Outdoor Sleeping at Butterflies

A peaceful rest, surrounded by nature

At Butterflies, nature is our playground—and it can be a lovely place to rest, too. We offer children the opportunity to nap in our sheltered outdoor sleeping area, enjoying fresh air and the gentle sounds of the garden.

After a busy morning of play and exploration, this calm setting gives children time to relax and recharge. Some children settle particularly well outdoors, and we follow each child's individual needs and familiar sleep routines.

Comfort and care come first

Children remain in sight and are closely supervised throughout their sleep. We regularly check their comfort and warmth, using suitable bedding and well-fitting sleep bags appropriate to each child and the conditions.

We assess the weather and the sleeping area before every outdoor nap, taking account of temperature, wind and damp conditions. At Butterflies, we do not offer outdoor sleeping below 10°C, and indoor rest is available whenever conditions are unsuitable or a child would be more comfortable inside.

We work closely with parents, agreeing outdoor sleeping arrangements in advance and discussing any preferences or concerns.

Whether resting indoors or outside, our aim is the same: for every child to feel safe, comfortable and cared for.

Our Safer Sleeping Inside and Outside Policy follows.

Safer Sleeping Inside and Outside Policy for Butterflies Toddles

At Butterflies Toddles, we believe that it is vital for children to get the sleep they need to develop their cognitive, emotional and physical skills. We recognise that each child's sleep routine will be unique and we will work closely with parents/carers to ensure there is consistency between home and our setting.

Parents/carers will be asked to provide details of their children's routines before their first day, including the usual duration and time(s) of their nap(s), as well as settling techniques used at home. If there are any changes to the child's routine, this should be communicated to the setting straight away. Parents/carers will be notified of their child's sleep times at the end of each session, where appropriate.

We follow NHS guidance on safer sleep and have thorough risk assessments in place regarding sleep and nap times. Our risk assessments include necessary precautions to help minimise the risks associated with SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Our setting is smoke-free and vape-free, so babies and children will not be exposed to either substance at any time, including while sleeping.

At Butterflies Toddles we follow parents' wishes on how long their child should sleep. If a parent wishes their child to be woken after a certain duration, this will be as gentle as possible.

Safer Sleeping Inside

At Butterflies Toddles, we give careful thought to the safest location for sleep, considering the bed/cot itself, room temperature, potential hazards that need to be out of reach and how we will monitor each child.

As per the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS), childcare settings must ensure that babies are kept safe, which includes following NHS guidelines on SIDS. Our Sleep Policy and Procedures take into account NHS guidance from their publication, 'Reduce the Risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)', as well as advice from The Lullaby Trust website.

Safer sleep guidance applies to all babies under 12 months of age (or until 12 months from their due date for premature babies). At Butterflies we take children from 12 months old.

Sleeping babies will have their own clear, flat sleep space, without toys, bumpers, cushions, sleep positioners, wedges or loose bedding. Nests, hammocks and beanbags are also discouraged for sleep, as they can create potential choking hazards. This follows recommendations from The Lullaby Trust, who are experts on the prevention of SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome) and are mentioned in NHS guidance.

All babies will sleep in age-appropriate cots or beds. All mattresses will be flat, firm, waterproof and kept in good condition.

Cots and beds are located in a suitable, safe position. Any strangulation hazards, such as blind cords and plastic bags, will also be kept out of reach of children. Babies will not be allowed to sleep on sofas or chairs, even if an adult is present. Children who are known to climb out of cots may be given a sleeping mat instead.

It is recommended that babies are not left sleeping in an inclined or seated position. If a child falls asleep during travel, they will be reclined where possible and moved to a more suitable cot or bed immediately on return to the setting. If babies fall asleep within the setting while seated they will be moved to lie down on a clear, flat sleep surface.

Babies will be laid down on their backs for naptimes, with their feet at the bottom of the cot, in line with NHS guidance. Once a baby is old enough to roll over, they will be allowed to roll onto their side or stomach while sleeping and will not be returned to laying on their backs.

A recommended room temperature of between 16 and 20 degrees is maintained wherever possible, avoiding heat sources, direct sunlight and draughts. Thermometers will be used to monitor room temperature.

Age-appropriate, well-fitting sleeping bags or lightweight sheets may be used for babies when necessary. Any sheets will be tucked in securely, no higher than their shoulders. Precautions will be taken to ensure babies and children do not overheat. They will not sleep in outdoor coats or bulky clothing, be given hot water bottles/electric blankets or have heaters close by during naptimes. Children will not have hats, slings or muslins covering their heads/faces while asleep. Where necessary, their body temperature will be checked using a hand on their chest or upper back.

All children and babies are monitored regularly whilst asleep and are in sight and/or hearing at all times. They are also regularly checked on individually, in person, while sleeping. Every 5-10 minutes this is recorded in a sleep schedule which is signed by the staff member. We also use a baby monitor as an additional aid; it never replaces direct supervision and physical checks.

After each sleep, mattresses will be wiped down and the bedding changed. Any pets within the setting will be kept away from children's beds, cots and bedding at all times.

In addition to following safer sleep procedures in our setting, we also aim to equip families with the information they need to make informed decisions regarding their child's sleep procedures at home. Should parents'/carers' wishes go against safer protocol, we will discuss this on a case-by-case basis.

All staff know to call 999 if a child will not wake up, stops or has difficulty breathing, appears overly confused or has a seizure.

Safer Sleeping Outside

Children aged one to three may sleep in our purpose-built outdoor sleep area. The area is covered, sheltered, secure and well ventilated. Outdoor sleep is offered only when it is safe and comfortable for the individual child. A suitable indoor sleep space remains available at all times.

Before each sleep period, staff complete and record a dynamic risk assessment. This includes the weather and temperature, wind, rain, direct sunlight, air quality, wet or slippery surfaces, insects or animals, nearby activities, safe access and emergency evacuation. Outdoor sleep will not take place during unsafe or extreme conditions, and children will be moved indoors promptly if conditions change. At Butterflies, outdoor sleeping will not take place when the temperature in the sheltered sleep area is below 10°C. Staff check the temperature before each sleep period and monitor it throughout. Children will be moved indoors if the temperature falls below 10°C, or sooner if wind, damp or other conditions make outdoor sleep unsuitable, or a child is not comfortably warm.

Each child has an individual low-level bed or sleep mat with a firm, flat, waterproof surface in good condition. The sleep space is kept clear. Children do not routinely sleep in buggies, car seats, hanging chairs, hammocks, beanbags or other inclined or enclosed products. Beds are spaced so staff can reach and observe every child easily.

Children are placed on their backs to sleep. A child who can roll independently may find their own sleeping position and will not be repeatedly repositioned. Their face and head must remain uncovered and their

airway clear. Bibs, necklaces, dummy clips, hoods, hats and scarves are removed before sleep.

Staff choose clothing and bedding for the conditions and the individual child. A well-fitting sleep bag or breathable sheet or blanket may be used. In cooler weather, appropriate breathable layers may be added and tucked securely no higher than the shoulders. Duvets, pillows, cot bumpers, weighted blankets, hot-water bottles and electric blankets are not used. Wet or damp clothing and bedding are changed immediately. Staff check the child's chest or upper back for warmth and take care to prevent both chilling and overheating.

A named member of staff remains responsible for the sleeping children, who stay within sight and/or hearing at all times. Each child is checked directly at least every five to ten minutes, or more frequently where their needs or the conditions require it. Staff record the child's position, breathing, skin colour, temperature and general comfort. Any monitor is an additional aid and does not replace direct observation or physical checks.

Parents and carers are told about our outdoor sleeping arrangements and share relevant information about their child's routine, health and comfort. Sleep start and finish times and the checks made are recorded. Any child who does not settle, becomes uncomfortable or appears unwell is brought indoors and cared for in line with our illness and emergency procedures.

After each sleep, beds and waterproof surfaces are cleaned and bedding is changed or stored separately for the named child. The sleep area and equipment are checked regularly and any damaged item is removed from use.

Settling Children to Sleep

At Butterflies Toddles, we recognise that each child's routine is unique and we will work closely with parents/carers to ensure there is consistency between home and the setting, while still maintaining safe practices and meeting our duty of care.

For children who require dummies and/or comforters, these should be provided by parents/carers and they will be stored with the child's personal belongings. If a dummy falls out of a child's mouth while sleeping, it will not be put back unless the child wakes. Dummies must not have cords if being used by sleeping babies, as these can pose a strangulation risk.

All children will either self-settle or be settled by us, following parents'/carers' wishes wherever possible. We will also take into account safety requirements at all times, as well as the wellbeing and needs of other children in our care.

Drinks are not permitted in children's cots, as these can present a choking hazard. We will discuss the dangers of prop feeding with parents/carers where required.

Rest Time

Children who are not sleeping will be encouraged to engage in rest or quiet time. This allows toddlers and older children to recover their energy. The activities during this time could include circle time, storytime or small group games.