

Safer Sleeping Policy

Falconhurst School



Policy information	Details
Policy owner	Headteacher / EYFS Leader
Applies to	Falconhurst School Early Years provision
Approved by	Governing Body / Headteacher
Effective from	1 September 2026
Review cycle	Annual, or sooner following changes to statutory guidance or practice

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Introduction

At Falconhurst School we recognise that sleep is important for children's health, development and wellbeing. Our priority is that any child who sleeps while in our care does so in a safe environment, with appropriate supervision and with their individual needs understood.

From 1 September 2026, explicit safer-sleep requirements are included within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for group and school-based providers. Falconhurst School provides early years education only for children aged 3 years and over. We do not admit babies, children under two, or two-year-olds. The specific statutory sleeping arrangements written for younger children are therefore not applicable to our current provision. This policy sets out an age-appropriate, safe and proportionate approach for the 3- and 4-year-old children in our Nursery who may occasionally fall asleep during the school day.

Aims

This policy aims to:

- protect children from avoidable risks associated with unsafe sleeping arrangements;
- ensure staff understand the September 2026 EYFS safer-sleep requirements and apply the requirements relevant to Falconhurst's provision for children aged 3 years and over;
- set out clear arrangements for children aged 3-4 who unexpectedly fall asleep during the nursery session;
- ensure parents/carers are involved where a child has an identified or recurring need for sleep; and
- provide clear expectations for supervision, recording, risk assessment and emergency response.

Statutory and guidance framework

This policy has been written with regard to:

- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, effective 1 September 2026, including the safeguarding and welfare requirements relating to sleeping children;
- Department for Education, Help for Early Years Providers: Safer sleep, developed with The Lullaby Trust;
- NHS safer-sleep/SIDS advice;
- Ofsted inspection materials effective from September 2026, which expect statutory safer-sleep arrangements to be understood and implemented effectively; and
- the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Health and Safety, First Aid/Medical Conditions and SEND policies.

Scope and the children at Falconhurst

Falconhurst School Nursery provides exclusively for children aged 3 years and over. The school does not admit children under the age of 3. We do not provide routine or planned sleep sessions and children are not placed down to sleep as part of the Nursery timetable. However, a 3- or 4-year-old child may occasionally fall asleep because they are tired, unwell or have an individual need. This policy sets out the safe arrangements that will be followed in that situation.

The September 2026 EYFS framework contains additional, specific safer-sleep requirements for younger children, particularly children under two and babies. As Falconhurst does not provide care for children under 3, those age-specific requirements are outside the scope of this policy. Staff are not expected to maintain cot, baby-room or infant-sleep arrangements for children who are not admitted to the school. Should the school's age range change in future, this policy and the associated risk assessment, equipment and staff training will be reviewed before younger children are admitted.

Falconhurst arrangements for Nursery children aged 3-4

If a child unexpectedly falls asleep

Staff will respond calmly and sensitively. They will first assess where and how the child has fallen asleep and ensure that the child is safe. A child aged 3 or over does not automatically need to be moved to a designated sleep mattress simply because they have fallen asleep. Staff will use professional judgement to decide whether it is safer to allow the child to remain where they are or to gently move them to a more suitable resting place. The child will not be left in a position where there is a foreseeable risk of falling, entrapment, obstruction of the face or airway, overheating, or injury from the immediate environment.

Where a child remains asleep, staff will ensure that the area around them is safe, that supervision of both the sleeping child and the wider group can be maintained, and that evacuation routes are not compromised. If the place in which the child has fallen asleep is unsuitable or presents a foreseeable risk, staff will gently move the child to a safer resting place.

Contact with parents/carers

If sleep continues for 10 minutes, parents/carers will normally be telephoned. Staff will discuss the child's presentation, any known reason for unusual tiredness and whether collection is appropriate. Where the child appears unwell, difficult to rouse, unusually drowsy, has sustained an injury, or staff have any other health or safeguarding concern, the school's first-aid/medical and safeguarding procedures will take precedence and parents/carers will be contacted without waiting 10 minutes.

A child will not be woken or collected simply because they have fallen asleep if this would not be in their best interests. Decisions will be based on the child's wellbeing, presentation, known needs and discussion with parents/carers. Where sleep is recurrent, staff will agree an individual approach with the family rather than relying on repeated ad-hoc collection.

Planned or recurring sleep needs

Any request from a parent/carer for a Nursery child to have a planned sleep during the session will be discussed with the EYFS Leader. The school will consider the child's individual needs, age, development, health, SEND, usual routine and the practicality of providing a safe sleep space with appropriate supervision. Where needed, advice will be sought from relevant health professionals.

Where a child regularly falls asleep or has an identified need for sleep, the school will record agreed arrangements in an individual risk assessment and, where appropriate, an Individual Healthcare Plan or other individual support plan. This will include the sleep space, supervision, frequency of checks, parental wishes, known medical factors, emergency arrangements and review date.

Safe environment for unexpected sleep

Falconhurst does not operate routine sleep provision and therefore does not require children aged 3 or over who unexpectedly fall asleep to use a prescribed cot or sleep mattress. Staff will instead make an age-appropriate assessment of the immediate environment. They will:

- ensure the child is resting in a stable and safe place and is not at risk of falling or becoming trapped;
- keep the area clear of cords, blind loops, heaters, radiators, trailing wires, heavy objects and other foreseeable hazards;
- ensure the child's face and airway remain unobstructed;
- avoid placing loose or heavy items around the child that could obstruct their face or create an entrapment risk;
- monitor the child for signs of overheating, illness or distress;
- ensure any school equipment used for resting is clean and suitable; and
- move the child if the location or circumstances become unsafe.

Supervision and monitoring

Sleeping children remain the responsibility of the staff team and normal EYFS staffing requirements continue to apply. For Falconhurst Nursery children aged 3-4, staff will keep the sleeping child within direct sight and hearing and will carry out and record physical checks at least every 10 minutes, or more frequently where the child's individual needs or presentation indicate this is necessary.

At each check, staff will confirm that the child:

- is breathing normally;
- is in a safe position and is not at risk of falling or entrapment;
- has a clear face and airway;
- is not too hot or too cold; and
- shows no signs of illness, distress or deterioration.

When a child wakes

A waking child will be responded to promptly and reassured. Staff will allow time for the child to become fully alert before returning to activities. Any equipment used for resting will be cleaned as necessary, and the sleep period will be recorded. Parents/carers will be informed of any significant or unusual sleep and of any concerns arising.

Illness, emergency and safeguarding

Unexpected or excessive sleepiness can be a sign that a child is unwell. Staff will use professional judgement and follow first-aid and medical procedures. If a child is unresponsive, has abnormal or absent breathing, is difficult to rouse, has a seizure, shows signs of serious illness or staff are otherwise seriously concerned, staff will call

999 and begin appropriate paediatric first-aid procedures. Parents/carers will be contacted as soon as possible.

Any concern that tiredness, presentation or information provided by the child/family may indicate a safeguarding issue will be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Recording

The Safer Sleeping Log at Appendix 1 will be completed whenever a Nursery child sleeps during the session. The record will include the time sleep began and ended, checks undertaken, the child's position and breathing, any action taken, contact with parents/carers and any relevant observations. Records will be stored in line with the school's record-keeping and data-protection arrangements.

Risk assessment

The school will keep the management of sleep under half-termly review. Risk assessment will consider the environment, equipment, evacuation, visibility, temperature, infection control, staffing and the individual child's needs. The EYFS requires providers to be able to demonstrate how risks are managed and to identify what needs to be checked, when, by whom and how risks will be removed or minimised.

Staff knowledge, training and accountability

The Headteacher and EYFS Leader will ensure that staff working in Nursery understand this policy and the safer-sleep requirements relevant to their role. Staff will know how to complete the sleep log, how to recognise signs of overheating or illness, and how to respond in an emergency. Relevant paediatric first-aid requirements will be maintained.

Safer-sleep practice may be checked through induction, staff briefing, supervision, learning walks and review of records. Any unsafe practice must be corrected immediately and reported to the EYFS Leader/Headteacher.

Working with parents/carers

Parents/carers are asked to tell the school about any factor that may affect their child's sleep or alertness, including illness, medication, disrupted sleep, a change in routine or relevant medical advice. Staff will work in partnership with families while retaining responsibility for ensuring that arrangements used in school are safe and compliant with the EYFS.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher and EYFS Leader are responsible for monitoring implementation. This policy will be reviewed annually, after any significant incident, before any change to the school's Nursery admission age, or sooner if the EYFS, Department for Education, NHS or Ofsted guidance changes.

Appendix 1 - Safer Sleeping Log

Child	Date	Sleep began	Sleep ended	10-minute checks	Notes / action / parent contact

Check each time: breathing normal; safe position; face/airway clear; head uncovered; temperature comfortable; no signs of illness/distress.

Appendix 2 - Individual Safer-Sleep Risk Assessment / Plan

Child's name	
Date of birth	
Reason sleep arrangements are required	
Usual sleep pattern / parent information	
Relevant medical/SEND information	
Agreed sleep space and equipment	
Positioning / bedding arrangements	
Supervision and frequency of checks	
Temperature / environmental considerations	
Actions if child is difficult to rouse or becomes unwell	
Parent/carer contact arrangements	
Professional advice received (if applicable)	
Review date	
Parent/carer signature / date	
EYFS Leader approval / date	

Appendix 3 - Staff quick reference: if a Nursery child falls asleep

1. Make safe	Ensure the child is not left sleeping unattended or in an unsafe location
2. Position safely	Keep the face and airway clear; do not cover the head. Remove unnecessary soft items and consider temperature.
3. Supervise	Maintain direct sight and hearing. Carry out and record checks at least every 10 minutes.
4. Contact home	If sleep continues for 10 minutes, normally contact parents/carers to discuss the child's presentation and needs. Contact sooner if unwell or there is concern.
5. Escalate concerns	If the child is difficult to rouse, unresponsive or breathing abnormally, call 999 and follow paediatric first-aid procedures.
6. Record and review	Complete the Safer Sleeping Log. Recurrent sleep triggers discussion with parents and an individual risk assessment/plan.