

Little Acorns Montessori

Baby Room Policy

Bracknell, England

1. Document Control

Policy Title	Baby Room Policy
Setting Name	Little Acorns Montessori
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Author	Jonathan Duffy
Approved By	Director

2. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to providing a warm, caring, and stimulating environment for all babies and young children in our care. Our baby room is designed to be rich in sensory opportunities whilst ensuring that each child's individual need for rest, reassurance, and close nurturing relationships is fully met.

We understand that entrusting your baby to our care is a significant step. Our carefully selected team is experienced in caring for babies and provides a beautiful balance of cosy cuddles and engaging play opportunities. We work in close partnership with families to ensure that every baby's care is consistent, responsive, and respectful of their home routines.

This policy applies to all children aged under two years attending Little Acorns Montessori. It must be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Safer Sleep Policy
- Feeding and Nutrition Policy
- Key Person Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Inclusion and Equality Policy

3. Statutory and Regulatory Framework

This policy fulfils the requirements of the following legislation and guidance:

Primary Legislation

- Childcare Act 2006 (as amended) – Section 40 places a statutory duty on registered early years providers to meet the requirements of the EYFS framework.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 – establish the paramountcy principle that the welfare of the child is the overriding consideration.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 – places duties on employers to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety, and welfare of employees and those on the premises.

Statutory Guidance

- DfE Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (effective 1 September 2025) – the principal document governing this policy. Key sections include:
 - Section 3.30–3.33 – Key Person requirements
 - Section 3.36–3.42 – Staffing: qualifications, training, ratios, and supervision
 - Section 3.54 – Paediatric First Aid requirements
 - Section 3.62 – Suitability of premises, environment, and equipment
 - Section 3.70 – Baby room requirements (separate room for children under two, with provision for contact with older children)
 - Section 3.69 – Sleeping arrangements (safer sleep requirements)
 - Section 3.73–3.75 – Food and drink requirements
 - Section 3.76–3.77 – Record keeping
- EYFS 2025, Section 3 (Safeguarding) — the September 2025 safeguarding reforms also introduced: a requirement for safeguarding policies to include procedures to ensure only suitable individuals are recruited (Safer Recruitment); mandatory follow-up on unexplained or prolonged child absences; a requirement to hold additional emergency contact details for every child; a Safeguarding Training Criteria Annex (Annex C) requiring policies to detail how safeguarding training is delivered and how staff are supported to put it into practice; strengthened whistleblowing requirements; safer eating requirements; and a requirement that children's privacy is considered and balanced with safeguarding needs during nappy changing and toileting.
- DfE / Lullaby Trust Safer Sleep Guidance for Early Years Settings (published April 2026) — developed with the Lullaby Trust, medical experts and Ofsted following the deaths of Genevieve Meehan and Noah Sibanda. All providers must be compliant now. The stronger wording is expected to be incorporated into the EYFS statutory framework from September 2026, subject to parliamentary processes.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024 (where applicable to early years providers).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Important: The safer sleep requirements published by the DfE in March 2026 (developed with the Lullaby Trust following the death of Genevieve Meehan) are currently non-statutory but must be implemented now. They are expected to be incorporated into the EYFS statutory framework from September 2026, subject to parliamentary processes. Little Acorns Montessori is fully compliant with these requirements.

4. The Baby Room Environment

Little Acorns Montessori maintains a dedicated baby room for children under the age of two, as required by EYFS 2025, Section 3.70.

4.1 Physical Environment

- The baby room must provide a minimum of 3.5 m² of floor space per child, in accordance with EYFS requirements.
- The environment must be clean, well-ventilated, and maintained at an appropriate temperature (recommended 16–20°C, particularly for sleeping areas).
- All resources, furniture, and equipment must be age-appropriate, safe, and regularly inspected.
- The room must be accessible to designated staff at all times and free from hazards.
- Babies must have meaningful contact with older children and be transitioned to older age groups when developmentally appropriate (EYFS 2025, Section 3.70).

4.2 Learning and Play Environment

In line with our Montessori ethos and the EYFS learning and development requirements:

- The baby room is designed to be rich in sensory opportunities, supporting the Characteristics of Effective Learning (Playing and Exploring, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically).
- Resources are rotated regularly to reflect each baby's interests and developmental stage.
- Both floor-level and supported play opportunities are provided.
- Natural materials, treasure baskets, and heuristic play resources are used in line with Montessori principles.
- Outdoor access is provided daily, weather permitting, with appropriate weather clothing required (see Section 8).

5. Staffing, Ratios, and Qualifications

5.1 Staff-to-Child Ratios

In accordance with EYFS 2025, the following minimum ratios apply in the baby room:

Age Group	Minimum Ratio	Statutory Reference
Under 2 years	1 adult : 3 children	EYFS 2025, Section 3.36

Ratios are calculated across the whole setting, not just within individual rooms. Staff may be deployed flexibly provided the overall minimum ratio is maintained at all times.

Students, volunteers, and apprentices may only be included in ratios at the level below their level of study where the provider is satisfied they are competent and responsible, and only where they hold a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) certificate (EYFS 2025, from September 2025). There is no requirement to include students or trainees in ratios, and if the Manager considers their inclusion would impact safety, they must not be included.

5.2 Qualification Requirements

In accordance with EYFS 2025:

- At least one member of staff in the baby room must hold an approved Level 3 qualification (or have attained Level 3 status via the Experience-Based Route from September 2025) and be suitably experienced in working with children under two.
- At least half of all other baby room staff must hold an approved Level 2 qualification.
- At least half of all baby room staff must have received training that specifically addresses the care of babies.
- The baby room manager must hold suitable experience of working with children under two.
- Students, volunteers, and apprentices counted in ratios must hold a current Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification (EYFS 2025, from September 2025).

5.3 Paediatric First Aid

- A member of staff holding a valid, in-date Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification must be on the premises and available at all times when children under two are present.
- A PFA-qualified member of staff must be present in the room whenever a child is eating, in accordance with EYFS 2025 requirements.
- PFA certificates must be renewed every three years.
- The Manager must maintain a record of all PFA qualifications and renewal dates.

6. Key Person Approach

Little Acorns Montessori operates a key person system, as required by EYFS 2025 (Sections 3.30–3.33). Each baby in our care will be assigned a named key person before they start, wherever possible.

6.1 Role of the Key Person

The key person must:

- Build a secure, warm, and responsive relationship with their key child and the child's family, working 'closely' with them.
- Continue, as far as possible, your baby's current care routine at home, including feeding schedules, sleep patterns, and comforting strategies, as this is of upmost importance to us.
- Provide regular, informal meetings with parents and carers to update them on routines, interests, and any changing needs.
- Communicate with parents and carers through our two-way Famly app, sending a daily update that includes information on feeds, sleeps, nappy changes, and any notable observations.
- Send parents a photograph of their child along with notes on their day.
- Share exciting news, special events, and achievements at nursery, and report any useful information regarding their baby's development.
- Observe, assess, and plan for their key child's learning and development in line with EYFS requirements.
- Share information with parents about their child's developmental progress and next steps.

6.2 Parent and Carer Engagement via the Famly App

Whilst parents and carers can use the Family app to receive daily updates and share exciting news, special events, and achievements at home, or any useful information for their child's key person, it also supports us in building a strong partnership with families. Parents are warmly encouraged to contribute to their child's learning journey by sharing observations from home.

6.3 Focus Weeks

In addition to daily communications, each child in the baby room will take part in two focus weeks per term. These focus weeks allow staff to closely observe and assess your child's development, interests, and next steps in learning, helping us to effectively track each child's progress. Following each focus week, parents will receive a progress update summarising their child's development and achievements.

6.4 Cover Arrangements

- A named buddy (secondary key person) must be assigned to each child to provide cover in the absence of the key person.
- Parents must be informed of the buddy arrangement at the time of their child's induction.

7. Admissions, Induction, and Settling In

- Before a baby starts at Little Acorns Montessori, the Manager and key person must undertake a pre-admission visit or meeting with the family.
- Parents must complete all required admission documentation including: emergency contact details (a minimum of two contacts as required by EYFS 2025), medical information, dietary requirements, and details of the child's current home routine.
- A written settling-in plan must be agreed with parents, which is flexible and responsive to the individual child's needs.
- The key person must take primary responsibility for the child during the settling-in period.
- The Manager must ensure that all relevant information is communicated to the baby room team before the child's start date.
- At admission, parents must provide a minimum of two emergency contacts as required by EYFS 2025, and are strongly encouraged to provide a third contact (such as a grandparent or family friend). Contact details must be reviewed and updated at least annually.
- If a child is absent without prior notification, staff must attempt to contact the parent or carer promptly. If a child is absent for a prolonged period without explanation, the key person must escalate to the Manager, who must attempt to contact all emergency contacts on record. If contact cannot be made and there are welfare concerns, the DSL must consider referral to children's social care or a request for a police welfare check. The nursery's Attendance Policy sets out the full procedure and must be shared with parents at induction.

8. Daily Care Routines and Procedures

8.1 Feeding

Formula and Bottle Feeding:

- If your child is still having milk feeds, we ask that you provide their regular formula, clearly labelled with your child's name.
- All labelled bottles and food will be prepared, mixed, and warmed as they are needed.

- We will aim to maintain the same routine your child follows at home.
- Formula milk must be prepared in accordance with current NHS guidance.
- Staff must not substitute one formula for another without explicit written parental consent.

Lunch Boxes:

- If you are bringing in a lunch box, please ensure it contains an ice pack to keep food cold and safe.
- Staff must check the contents of lunch boxes for allergen risks and report any concerns to the Manager immediately.
- A member of staff holding a valid PFA qualification must be present in the room whilst a child is eating.

Weaning and Solid Foods:

- Weaning must only commence on the written instruction of parents, with confirmation that it has been introduced at home and the child is developmentally ready.
- All known allergies and dietary requirements must be recorded and clearly displayed in the baby room.
- Staff must have completed, or be working towards, Level 2 Food Hygiene training.

8.2 Nappy Changing and Intimate Care

- Nappy changing must be carried out in accordance with the Intimate Care Policy.
- Parents are asked to provide nappies and wipes packed into their child's bag daily.
- Nappy changes must be recorded on the daily communication record / app.
- Staff must wash hands before and after each nappy change.
- Changing mats must be cleaned with antibacterial solution after each use.
- Staff must ensure that children's privacy and dignity are considered and balanced with safeguarding needs during all nappy changing and intimate care routines, in accordance with EYFS 2025. Lone working arrangements in the changing area must be considered in the Intimate Care Policy to ensure that privacy does not compromise safeguarding oversight.

8.3 Clothing and Outdoor Play

- Parents are asked to provide a couple of changes of clothes, along with a puddle suit, wellies, and weather-appropriate clothing for outdoor play, packed in their child's bag daily.
- Outdoor play is provided daily, weather permitting, as fresh air is considered essential for children's health and wellbeing.
- Staff must carry out a risk assessment of the outdoor area before each outdoor session.

9. Safer Sleep

Little Acorns Montessori is fully compliant with the DfE and Lullaby Trust Safer Sleep Guidance for Early Years Settings (April 2026), which all providers must implement now ahead of its formal incorporation into the EYFS statutory framework (expected September 2026). This guidance addresses the risk of both Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) for babies up to 12 months and Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDC) for children over 12 months.

Statutory Requirement: In accordance with EYFS 2025, Section 3.69, sleeping children must be frequently checked to ensure that they are safe. Being safe includes ensuring that cots and bedding are in good condition and suited to the age of the child, and that babies are placed down to sleep safely in line with the latest government safety guidance.

9.1 Safe Sleep Procedures for Children Under Two

- Children must be placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface such as a cot, bed, or mattress on the floor.
- Babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot (including carrycots, moses baskets, or travel cots).
- Sleep spaces must contain only a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding, firmly tucked in below the child's shoulders to prevent head covering. Alternatively, a well-fitted baby sleep bag may be used (check manufacturer recommendations before use).
- Where blankets are used, the child must be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.
- Cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges, or straps.
- Sleep comforters must not be used for babies aged 12 months and under. Dummies are excepted. For children over 12 months, comforters may be used in the sleep space.
- The recommended room temperature for sleeping babies is 16–20°C. A room thermometer must be in use in all sleep areas. Where the temperature falls outside this range — for example during hot weather or heating failure — staff must not prevent children from sleeping. Instead, staff must manage the child's comfort through appropriate adjustment of clothing and bedding: removing layers if too warm, adding a lightweight layer if too cool. In all cases, staff must check the child's temperature by feeling the chest or back of the neck (not the hands or feet, which are normally cooler). Checks must be more frequent if the room temperature is outside the recommended range and must be recorded on the daily log. Any prolonged inability to maintain appropriate temperatures must be reported to the Manager, who must assess whether the environment remains safe.
- Children under six months must be in the same room as a member of staff while asleep.
- All sleeping children must be within sight and hearing of a staff member.
- Sleeping children must be checked at frequent, regular intervals and checks must be recorded on the daily log.
- All cots, moses baskets, carrycots, and travel cots must be checked to ensure they meet current British Safety Standards before use.
- For babies born prematurely (before 37 weeks gestation) or with a low birthweight (under 2.5kg / 5.5lb), safer sleep procedures applicable to babies aged 12 months and under must be followed for a full year from the baby's due date, not from the date of birth. Parents must confirm the due date at admission for any premature baby.
- Any baby aged 12 months and under who falls asleep while travelling (in a buggy, pram, or car seat) must be transferred to their cot as soon as they return to the setting. For children over 12 months, staff must transfer them to their own separate sleep space on a firm, flat surface where possible. Hats and extra layers must be removed on return indoors to prevent overheating. A lie-flat pram or pushchair must not be used as a main sleep space.

9.2 Prohibited Practices

The following practices are strictly prohibited at Little Acorns Montessori:

- Placing a baby face down or on their side to sleep.
- Using swaddling in the sleep space unless specifically agreed in writing with parents and in line with medical guidance.

- Strapping or restraining a child in a sleep position.
- Using a bean bag, bouncy chair, or car seat as a sleep surface.
- Placing a sleeping child in a room without supervision.

9.3 Sleep Records

- All sleep times must be recorded on the child's daily log and shared with parents via the Family app.
 - Sleep checks are recorded physically, and are available to parents on demand. These are kept for a full term.
 - Any concerns regarding a child's sleep must be reported to the key person, room lead, and Manager immediately.
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10. Health, Hygiene, and Medicine

- The baby room must be cleaned daily, with a schedule maintained and signed off by the room lead.
 - Toys and resources must be cleaned regularly and after any child has been unwell.
 - Staff must follow the Medication Policy when administering any medication, including teething gels or infant paracetamol.
 - Parents must be informed promptly if their child appears unwell during a session.
 - The nursery's Illness and Exclusion Policy must be followed at all times.
 - Any accidents or incidents in the baby room must be recorded in the Accident Book and parents must be informed on collection or sooner where the incident warrants it.
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11. Recording and Reporting

11.1 Daily Records

The following information must be recorded for each child on each day of attendance, using the nursery's Family app and/or paper-based daily log:

- Feeds: time, amount, type (formula, breast, solid food).
- Nappy changes: time and outcome.
- Sleep: start time, end time, position placed to sleep, and frequency of checks.
- General observations: mood, activities, interactions, and any notable developments.
- Any accidents, incidents, or concerns, in accordance with the Accident and Incident Policy.

11.2 Developmental Records

- Observations, assessments, and learning journey records must be maintained for each child in line with the EYFS Assessment requirements.
- Records must be stored securely and confidentially in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK GDPR.
- Parents have the right to access records relating to their child at any time.

11.3 Safeguarding Records

- Any safeguarding concern must be recorded immediately using the nursery's Safeguarding Concern Form.
- Records must be stored securely and separately from general child files.
- The DSL must be informed of any concern immediately.
- In accordance with EYFS 2025 (Annex C — Safeguarding Training Criteria), the nursery's Safeguarding Policy includes details of how safeguarding training is delivered and how staff are supported to apply their learning in practice. The Manager must maintain a training matrix confirming that all staff hold in-date safeguarding training. Safeguarding training must be renewed at least every two years. The Manager will consider whether annual refresher training is needed for any staff member, particularly following a safeguarding concern or a change in guidance.

11.4 Record Storage

- All physical records are stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Manager's office.
- All digital records are stored on Famly, with access restricted to authorised staff.
- Records are retained in line with our data retention policy.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Nursery Manager	• Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed annually. • Ensure staffing ratios and qualification requirements are met at all times. • Oversee key person assignments and review them regularly. • Ensure all baby room staff receive appropriate induction and ongoing training. • Act as, or designate, the room manager who holds suitable experience with children under two. • Maintain all records pertaining to this policy. • Ensure that the Safer Recruitment Policy is followed for all new appointments, including obtaining references from the applicant's current employer, training provider, or educational institution, authorised by a senior person. Ensure that new staff do not work unsupervised or in ratio until Ofsted confirms their suitability. • Ensure the nursery's Whistleblowing Policy is in place, clearly communicated to all staff, and reflects EYFS 2025 requirements. Staff must be able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice without fear of retaliation.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Agata Payne	• Ensure all safeguarding concerns arising in the baby room are reported and recorded in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy. • Ensure baby room staff are supported with up-to-date safeguarding training (renewed at least every two years in line with EYFS 2025). • Liaise with external agencies as required.
Deputy DSL: Joanne Broughton	• Support the DSL in all safeguarding duties. • Act in the DSL's absence.
Baby Room Lead / Key Persons	• Implement all procedures in this policy on a daily basis. • Act as key person for a designated group of babies. • Maintain accurate daily records and communicate with parents. • Follow safer sleep, feeding, and hygiene procedures at all times. • Attend relevant training including baby-specific care training. • Hold a valid Paediatric First Aid (PFA) qualification.

All Baby Room Staff	- Follow the procedures in this policy and all associated policies. - Report any concerns to the key person, room lead, or DSL. - Maintain confidentiality at all times.
Parents and Carers	- Share relevant information about their child's routine, feeds, and development on admission and as it changes. - Provide labelled formula milk (if applicable), nappies, wipes, changes of clothes, a puddle suit, and weather-appropriate clothing daily. - Remain contactable whilst their child is in the nursery's care. - Engage with the key person and Family app. - Inform the nursery of any changes to their child's routine, health, or dietary needs promptly.

13. Training and Professional Development

- All baby room staff must complete an induction that includes this policy, safer sleep, safeguarding, feeding, and intimate care procedures before working unsupervised with babies.
- Safeguarding training must be renewed at least every two years in line with EYFS 2025.
- Paediatric First Aid training must be renewed every three years.
- The Manager must maintain a training matrix for all baby room staff.
- Staff are encouraged to pursue continuous professional development relevant to infant care, including attachment theory, early brain development, and Montessori practice.
- All baby room staff must complete safer sleep training as part of their induction, covering NHS SIDS guidance and the Lullaby Trust's resources for early years settings. This training must be refreshed in line with any updates to the DfE/Lullaby Trust guidance.

14. Monitoring, Compliance, and Policy Review

- This policy must be reviewed annually by the Manager, or sooner following any change in relevant legislation or guidance, or following any significant incident.
- This policy must be made available to all staff, parents, and Ofsted inspectors upon request.
- All staff must confirm they have read and understood this policy on appointment and following each review.
- Compliance with this policy will be monitored through supervision meetings, room observations, and audits carried out by the Manager.

15. Linked Policies and Documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Safer Sleep Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Feeding and Nutrition Policy
- Intimate Care Policy
- Key Person Policy
- Medication Policy
- Illness and Exclusion Policy

- Inclusion and Equality Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy *(required by EYFS 2025 — must be shared with parents)*
- Safer Recruitment Policy *(required by EYFS 2025)*
- Whistleblowing Policy *(required by EYFS 2025)*
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Admissions Policy

16. Policy Sign-Off

Role	Name	Date
Owner/Director	Jonathan Duffy	June 2026

Staff Acknowledgement: All staff must sign the separate Staff Acknowledgement Register to confirm they have read, understood, and will adhere to this policy.