



## SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME AND SAFE AND COMFORTABLE SLEEP/REST POLICY

### **Policy Statement:**

Sleeping infants and young children's safety is a special responsibility for those who care for other people's children. It is therefore important for childcare workers to ensure that children in their care sleep safely at all times and that service policies and procedures reflect evidence based research.

### **Aims:**

- To educate staff in safe sleeping practices.
- To comply with guidelines set out by Sids and Kids.
- To prevent the death of a child at St Andrew's Little Saints.

### **Rationale:**

SIDS is short for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and has previously been known as 'Cot Death'. It means the sudden and unexpected death of a baby or young child from no known cause. SIDS is the most common cause of death in babies between one month and one year of age. There are a variety of ways to reduce the risks of fatal sleeping accidents.

### **Strategies/Practices/Procedures:**

#### **To reduce the risk of SIDS**

- Put babies on their back to sleep, from birth, not on the tummy or side. Babies under one year of age, wherever they sleep, should be placed on their back to sleep, unless otherwise directed in writing by the child's medical practitioner.
- Babies should sleep with their faces uncovered. Babies should be placed at the bottom of the cot to prevent them from wriggling down under bedclothes. No quilts, doonas, cot bumpers or lambs wool should be used. Light bedding, such as thermal blankets, should be firmly tucked in at the bottom to prevent them covering the baby's head during sleep. A safe infant sleeping bag with fitted neck and armholes is a good alternative for bedding.
- Keep babies smoke free. Infants and young children should not be exposed to cigarette smoke while attending St Andrew's Little Saints.

#### **To prevent serious sleeping accidents:**

Staff at St Andrew's Little Saints should use:

1. A safe cot. Each child at St Andrew's Little Saints should sleep in a separate safe, strong cot or portable cot that meets the Australian Standard 2172 for cots.

Recreated from original policy: Kristy Barbour & Shon Whyte, 27.6.06

Created by: Ola Goryl

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2. A safe mattress. The mattress used in the cot should be firm, clean, well fitting and in good condition. If a portable cot is used, it should meet Australian Standard 2195 and only the mattress that is supplied with the cot should be used. The mattress and the bedding should be regularly cleaned.
3. Safe Bedding. No pillows, cot bumpers, quilts, doonas, duvets, lambskins or soft toys should be used in the cot as they may cover baby's face and make breathing difficult. If babies are wrapped or swaddled, only cotton or muslin wraps should be used and the baby's head should not be covered.
4. Staff will check on babies every ten minutes while they are sleeping and must sign the sleep chart. Staff must either observe breathing (chest rising), baby moving, or hear breathing.
5. A safe place to sleep. The following should not be used at St Andrew's Little Saints.
  - ✓ An unsupervised adult bed. This can be unsafe for babies and toddlers and increases the risk of sleeping accidents if the infant gets caught in between adult bedding or pillows, trapped between the wall and the bed or falls out of the bed.
  - ✓ Soft sleeping places where a toddler or baby's face may become covered such as a pillow, a tri-pillow, waterbed or beanbag.
  - ✓ Dangling cords or string including mobiles should be moved out of the infants reach, as these may get caught around their neck.
  - ✓ Heaters and electrical appliances should be kept well away from the cot to avoid the risk of overheating, burns or electrocution. Electric blankets should not be used.
  - ✓ Electric blankets, hot water bottles or wheat bags for babies' young children should not be used. A baby who becomes too hot has an increased risk of SIDS.
  - ✓ Restraints that are not done up. When baby is in pram, stroller or bouncer or any other baby/toddler equipment the restraints should be done up correctly, it can be dangerous if baby becomes tangled in loose restraints.

Over 2s

- When placing beds out for sleep/rest time, beds must be far apart from each other to ensure the linen is not touching and enough space for staff to walk and sit around each bed.
- The children are not to be placed in one small space in the room, rather they should be spread out across the whole room.

Research shows that if children are sleep deprived many things can be effected such as:

- behaviour – symptoms similar to ADHD
- emotion
- concentration
- creativity
- problem solving
- motor coordination
- health
- weight
- learning.

<b>Average Sleep Needs by Age</b>	
Newborn to 2 months old	12 - 18 hrs
3 months to 1 year old	14 - 15 hrs
1 to 3 years old	12 - 14 hrs
3 to 5 years old	11 - 13 hrs
5 to 12 years old	10 - 11 hrs
12 to 18 years old	8.5 - 10 hrs
Adults (18+)	7.5 - 9 hrs

Due to the detrimental effects that sleep deprivation can have on young children, the following will be observed by staff and parents.

- The first stage of sleep (light sleep) last between 10 and 25 minutes therefore children will be allowed to sleep at least half an hour. If children are visibly tired, staff will not keep children awake and will allow them to have a short half hour nap before waking them.
- We respect that if some children sleep during the day, it may be difficult for them to fall asleep at night time. For this reason, upon parental request we will endeavour to keep children awake, however should they display signs of being very tired, they will be allowed to have a sleep and staff will attempt to wake the child after half an hour.
- All sleeping patterns will be recorded daily for families.

### **Measuring Tools:**

Sleep check chart

Safe Sleeping Checklist

### **Sources:**

Sids and Kids Child Care Kit: Safe Sleeping

Australian Centre for Education in sleep

How much sleep do you need? Retrieved from Helpguide.org. Authors: Melinda Smith, M.A., Lawrence Robinson, and Robert Segal, M.A. Last updated: October 2014

National Sleep Foundation

Sleep Deprivation, Psychosis & Mental Efficiency (Stanley Coren PhD)

Department of Education & Early Childhood Development. Victorian Government

Safe sleeping guidelines and SIDS ([www.bubhub.com.au](http://www.bubhub.com.au))

### **Links to Other Policies:**

Maintenance of Building and Equipment Policy