforters will be given where required. All spaces around cots and beds should be kept clear from hanging objects i.e. hanging cords, blind cords, draw-string bags.

Every child should be provided with clean bedding (light blankets) and ensure children are appropriately dressed for sleep to avoid overheating. Remember that one blanket doubled over counts as two blankets. Staff should monitor the room temperature and record this on the sleep record. The ideal temperature should be between 16-20°C.

Parents are advised to have a new mattress for each child within their own home; however this is not practical within the early years setting. Therefore each child should have their own bedding and the mattress should be checked, inspected and disinfected between each infant sleep.

All babies should be placed to sleep in a cot on their back, with their feet at the bottom end the cot. If the baby is less than six months old and you discover that they have turned onto their tummy, you should gently return them onto their back. Ensure the bedclothes are firmly tucked in and no higher than just under the baby’s shoulders, so that they can’t wriggle down under the covers.

Children must never be put down to sleep with a bottle to self-feed.

**Swaddling**

Never cover a baby’s head, and only use thin materials for swaddling. Muslin cloth or thin cotton help reduce the risk of overheating. Infant sleeping bags/growbags are now available as an alternative to swaddling. Providing these are of the right size and tog for each infant these are safe to use. Infants must never be placed prone (on their stomach) when swaddled. Current research suggests that it is safest to swaddle infants from birth and not to change infant care practices by beginning to swaddle at 3 months of age when SUDI (cot death) risk is greatest.

**Dummies**

The nursery shall not provide dummies for children nor shall the nursery introduce a child to a dummy if they have not used one before at home. Parents are permitted to bring in a dummy from home for their child to use when at nursery and we recognise a dummy can provide great comfort for a child during rest and sleep times. If parents do provide dummies from home for their children to use at nursery, we shall provide a hygienic dummy pot in which the dummy can be sealed to store when not in use.

Dummies are usually restricted to sleep and rest times. They are not encouraged at other times as they can hamper a child’s speech, interaction with others and are a major cause of speech delay.

Some research suggests that using a dummy for every period of sleep may reduce the risk of cot death. It is recommended that when an infant uses a dummy, this should be offered at every period of sleep, including daytime naps. If the dummy falls out during the sleep do not waken the baby up to put it back in. However if the baby wakens then offer the dummy once again. Never force a baby to take a dummy or put it back in if the baby spits it out. Don’t use a neck cord, and never coat a dummy in anything sweet.

It is recommended that dummy use stops between 6 and 12 months.

**Sleep Records**

Sleep records are completed each day to record how long a child has slept for. Staff should record the time the child fell asleep, checks at 15 min intervals and the time the child woke up. All children must be monitored visually when sleeping and children are never left in a separate sleep room without staff supervision. When monitoring, the staff member looks for the rise and fall of the chest and if the sleep position has changed.

**Rest Areas**

Within the nursery there are quiet rest areas in the playrooms with soft cushions where children can go if they wish to rest and relax at any time of the day. If a child falls asleep at any point during the day, staff should make efforts to transfer the child to a sleep mat or cot.

**Care Plans**

We ask parents to complete a Care Plan and with the child’s key person discuss sleeping routines when the child starts at nursery, and these are reviewed and updated at timely intervals. If a baby has an unusual sleeping routine or a position, we will use in the nursery i.e. babies sleeping on their tummies, however we will explain our policy to the parents and ask them to sign to say they have requested we adopt a different position or pattern on the sleeping babies – Care Plan.

We recognise parents’ knowledge of their child regarding sleep routines and will, where possible, work together to ensure each child’s individual sleep routines and well-being continues to be met. However, staff will not force a child to sleep or keep them awake against his or her will. They will also not usually wake children from their sleep.

Staff will discuss any changes in sleep routines at the end of the day and share observations and information about children’s behaviour when they do not receive enough sleep.

**Date Completed: October 2023**

**Review Date: October 2024**

*This policy will be monitored in line with relevant legislation and good practice guidelines*