RELAXATION, REST AND SLEEP

QUALITY AREA 2 – CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

PURPOSE

This policy will provide clear guidelines for the implementation of safe relaxation, rest and sleep practices that meet the individual needs of children attending Sparkways.

POLICY STATEMENT

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Sparkways is committed to:

- providing a positive and nurturing environment for all children attending the service
- 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.
- consulting with parents/guardians about their child's individual rest, relaxation and sleep requirements/practices, and ensuring practices at the service are responsive to the values and cultural beliefs of each family
- its duty of care *(refer to Definitions)* to all children at Sparkways, and ensuring that adequate supervision *(refer to Definitions)* is maintained while children are sleeping, resting or relaxing
- complying with all legislative requirements, standards and current best practice and guidelines, including recommendations by Red Nose *(refer to Sources)*

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 Sparkways.

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 obligations under the *Education and Care Services National Law* and *National Regulations (84A,B,C)* are met	**R**	**R**	✓	✓	✓
Conducting a Risk Assessment *(refer to Links)* at least annually, and as soon a practicable after becoming aware of any circumstance that may affect the safety, health or wellbeing of children during sleep and rest (*National Regulations 84C)*	**R**	**R**	✓		
Implementing the associated mitigation strategies, including any updates to policies and procedures, as a result of the risk assessment (*National Regulations 84C)*	**R**	**R**	✓	✓	✓
Keeping records of all sleep and rest risk assessments that have been conducted (*National Regulations 84C)*	**R**	**R**	✓		
Taking reasonable steps to ensure the sleep/rest needs of children at the service are met, with regard to the children's ages, developmental stages and individual needs *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring the individual health care needs of children are met in relation to sleep and rest *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring that requests from families about a child's sleep and rest and cultural preferences are considered *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring children's sleep and rest is supervised, monitored and documented *(refer to Links),* including the completion of physical checks of sleeping children at least every 10 minutes, entailing checking the child's breathing (using touch, sight and sound), and the colour of the child's lips and skin tone *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring all educators, staff and volunteers comply with the recommendations of Red Nose in relation to best practices to adopt to ensure the safety of children during sleep and rest *(refer to Sources) (National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring educators receive information, induction and training to have the required knowledge to effectively fulfil their roles, including being made aware of the sleep and rest policies, their responsibilities in implementing these, and any changes that are made over time *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓

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
Ensuring that the location and arrangement of sleep and rest areas meets the needs of the children at the service *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring the safety and suitability of cots, bedding and bedding equipment, having regard to the ages and developmental stages of children who are using them *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Managing hazards in sleep and rest areas and on a child during sleep and rest periods *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring the physical safety and suitability of sleep and rest environments, including positioning within rooms, and appropriate temperature, lighting and ventilation *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Communication of sleep and rest policies and procedures to parents/guardians *(National Regulation 84B)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring sleep and rest environments are free from cigarette, e-cigarette, or tobacco smoke *(Regulation 82)*	**R**	✓	✓		✓
Developing relaxation and sleep practices that are responsive to: • the individual needs of children at the service • parenting beliefs, values, practices and requirements • the length of time each child spends at the service • circumstance or events occurring at a child's home • consistency of practice between home and the service • a child's general health and wellbeing • the physical environment, including lighting, airflow and noise levels	**R**	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring cots (including evacuations cots), bedding and bedding equipment provided at the service comply with the most current Australian/New Zealand Standards *(refer to Sources and Attachment 1)*	**R**	✓			
Ensuring that all sleeping products meet the Australian mandatory safety standards *(refer to Sources)*	**R**	**R**	✓		✓
Ensuring that hammocks, prams and strollers are not used to settle children to sleep	**R**	✓	✓		✓
Removing any hazards identified in the child's resting or sleeping environment and informing the approved provider, as soon as is practicable	**R**	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that any hanging cords, mobiles, curtains and blinds are inaccessible to children who are resting or sleeping	**R**	✓	✓	✓	✓

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
Ensuring that artificial heating, such as heat bags and hot-water bottles, is not used to provide warmth		✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that each child has their own bed linen (for services where children sleep), and that the *Hygiene Policy* and procedures are implemented for the cleaning and storage of cots, mattresses and linen. Note: For kindergartens, this can entail families supplying and laundering their own children's linen, e.g. provided at the start of the week and laundered over the weekend, or earlier as required.		✓	✓		✓
Ensuring that there is adequate space to store bedding in a hygienic manner *(refer to Hygiene Policy)*	**R**	✓	✓		✓
Ensuring compliance with WorkSafe Victoria's Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit *(refer to Sources)*, including in relation to staff lifting children into and out of cots	**R**	✓	✓		✓
Providing information on (or authorisation to be kept with) their child's enrolment form if the child requires special items whilst resting or sleeping. E.g. a comforter or soft toy. Note: As per Red Nose Guidelines, such items are only for children aged 7 month or older *(refer to Sources)*				✓	
Educating families about evidence-based safe sleeping practices	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assessing whether there are exceptional circumstances for alternative practices where medical needs or family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices, seek written support from a medical practitioner and develop a risk management plan	R	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implementing the documented sleep regime and risk management strategies where in exceptional circumstances medical needs or family beliefs conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines for safe sleeping practices	R	✓	✓	✓	
Ensuring the educational program provides opportunities for each child to sleep, rest or engage in appropriate quiet play activities, as required	**R**	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensuring that resting and sleeping practices are not used as a behaviour guidance strategy *(refer to Interactions with Children Policy)*		✓	✓		✓

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
Providing a range of opportunities for relaxation throughout the day		✓	✓		✓
Supervising children displaying symptoms of illness closely, especially when resting or sleeping *(refer to Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*)		✓	✓		✓
Documenting and communicating children's rest and sleep times to co-workers during shift changes (Early Learning Centres)		✓	✓		✓
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.		✓	✓		✓

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, including the completion of a risk assessment.

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 cots and 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 (Vic)

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

Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: www.legislation.vic.gov.au
Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: 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 Sparkways policy catalogue.

Red Nose: (formerly SIDS and Kids), the 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.

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

SOURCES

- Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, *Safe sleep and rest practices*: https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/supporting-materials/infosheet/safe-sleep-and-rest-practices
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission: Infant sleep products mandatory standards
- *Belonging, Being & Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (EYLF): https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks
- Current Australian/New Zealand Standards for cots is available on the SAI Global website at: www.saiglobal.com
- Red Nose: https://rednose.org.au/
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (VEYLDF): https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldf.aspx
- WorkSafe Victoria, *Children's services – occupational health and safety compliance kit*: https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/resources/childrens-services-occupational-health-and-safety-compliance-kit

RELATED POLICES

- Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Interactions with Children
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Supervision of Children

EVALUATION

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

- seek feedback from people 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 AND LINKS

- Attachment 1: Cots
- Sleep and Rest Risk Assessment Template.docx
- Sleep Check Template.docx

AUTHORISATION

This policy was confirmed by Sparkways on 17/07/2026

REVIEW DUE: July 2027

ATTACHMENT 1

COTS

There is currently (at the time of authorisation) one standard that applies to the use of cots:

- Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010)

Services can check the current standard on the SAI Global website at: www.saiglobal.com

Sparkways uses cots that:

- meet the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use – Safety Requirements (AS/NZS 2172:2010) and have a higher base and mattress

Household cots usually have a lower base and mattress, and WorkSafe Victoria have highlighted manual handling risks posed when working with cots at a lower height.

- Cots should be of a height that will enable employees to lift and lower children into and out of the cots with minimal forward bending of the employee's back.
- If cots have two base positions, set the base to the higher position for infants unable to stand. The higher base position will reduce the need for employees to reach into cots.
- Cots should have sides that drop to reduce the need for employees to bend and reach over the cot side to lift and lower children. At its dropped level, the top of the cot's lowered side should be at least 250mm above the top of the mattress to ensure children cannot roll out of the cot.
- Ensure there is enough clearance under cots for employees to stand with their feet under the edge of the cot to minimise reaching distance.
- Prepare cots in advance so sides are down before employees lift children in or out.
- If cots have wheels, ensure the wheels have locks and keep wheels in the locked position when the cot is not being moved.
- Regularly check and maintain cot wheels, wheel locks and drop-down sides to ensure cots are safe and secure.
- Assess floor surfaces to ensure minimal friction and resistance when wheeling cots. Change floor surfaces so employees can easily move cots.
- Ensure cots meet all relevant structural safety requirements.

No alterations should be made to purchased cots under any circumstances, as this may have serious consequences in relation to liability if an incident occurs.

Caution should be used in regards to portable or folding cots, as they present an increased risk of injury or death to a child if erected incorrectly. Portable cots also pose an increased risk of manual handling injuries to staff.

If a service requires an extra cot to be available for occasional use, it is possible to purchase a cot that meets the Australian/New Zealand Standard – Cots for household use, and folds flat for easy storage. Portable cots that meet this standard would be the only acceptable option.

Further information on portable or folding cots is available is outlined below:

- Red Nose: https://rednose.org.au/article/portable-cots
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission: www.productsafety.gov.au

Note: Bassinets must not be on the premises at any time that children are being educated and cared for by the service.