



St. Angela's Nursery Class

Safe Sleeping Policy

What is cot death?

Since the introduction of the national 'Back to Sleep' campaign in the early 1990's cot death rates have been dramatically reduced. There are now 70% fewer cot deaths since babies have been placed on their backs to sleep. Cot death is a term used to describe the death of a previously healthy baby, who has died for no apparent reason. It is sometimes referred to as Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI), which is defined as "the sudden death of an infant or young child which is unexpected by history and in which a thorough post mortem examination fails to demonstrate an adequate cause for death". The term 'Sudden Infant Death Syndrome' (SIDS) is sometimes used on death certificates although it is more commonly recorded as "Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy" (SUDI). "Cot death" is still the term understood and used by most people in the UK (Scottish Cot Death Trust).

What happens?

In a typical case an apparently healthy baby is put down to sleep without the slightest suspicion that anything is out of the ordinary, although there are sometimes signs of a slight cold or tummy upset. When next checked the baby is found to have died. Sometimes the time interval is only minutes. Although the term "cot death" is used, babies can be found in car seats, prams, in an adult bed or on a sofa or chair. There is often no sound or sign of a struggle, or of any distress. Whilst the majority of cot deaths occur during the night, they can also happen during the day (Scottish Cot Death Trust).

Which babies are at risk?

All babies are potentially at risk of cot death however, there are certain circumstances where the risks are increased.

Safe sleep procedure/practices

While in nursery:

- All children should be placed on their folding mattress on their back with their feet at the bottom end of the mattress.
- Do not place a hat on a child's head unless it has been recommended for medical reasons for an individual child.
- Ensure bedclothes are firmly tucked in and no higher than just under the baby's shoulders so they can't wriggle down under the covers.
- **Bean bags, bouncy chairs, sleep nests (pods), car seats should never be used - all increase the risks of cot death.**
- Ideal room temperature should be **between 16-20 degrees**. Room temperature **must be recorded** when children sleep.
- To check a baby's temperature, feel the back of their neck or tummy. If these areas feel too warm, remove some bedding. Don't worry if their hands or feet feel cool as this does not indicate their overall body temperature.

Safe Nursery Sleeping Environment:

If a child falls asleep during the nursery setting please ensure you follow the procedures below:

- Keep the room well ventilated.
- **Don't** position the folding mattress below a window or in front of a working radiator.
- 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.
- After each use, the mattress should be cleaned using QUEST+ and dried using a disposable paper towel.
- Use one or more layers of light blankets (**cellular blanket**) (depending on the room temperature). **Remember that one blanket doubled over counts as two blankets.**
- Parents/carers 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.
- This **must** be washed weekly as per infection control guidance or after each sleep if needed.
- Remove children's footwear, outer jumpers/cardigans and bibs before putting down to sleep.
- Staff must sit with sleeping children at all times.
- Staff should check each sleeping child every 10 minutes to check for breathing/any changes and record this on the pro-forma.
- Sleep Safe Risk assessment must be completed.

This policy was written	Nov 2023
Date for Review	Nov 2024