

# SLEEP AND REST POLICY

## Free Kindergarten

QUALITY AREA 2 | ELAA VERSION 1.2

### PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending St John's Kindergarten and appropriate opportunities are provided to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.



### POLICY STATEMENT

#### VALUES

St John's Kindergarten is committed to:

- complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice and guidelines, including recommendations by Red Nose Australia (*refer to Sources*)
- its duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) to all children at St John's Kindergarten, and ensuring that adequate supervision (*refer to Definitions*) is maintained while children are sleeping, resting or relaxing
- consulting with parents/guardians about their child's individual relaxation and sleep requirements/practices, and ensuring practices at the service are responsive to the values and cultural beliefs of each family
- providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending the service, including known areas designated for rest.
- allowing children to be actively involved in decision making, to provide an environment that encourages them to reach their potential
- providing a safe environment where children feel comfortable and safe to play, talk, or relax
- children's safety and wellbeing will be fostered through responsive relationships, engaging experiences and a safe and healthy environment.

#### SCOPE

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children, and others attending the programs and activities of St John's Kindergarten.

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teacher, educators and all other staff	Parents/ guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
R indicates legislation requirement, and should not be deleted					
Ensuring that policies and procedures are in place for managing sleep and rest for children (Regulation 168) and take reasonable steps to ensure those policies and procedures are followed (Regulation 170)	R				
Taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep and rest needs of children at St John's Kindergarten are met, with regard to the age of children, developmental stages and individual needs (Regulation 84A)	R	R	√		√
Conducting a sleep and rest risk assessment at least once every 12 months, and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest (Regulation 84C (a)(b)) see Attachment 1.	R	R	√		
Ensuring the risk assessment considers the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number (attendance), ages, and developmental</li> </ul>	R	√	√		√

<p>stages of the children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the sleep and rest needs of children (including health care needs, cultural preferences, individual needs and requests from families about a child's sleep and rest)</li> <li>• the suitability of staffing arrangements to adequately supervise and monitor children during sleep and rest periods</li> <li>• the level of knowledge and training of staff supervising children during sleep and rest periods</li> <li>• the location of sleep and rest areas</li> <li>• the safety and suitability of any beds and bedding equipment, having regard to the ages and developmental stages of the children who will use the cots, bed and bedding equipment</li> <li>• any potential hazards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o in sleep and rest areas</li> <li>o on a child during sleep and rest periods</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the physical safety and</li> </ul>					
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suitability of sleep and rest environments (including temperature, lighting and ventilation) <i>(Regulations 84C) (refer to Sources)</i>					
Ensuring all risk assessments conducted are recorded and stored <i>(Regulation 84C (4))</i>	<b>R</b>	√	√		√
Undertaking a risk assessment to mitigate hazardous manual handling <i>(refer to Definitions)</i> , such as patting and rocking children to sleep for long periods of time	<b>R</b>	√	√		√
Ensuring all educators, staff and volunteers comply with the recommendations of Red Nose Australia in relation to safe sleeping practices for children <i>(refer to Sources)</i>	<b>R</b>	√	√		√
Ensuring educators receive information and induction training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time	<b>R</b>	√			
Ensuring the premise, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair <i>(Regulation 103 and National Law:</i>	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	√	√	√

<p><i>Section 167)</i> including ensuring all equipment used meets any relevant Australian Standards and other product safety standards, such as Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) guidelines (<i>Refer to Sources</i>).</p>					
Ensuring the beds, bedding and bedding equipment being used for sleep and rest are safe and appropriate for the ages and developmental stages of children who will use them	R	R	√		√
Ensuring that rooms used for sleep and relaxation are well ventilated; have adequate natural light; and are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children ( <i>Regulation 110</i> )	R	√	√		√
Ensuring sleep and rest environments are free from cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco smoke ( <i>Regulation 82</i> )	R	√	√		√
Ensuring that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision	R	R			
Ensuring adequate supervision of children sleeping and resting, being within sight and hearing distance and are monitoring	R	R	√		√

through visual checks of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sleeping position</li> <li>• skin and lip colour</li> <li>• breathing</li> <li>• body temperature</li> <li>• head position</li> <li>• airway</li> <li>• head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered</li> </ul>					
Developing relaxation and sleep practices that are responsive to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the individual needs of children at the service</li> <li>• parenting beliefs, values, practices and requirements</li> <li>• the length of time each child spends at the service</li> <li>• circumstance or events occurring at a child's home</li> <li>• consistency of practice between home and the service</li> <li>• a child's general health and wellbeing</li> <li>• the physical environment, including lighting, airflow and noise levels</li> </ul>	R	√	√		√
Conducting regular safety checks of equipment used for sleeping/resting, such as mattresses ( <a href="#">Regulation 103 and</a>	R	R	√		√

<i>National Law: Section 167)</i>					
Removing any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment and informing the approved provider, as soon as is practicable	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	√		√
Ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are resting or sleeping	<b>R</b>	<b>R</b>	√		√
Ensuring that artificial heating, such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used to provide warmth		√	√		√
Ensuring children's clothing is appropriate during sleep times and does not have any items that are loose, could get tangled and restrict breathing (including but not limited to bibs and jewellery)		√	√	√	√
Ensuring that each child has their own bed linen, and that the <i>Hygiene Policy</i> and procedures are implemented for the cleaning and storage of mattresses and linen		√	√		√
Ensuring that there is adequate space to store bedding in a hygienic manner ( <i>refer to Hygiene Policy</i> )	<b>R</b>	√	√		√
Ensuring compliance with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety	<b>R</b>	√	√		√

compliance kit (refer to Sources),					
Regularly reviewing practices to ensure compliance with the recommendations of Red Nose Australia in relation to safe sleeping practices for children (refer to Sources)	<b>R</b>	√	√	√	√
Providing information and training to ensure staff are kept informed of changing practices in relation to safe sleep practices for children	√	√			
Providing information to families about the service's relaxation and sleep practices	√	√	√		√
Ensuring parents/guardians are consulted about appropriate relaxation and sleep practices for their child	√	√	√	√	√
Educating families about evidence-based safe sleeping practices	√	√	√	√	√
Assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances for alternative practices where family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices, seek written support from a medical practitioner and	<b>R</b>	√	√	√	√



develop a risk management plan					
Implementing the documented sleep regime and risk management strategies where in exceptional circumstances family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices	<b>R</b>	✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring the educational program provides opportunities for each child to sleep, rest or engage in appropriate quiet play activities, as required	<b>R</b>	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that resting and sleeping practices are not used as a behaviour guidance strategy <i>(refer to Interactions with Children Policy)</i>		✓	✓		✓
Providing a range of opportunities for relaxation throughout the day		✓	✓		✓
Supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when resting or sleeping		✓	✓		✓
Documenting and communicating children's rest and sleep times to co-workers during shift changes		✓	✓		✓
Developing communication strategies to inform parents/guardians about their child's rest and sleep patterns, including times and length of sleep		✓	✓	✓	✓

Encouraging children's independence and assisting children with dressing as needed.		✓	✓		✓
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## BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATION



### BACKGROUND

*The Education and Care Services National Regulations* requires approved providers to ensure their services have policies and procedures in place for children's sleep and rest.

*The Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) and the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF) include a focus on social, emotional, spiritual and physical wellbeing and health. Development Outcome 3 in both framework documents refers to a child's ability to take increasing responsibility for their own wellbeing. One of the indicators for this capacity is that children "recognise and communicate their bodily needs (for example thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, physical activity)". The EYLF suggests that to promote this, educators should:

- consider the pace of the day within the context of the community
- provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day, and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation.

Holistic approaches recognise the importance of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. Educators who provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day support children's individual requirements for health, nutrition, sleep, rest and relaxation.

Employers have a responsibility under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* to provide a safe and healthy working environment. This duty extends to others present in the workplace, including children and volunteers. Providing a safe sleeping environment for children at the service includes complying with current Australian/New Zealand standards in relation to equipment, such as mattresses (*refer to Sources*).

### LEGISLATION AND STANDARDS

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Australian Consumer Law and Fair-Trading Act 2012
- Australian Consumer Law and Fair-Trading Regulations 2012
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010)
- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for day nursery, hospital and institutional use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2130:1998)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)



## DEFINITIONS

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable complaints, Serious incidents, Duty of care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

**Hazardous Manual Handling:** Manual handling is work where you have to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, move, hold or restrain something. It's hazardous manual handling if it involves:

- repeated, sustained or high force
- sustained awkward posture
- repetitive movements
- exposure to sustained vibration
- handling people or animals
- loads that are unstable, unbalanced or hard to hold.

**Red Nose Australia** (formerly SIDS and Kids): Recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children (*refer to Sources*)

**Relaxation:** Relaxation or other activity for bringing about a feeling of calm in your body and mind

**Rest:** A period of inactivity, solitude, calmness or tranquillity, and can include a child being in a state of sleep.

**SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome):** The sudden and unexpected death of an infant under one year of age with an onset of a fatal episode occurring during sleep, that remains unexplained after a thorough investigation, including performance of a complete autopsy and review of the circumstances of death and the clinical history.

**Sudden and Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI):** A broad term used to describe the sudden and unexpected death of a baby for which the cause is not immediately obvious.



## SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

### SOURCES

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, Safe sleep and rest practices: [www.acecqa.gov.au/resources](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources)
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (2016), Consumer product safety – a guide for businesses & legal practitioners: [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au)
- Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF): [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- Current Australian/New Zealand Standards for cots is available on the SAI Global website at: [www.saiglobal.com](http://www.saiglobal.com)
- Red Nose Australia: [www.rednose.org.au](http://www.rednose.org.au)
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF): [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)
- WorkSafe Victoria, Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit: [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, Sleep and rest risk assessment Template - [Sleep Rest Risk Assessment Template](#)
- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, Risk Assessment and Management Tool - [www.acecqa.gov.au/media/32166](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/media/32166)
- Kids Safe Australia - [www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)
- Compliance code: Hazardous manual handling - <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/compliance-code-hazardous-manual-handling>
- Hazardous manual handling risk assessment and control tool – [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au)

## RELATED POLICIES

- Administration of First Aid
- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Emergency and Evacuation
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Staffing
- Supervision of Children



## EVALUATION

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the policy have been achieved, the approved provider will:

- regularly seek feedback from everyone affected by the policy regarding its effectiveness
- monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to this policy
- keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research, policy and best practice
- revise the policy and procedures as part of the service's policy review cycle, or as required
- notifying all stakeholders affected by this policy at least 14 days before making any significant changes to this policy or its procedures, unless a lesser period is necessary due to risk (Regulation 172 (2)).



## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Risk Assessment for Sleep and Rest
- Attachment 2: Relaxation and Rest Practices



## AUTHORISATION

This policy was adopted by the approved provider of St Johns Kindergarten on March 2025

**REVIEW DATE:** March 2026

## Risk Assessment for Sleep and Rest

**Service Name:** St John's Kindergarten

**Date of Assessment:** [Date]

**Assessor:** Bec Vernal

**Review Date:** [Date]

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### Risk Identification and Assessment

#### 1. Number, Ages, and Developmental Stages of Children

- Children aged 3–5 years attending the kindergarten.
- Developmental stages vary; some children no longer nap, while others require short rest periods.
- Individual sleep needs are assessed during enrolment and updated as needed.

#### 2. Sleep and Rest Needs of Children

- Family preferences and individual needs are considered, including cultural and health requirements.
- Information regarding a child's usual sleep/rest routine is gathered upon enrolment.
- Children requiring a nap are provided with a quiet, comfortable space.
- Alternative quiet activities are available for children who do not sleep.

#### 3. Staffing Arrangements for Supervision

- Educators are rostered to ensure adequate supervision of all children during rest periods.
- Supervision ratios meet or exceed regulatory requirements.
- At least one educator remains in close proximity to the rest area at all times.

#### 4. Staff Knowledge and Training

- Educators are trained in safe sleep/rest practices and understand individual needs.
- Staff are knowledgeable in responding to health-related sleep concerns, including allergies and respiratory conditions.
- First aid and CPR-certified staff are always available during rest periods.

#### 5. Location and Arrangement of Sleep and Rest Areas

- Sleep and rest areas are located within the main learning space or designated quiet room.
- Floor mattresses are arranged to allow easy access and visibility for supervision.
- Clear pathways are maintained to ensure quick educator response if needed.

#### 6. Safety and Suitability of Beds, and Bedding

- All sleeping equipment complies with Australian Safety Standards.
- Bedding is age-appropriate, well-maintained, and cleaned regularly.
- Children use individual bedding that is washed at the service to maintain hygiene.

#### 7. Potential Hazards in Sleep and Rest Areas

- Tripping hazards (e.g., cords, loose rugs) are identified and removed.
- Beds are spaced to prevent entrapment and allow movement.
- Temperature is monitored to ensure comfort (not too hot or cold).
- Lighting and ventilation are adjusted to maintain a safe, calming environment.

## 8. Potential Hazards During Sleep and Rest Periods

- Regular checks are conducted to monitor children's well-being.
- Educators ensure children do not cover their faces with blankets.
- Children with additional health needs (e.g., asthma, allergies) have risk minimisation plans in place.

### Control Measures and Actions

Identified Risk	Control Measures	Responsible Person
Inadequate supervision	Maintain appropriate staff ratios; assign designated educators to supervise	Nominated Supervisor, Educators
Unsafe bedding/equipment	Ensure all equipment meets safety standards and is regularly checked	Educators
Temperature discomfort	Monitor and adjust ventilation, heating, and cooling	Educators
Cultural needs not met	Consult families about preferences and adapt practices accordingly	Educators, Nominated Supervisor
Health-related concerns	Maintain individual medical action plans, have first aiders present	Educators, First Aid Officers

### Monitoring and Review

- Daily visual checks of the sleep area.
- Regular review of sleep/rest procedures with staff and families.
- Annual policy review to align with updated regulations and best practices.
- Incident reporting system in place for any sleep/rest-related concerns.

**Approved by:** Bec Vernall

**Date:** {Date}

### Relaxation and Rest Practices for 3-5 Year-Olds

Most children aged 3-5 no longer require sleep during the day but benefit from structured rest and relaxation. These practices ensure a calm, inclusive, and supportive environment while catering to individual needs.

#### 1. Creating a Relaxing Environment

- **Dim Lighting & Calming Sounds:** Use soft lighting and gentle music or nature sounds to signal quiet time.
- **Comfortable Rest Spaces:** Provide mats, cushions, or soft rugs where children can rest comfortably.
- **Temperature & Ventilation:** Ensure the room is well-ventilated and at a comfortable temperature.

#### 2. Flexible Resting Options

- **Quiet Activities for Non-Sleepers:** Children can engage in quiet activities like looking at books, drawing, or mindfulness colouring.
- **Individualised Rest Plans:** Families' preferences and children's needs are considered, with a space provided for those who still require sleep.

#### 3. Guided Relaxation & Mindfulness

- **Deep Breathing Exercises:** Educators lead simple breathing activities (e.g., "smell the flower, blow out the candle") to promote relaxation.
- **Mindfulness Stories:** Playing or reading short guided relaxation stories helps calm children's minds.
- **Gentle Yoga or Stretching:** Simple movements help children unwind and transition into rest time.
- **Projector of stories and mindfulness:** Stories are projected onto the ceiling for relaxation purposes and to engage in mindfulness exercises.

#### 4. Supporting Children's Wellbeing During Rest

- **Encouraging Self-Regulation:** Children learn to recognize their own need for rest and choose an activity that supports them.
- **Soft Transition Out of Rest Time:** Educators gradually increase engagement after rest, avoiding sudden changes in activity.
- **Reassurance & Comfort:** Educators offer calm reassurance for children who find it difficult to settle.