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Dear Parents & Carers

Our local NHS teams have made us aware of two tragic incidents recently where a baby and a child have tragically died following incidents involving bunk beds. Sadly, every year babies and children die or are seriously injured following accidents in their bedrooms.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) recommends that children under the age of six years do not use the upper bunk since younger children are likely to fall getting in and out, particularly half-asleep at night. The age 6 threshold comes down to coordination and awareness rather than size. Younger children generally haven't developed the balance, spatial awareness, or impulse control needed to climb a ladder safely, especially in the dark or half-asleep during the night. Most bunk bed related injuries happen during climbing or descending rather than during sleep itself, which is exactly the risk the age guidance is designed to reduce.

Parents should also consider very carefully whether allowing a child younger than six to sleep on the bottom bunk is safe for them, toddlers can get trapped. The bottom bunk carries far less risk, since there's no height or ladder involved, but it isn't automatically fine for any age either.

Many manufacturers suggest the bottom bunk can suit children from around age 4, provided the bunk bed has secure guard rails and a stable, low frame. RoSPA's own guidance is to think carefully even about the bottom bunk for children younger than 6, rather than assuming it's risk-free simply because it's closer to the floor. Babies should always have their own cots.

Please follow the links below for further information about safe sleep:

RoSPA- Keeping Kids Safe | Bedtime safety tips for children

https://www.rospa.com/health-and-safety-resources/keeping-kids-safe-hub/bedtime

Safer sleep overview | The Lullaby Trust

https://www.lullabytrust.org.uk/baby-safety/safer-sleep-information/safer-sleep-overview/



Bunk Bed Safety Rules Once They're Using It

Once your child has reached the right age, a few ongoing habits keep a bunk bed genuinely safe day to day. Only one child should be on the top bunk at any time, and the ladder should always be used for climbing rather than any nearby furniture. Avoid hanging bags, dressing gowns, or cords near the top bunk, since these create a strangulation risk close to where a child sleeps, and check regularly that the guard rails and ladder fixings haven't loosened over time.