



Little Firs Day Nursery



14. Caring for Children Under the Age of Three Policy & Procedure.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Nappy Changing, Respectful Intimate Care, Safer Sleep, Nutrition and Mealtime and Use of Dummies in Nursery Policies.

At Little Firs our Nestlings and Discoverers rooms work together as a 0-3-year Unit; this ensures that the children make steady progress as they learn from the practitioners and their peers.

Language develops more rapidly in this mixed age group where the children act as role models for others with fewer language skills. The younger child is surrounded with language interactions of various levels and complexity, which develops their communication and language skills.

Furthermore, new children settle more easily and feel secure as their older peers help guide them to learn what happens during the day, and in the process, they develop their own self-esteem and self-confidence. Less confident children can relax and interact more comfortably with the younger children; this develops their self confidence and self-esteem.

Physical and intellectual development is also well provided for as each child is able to play and learn at their own pace and learn to accept and respect others' abilities and can themselves attempt any experience without embarrassment or a sense of failure.

The older children model appropriate play and problem solving to the younger children while mastering and extending their own development. Older children also develop caring skills, empathy skills and a sense of belonging.

We ensure their health, safety, and well-being through the following:

- Children under the age of three have a separate base room and are cared for in small intimate groups and ensure that the younger children have opportunities to have contact with older children whilst at nursery Implementing the EYFS requirements at all times.
- Allocating each child, a key person who works in partnership with their parent to meet their individual needs and routines.
- Having well qualified staff who understand the needs of babies and toddlers, ensuring that at least half of the staff team caring for children under the age of two have undertaken specific training for working with babies
- Children transfer to the older age group when assessed as appropriate for their age/stage following our agreed transition and settling procedures.
- Staff supervising all babies and toddlers and organising the environment to support both non-mobile and mobile babies and toddlers.
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Environment.

- The environment and equipment and resources are risk assessed and checked daily before the children access the area. This includes checking the stability of cots, low chairs have restraints, pushchairs are intact and working.
- All doors are fitted with viewing panels and door finger-guards to ensure the safety of children and prevent accidents.
- Outdoor shoes are removed when entering the baby room. Staff remind parents and visitors to adhere to this procedure.

- Sterilisers are washed out and cleaned daily.
- Large pieces of furniture are fixed to the walls to stop them falling on top of babies and young children.
- Play and learning is planned in line with children's interests and the EYFS learning and development requirements.

Resources

- Care is taken to ensure that the children do not have access to resources or activities containing small pieces, which may be swallowed or otherwise injure the child.
- The children are closely supervised during all activities.
- Resources and equipment that babies and young children have placed in their mouth are cleaned and/or sterilised after use.
- All resources are frequently cleaned.
- Soft furnishings are frequently cleaned.
- The use of resources that restrict babies' movement such as baby walkers, pushchairs, jumparoos, etc will not be used on a regular basis because these can contribute to delayed physical development. We follow NHS guidelines which recommends that if these resources are to be used then it should be for no more than 20 minutes at a time.

Intimate Care:

We aim to support children's care and welfare in line with their individual needs. All children have contact with familiar, consistent carers to ensure they can grow confidently and feel self-assured. This is established through our key-person system and ensuring all parents understand how this works and who their child's key-person is.

We provide a two-way exchange between parents, key persons and staff so that information is shared about nappy changing and toilet training in a way that suits the parents and meets the child's needs. Parents are engaged in the process of potty training and supported to continue potty training with their child at home.

Procedure:

- Babies'/toddlers' privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding and support needs when changing nappies and toileting
- The children have their nappies changed according to their individual needs and requirements by their key person, wherever possible. Checks are documented with the time and staff initials and information is shared with parents on parentzone.
- When developmentally appropriate, we work closely with parents to sensitively support toilet training in a way that suits the individual needs of the child.
- Potties are washed and disinfected after every use. Changing mats are wiped with anti-bacterial cleanser before and after every nappy change.
- Staff ensure all the equipment is ready before the children are placed on the changing mat.
- No child is ever left unattended during nappy changing time.
- Intimate care times are seen as opportunities for one-to-one interactions.
- Staff do not change nappies whilst pregnant until a risk assessment has been discussed and conducted.
- Cameras, mobile phones and other equipment capable of recording images (Smartwatches, tablets etc) are not permitted in toilet and nappy changing areas.
- Nappy sacks and creams are not left in reach of babies and children.

- We always follow systems in place to ensure there is an adequate supply of clean bedding, towels and spare clothes.

See our separate Nappy Changing Policy and Respectful Intimate Care Policy.

Sleep

- We follow the NHS and Lullaby Trust guidance to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Each baby and toddler have separate nursery bedding which is washed daily, this considers any allergies and irritation to soap powders and any individual needs. For example, if a child prefers to sleep in a sleeping bag, we will ask parents to bring one from home.
- All cot mattresses and sleep mats meet necessary safety standards. We use a firm and flat mattress and waterproof mattress covers.
- Safe sleep guidance is always followed, babies are always laid to sleep on their back, with their feet touching the foot of the cot. Children under two years are not given pillows, cot bumpers or any soft furnishings to prevent risk of suffocation.
- We also share safe sleep advice with parents.
- We ensure that sheets or thin blankets come no higher than the baby's shoulders, to prevent them wriggling under the covers. We make sure the covers are securely tucked in so they cannot slip over the baby's head.
- Only sheets and blankets that are of good condition are used, any loose threads are removed.
- Cots are checked before use to ensure no items are within reach i.e. hanging over or beside the cot (fly nets, cables, cord blinds)
- Babies sleeping outside have cat/fly nets over their prams and we ensure we only use prams that lie flat for sleeping so babies and toddlers are supported.
- Sleeping children are supervised at all times and checks are completed every 10 minutes. This may increase to five minutes for younger babies and/or new babies. Checks are documented with the time and staff initials on the sleep check form and times are shared with parents.

See separate Sleep Policy.

Bottles.

- Feeding times are seen as an opportunity for bonding between practitioner and child and where possible babies are fed by their key person.
- Food and milk for babies is prepared in a separate kitchen in the baby room which is specifically designated for this preparation. Handwashing is completed before preparation is undertaken.
- Bottles of formula milk are only made up as and when the child needs them. Following the Department of Health guidelines, we only use recently boiled water to make formula bottles (left for no longer than 30 minutes to cool). We do not use cooled boiled water that is reheated. They are then cooled to body temperature, which means they should feel warm or cool, but not hot. Bottles are tested with a sterilised thermometer to ensure they are an appropriate temperature for the child to drink safely.
- Bottles are only made following the instructions on the formula. If, during the making process, there are discrepancies, a new bottle will be made.

- All new staff will be shown the procedure, and only when competent and confident will they make them on their own.
- Nursery bottles and teats are thoroughly cleaned with hot soapy water and sterilised after use (they are not washed in the dishwasher). They are replaced as and when required.
- Unwanted or left over contents of bottles are disposed of after two hours.
- Babies are never left propped up or laid in a cot or a pram with bottles as it is both dangerous and inappropriate.
- A designated area is available for mothers who wish to breastfeed their babies or express milk.
- Labelled breast milk is stored in the fridge.

Mealtimes.

- All babies and young children are seated safely in low/highchairs used for feeding. The chairs are fitted with restraints, and these are used at all times. Children are never left unattended when eating or when in low/highchairs. Restraints are removed and washed weekly or as needed
- Mealtimes are seen as social occasions and promote interactions. Staff always sit with babies and young children, interacting, promoting communication and social skills
- Staff supervising mealtimes will have ongoing discussions with parents about the stage their child is at in regard to introducing solid foods, including to understand the textures the child is familiar with. Assumptions will not be made based on age
- Food will be prepared in a suitable way for each child's individual developmental needs, working with parents to help children move on to the next stage at a pace right for the child
- All children are closely supervised whilst eating and if any choking incidents occur paediatric first aid will be administered
- Babies and young children are encouraged to feed themselves with support, as required
- We work together with parents regarding weaning and offer support, as required, following the NHS Best Start in Life Weaning guidance¹.

See separate Nutrition and mealtimes policy for further details.

Use of Dummies at Nursery.

We recognise that a dummy can be a source of comfort for a child who is settling or upset, and that it may often form part of a child's sleep routine. We also recognise that overuse of dummies affects a child's language development as it restricts the mouth movements needed for speech. As babies get older, they need to learn to move their mouths in different ways, to smile, to blow bubbles, to make sounds, to chew food and eventually to talk. As babies move their mouths and experiment with babbling sounds, they are learning to make the quick mouth movements needed for speech.

Comforters and Dummies

- We have a separate Use of dummies in nursery policy to promote communication and language development.
- If dummies are used, they are cleaned and sterilised. This also applies to dummies which have been dropped on the floor.

¹ <https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/weaning/>

- All dummies are stored in separate labelled containers to ensure no cross-contamination occurs.
- Dummies are disposed of if they become damaged.
- Comforters including teddies and blankets are kept safe and provided at sleep times, or if the child becomes unsettled.

Please see our separate Dummy Policy.

Date of Review	This Policy was adopted on	Signed on behalf of the Nursery	Date for review
August 2026.	1st September 2026		August 2027.