

ECH002 – SLEEP AND REST FOR CHILDREN POLICY & PROCEDURES

POLICY CONTEXT

Willunga Waldorf School is a co-educational and inclusive school. The school's mission is to provide Steiner education from early childhood to year 12, based on the work of Rudolf Steiner. This education is driven by a deep understanding and respect for the developing and unfolding human being.

The School seeks to be a safe, just, compassionate, responsive and inclusive place for all.

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. Our Sleep and Rest Policy and Procedures fosters a shared understanding between staff and families about our management of children's needs for sleep and rest while attending WWS Kindergarten and Reception.

The School's early childhood program provides education and care to children aged 4-6. We follow the ACECQA guidelines as set out in the fact sheet:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices>

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Sleep and Rest Policy aims to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of children attending WWS early childhood programs (Kindergarten and Reception) and ensure that appropriate opportunities are provided to meet each child's need for sleep, rest, and relaxation.

It sets out principles and procedures, as well as the roles and responsibilities of Early Childhood Educators and families.

This policy applies to all children and families enrolled and staff working in the early childhood programs at Willunga Waldorf School (WWS).

DEFINITIONS

ACECQA – Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority

The independent national authority that works with all regulatory authorities to administer the National Quality Framework, including providing guidance, resources and services to support the sector to improve outcomes for children. ([acecqa.gov.au](https://www.acecqa.gov.au))

Early Childhood Programs

At WWS, this includes the Kindergarten and Reception years.

Approved Provider

This is the Willunga Waldorf School (WWS).

Nominated Supervisor

At WWS, this role is held by the Head of School.

Responsible Person

At WWS, this role is held by the Early Childhood Faculty Leader.

Educator

Throughout this document, the term 'Educator' refers to all early childhood teachers and assistants.

Relaxation

Relaxation or other activity brings about a feeling of calm in your body and mind.

Rest

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

Duty of Care

In education and care contexts, 'duty of care' is a common law term that refers to responsibility of staff to provide children and young people with an adequate level of protection against harm and all reasonably foreseeable risk of injury. (Protective Practices for Staff in their Interactions with Children and Young People)

POLICY STATEMENT

Rest and relaxation are important aspects of the pedagogy of the Willunga Waldorf School early childhood programs, a pedagogy that aims to support the wellbeing of each child through daily rhythms of activity and rest.

PRINCIPLES THAT INFORM THIS POLICY

- Our approach to supporting and promoting children's health and physical activity, including safe sleep and nutrition, is informed by current ACECQA guidelines and Steiner pedagogical principles.
- Our service's safe sleep and rest procedures and practices follow Red Nose guidelines, the recognised national authority in this area.
- Responsive sleep and rest strategies are important factors in ensuring that children feel secure and safe at our service.
- Educators and management have a shared duty of care to ensure children are provided with a high level of safety when sleeping and resting. This includes adequate lighting to enable effective supervision by staff and ventilation for children and taking every reasonable precaution to protect children from harm, risk of harm, and hazards.
- Children sleeping and resting will always be adequately supervised so that educators can monitor children's safety and wellbeing. Educators will be able to visually check the child's sleeping position, breathing and the colour of the child's lips and skin, body temperature, head position, airway and the child's head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered.
- Child safety is our priority. If families make requests that are contrary to the child's safety, educators can confidently refer to this *Sleep and Rest for Children policy* and associated procedures.
- Opportunities will be provided to meet each child's sleep, rest and relaxation needs and ensure children feel safe and secure.
- We will consult with families about their child's sleep and rest routine at home and carry this out in our early childhood classes where it is possible and safe to do so.

PROCEDURES

1. STAFFING

- We maintain a 1:11 staff-to-child ratio at all times.
- Steiner early childhood pedagogy places a high value on staff being role models for imitation. At rest time, staff lie down and “rest” with the children. In the mixed-age classes Jacaranda and Hollyhock, one staff member is in the main room with the Reception children, and another is in the sunroom with the Kindergarten children.
- If a child falls asleep, a staff member will always stay within hearing distance of the sleeping child and conduct visual checks at ten-minute intervals. These checks are recorded on the template stored in each classroom.

2. BEDDING

- The School supplies futon-style floor mattresses with cotton covers; covers are washed every term by each child’s family or more frequently as needed.
- Waterproof mattress covers are provided for those children likely to fall asleep or wet the bed.
- Mattresses are aired as needed.
- Bedding is labelled for each child.
- Bedding is stored separately in an individual bag or wooden “pigeonhole”.

3. SLEEPING ENVIRONMENTS

- Group rest time is included in the daily rhythm/routine, after lunch at approximately 1.30 pm- 2.00 pm each day. Educators “rest” with the children as role models for imitation.
- All bedding is on the floor, and the children sleep/rest on their bedding. Pillows are included in their bedding pack as the children are all aged over 4 once they begin attending WWS Kindergarten/Reception.
- No bassinets are used in any capacity within the WWS early childhood programs.
- The room is darkened by turning off the lights and closing the blinds. Windows are left open for ventilation and adequate light is maintained within the room for supervision. A split-system air conditioner provides temperature control when needed.
- All blind cords are secured to the wall.
- An atmosphere of quiet is created, during which children may engage in quiet activities, and the teacher may sing or play the lyre or glockenspiel prior to quiet time beginning.

4. HEALTH, SAFETY AND SUPERVISION

- A Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment is undertaken annually by the ECH Faculty Leader, in collaboration with educators, and any necessary changes are made to policy and procedures as a result of this risk assessment within a reasonable timeframe according to the risk or hazard posed.
- The children rest in assigned places. The teacher will decide who would benefit from being close to an educator and which children would rest better not being next to each other. Children feel safer if they are in the same resting place each day.
- Any hooded jumpers or jackets, necklaces or scarves are removed prior to rest time.
- Children may have a comforter or doll with them during rest time as they are aged older than 4 once they begin attending WWS Kindergarten or Reception.
- Educators closely observe the children.



- If a child falls asleep, educators will ensure the child is within reasonable hearing distance via open doors or windows and undertake 10-minute visual checks which are recorded on the template.
- Open communication between families and educator is an essential element of practice. Upon transition into Kindergarten or Reception, families are invited to share requests regarding sleep and rest and are given information about sleep and rest practices at WWS. If families have any requests that contravene the guidance provided, this policy will serve as a clarifying tool. If families have requested that their child not fall asleep at school or sleep for only a certain amount of time, the child will be woken up gently.
- If a child has fallen asleep, it will be written in the sign-in book next to the child's name, including the time they slept.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Approved Provider	• Ensure that obligations under the <i>Education and Care Services National Law</i> and <i>National Regulations</i> are met. • Ensure that a Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment is undertaken and documented annually by the ECH Faculty Leader in collaboration with educators to ensure adequate supervision and monitoring of children during periods of sleep and rest, including the method and frequency of checking children's safety, health and wellbeing. • Ensure educators receive information and induction training to fulfil their roles effectively, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies and procedures, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time. • Take reasonable steps to ensure that nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers follow the policy and procedures. • Ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for in the School's early childhood programs are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children. • Ensure the premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and in good repair. • Ensure that each child has access to sufficient furniture, materials and developmentally appropriate equipment suitable for the education and care of that child. • Ensure that the indoor spaces used by children are well-ventilated, have adequate natural light, and are maintained at a temperature that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children. • Ensure sleep and rest environments are free from cigarette or tobacco smoke and vaping odours. • Ensure children are supervised during periods of sleep and rest. This should include ensuring clear procedures and processes are in place for regular physical bed-side checks of children and recording all checks at the time they occur. • Ensure that the premises are designed to facilitate supervision. • Ensure copies of this policy and procedures are readily



	accessible to nominated supervisors, educators, staff and volunteers and available for inspection.
Nominated Supervisor	• Ensure the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for in the School's early childhood programs are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children. • Ensure educators understand and follow the School's policies and procedures. • Ensure educators understand their legal roles in the implementation of the policies and procedures. • Ensure sleeping spaces have sufficient light to allow supervision. • Ensure sleep practices, environments and equipment continue to be safe and in line with best practice guidelines. • Ensure children are supervised during periods of sleep and rest. This should include ensuring clear procedures are in place for checks of children and documenting of all safety checks at the time they occur.
Educators	• Have a good understanding of this policy and associated procedures and embed practices that support safe sleep into everyday practice. • Identify and suggest any potential improvements to service procedures and practice. • Identify and remove potential hazards from sleep environments. • Document children's sleep and rest needs and provide information to families about their child's sleep and rest patterns. • Ensure the needs for sleep and rest of all children being educated and cared for within the School's early childhood programs are met, considering the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children. • Maintain supervision of sleeping and resting children, including regular physical bed-side checks and visual inspection of the child's: - Sleeping position - Skin and lip colour - Breathing - Body temperature - Head position - Airway - Head and face, ensuring they remain uncovered • Ensure sleeping spaces have adequate light to allow supervision. • Ensure children's clothing is appropriate during sleep times and does not have any items that are loose and could get tangled and restrict breathing. • Report issues with day-to-day sleep practice, environment and equipment to the nominated supervisor or provider.
Families	• Regularly update the Lead Teacher on their child's sleeping routines and patterns. • Provide informal updates on the previous night's sleep to assist with sleeping during the day if relevant.



	• Take home and wash their child's bedding at the end of each term and return it at the start of the new term. • Review the School's policies and procedures relating to sleep and rest.
--	---

STAFF INDUCTION AND TRAINING

- Policies and procedures, including this *Sleep and Rest in Children* policy and its associated procedures, are discussed regularly at Faculty Meetings.
- Induction of new staff includes making them aware of all policies and procedures and ensuring they understand their role and responsibilities.

POLICY ACCESS

- Electronic copies of policies are available on the School's website and staff apps.
- Hard copies of policies are also available in the shared Jacaranda/Hollyhock area and can be made available to parents upon request.
- Families will be notified by email at least 14 days beforehand of any changes if they:
 - affect the fees charged or the way they are collected, or
 - significantly impact the service's education and care of children, or
 - significantly impact the family's ability to utilise the service.

BREACH OF POLICY

Staff

Staff in breach of this policy will be required to undergo additional training or performance counselling to ensure they understand their responsibilities as laid out in this policy and associated procedures. In severe cases, staff may be suspended while an investigation takes place or their employment terminated.

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

Related School Policies, Procedures and Guidelines	STU001 – Child Safe Environment Policy STU002 – Mandatory Notification Policy and Procedures SF001 – Professional Code of Conduct WHS001 Work Health and Safety Policy WHS009 Administration of First Aid Policy and Procedures ECH010 Interactions with Children (Behaviour Support) Policy EM003 – Emergency Procedures
Related Legislation and Regulatory Requirements	Education and Early Childhood Services (Registrations and Standards) Act 2011 https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations • Section 165 Offence to inadequately supervise children • Section 167 Offence relating to the protection of children from harm and hazards Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations • Regulation 81 Sleep and rest • Regulation 84A-D • Regulation 103: Premises, furniture and equipment to be safe, clean and in good repair • Regulation 105 Furniture, materials and equipment • Regulation 106 Laundry and hygiene facilities • Regulation 107 Space requirements – indoor space • Regulation 110 Ventilation and natural light



	- Regulation 115 Premises designed to facilitate supervision - Regulation 168 Education and care service must have policies and procedures
Source Documentation	- Early Years Learning Framework https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-02/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf - National Quality Standard https://www.acecqa.gov.au/ - Guide to the National Quality Framework (ACEQA 2018) https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-09/Sleep_restriskassessment_template_1_0.pdf https://rednose.org.au/safe-sleep-and-safer-pregnancy/articles/ensuring-safe-sleep-best-practices-for-supervising-sleeping-and-resting-children-in-early-childhood-education/
Cross sector Guidelines (SA)	- DHS – National Principles for Child Safe Organisations - Protective Practices for staff in their interactions with children and young people

VARIATION AND REVIEW

The School reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time. Unless altered earlier, this policy will be reviewed every three (3) years.

Responsible Person	Early Childhood Faculty Leader
Policy Approver	Head of School
Version	1.0
Publication Date	Sep 2023
Last Review Date	May-Aug 2026
Next Review Date	May 2029
Revision Record	May-Aug 2026: Comprehensive review, including reformatting; checking requirements against current law, regulations and standards; clarifying language; extended Definitions and added Breach of Policy section.