



Carr Hill Community Primary School

Oral Health Policy 2025

Introduction

Oral health is an integral element of general health and well-being. Good oral health enables individuals to communicate effectively, to eat and enjoy a variety of foods, and is important in overall quality of life, self-esteem and social confidence. Oral diseases are largely preventable but no easy or quick fixes exist to promote oral health. Interventions need to be developed that will achieve sustained long term improvements in oral health. Pain, discomfort, sleepless nights, limitation in eating function leading to poor nutrition, and time off school due to dental problems are all common impacts of oral diseases.

Despite the general improvement in oral health there remain very marked inequalities in oral health. People living in areas of material and social deprivation have much higher levels of tooth decay. They are more likely to have diets high in sugary foods and drinks and they brush their teeth less often. Vulnerable groups of society also have poorer oral health and less access to oral health care services. For example, people with learning disabilities and people with mental illness tend to have fewer teeth, more untreated decay and more periodontal disease than the general population.

The most common oral diseases, tooth decay and periodontal disease can both cause pain and infection as well as eventual tooth loss. Acute dental infection can cause swelling and severe pain and in extreme cases can be life threatening. Chronic infection also tastes and smells unpleasant. Dental treatment has become much more acceptable due to advances in technology and behaviour management techniques. However, extensive treatment can still be stressful, especially for young children. Many children still have teeth extracted under general anaesthetic, a distressing experience and an avoidable, albeit small, risk to life.

This policy advises staff and parents on the basic standards that should be adopted to maintain good oral health in school.

Rationale

As part of the ongoing work in Carr Hill School we follow guidelines for healthy teeth. The guidelines we have to promote the importance of good oral health and encourage habits conducive with this are:

We only offer milk and water to drink at snack times

Use of water bottles and drinking fountains are encouraged during the school day and children can pay for milk. No juice is given at snack times. We do not allow fizzy drinks and energy drinks in school.

We only offer healthy snacks to eat

Children are offered fruit, toast or plain crackers as part of our school snack time. All snacks during the day should be sugar free.

We do not allow sweets or confectionery in our packed lunches or in the playground and we do not use sweets as a reward

Sweets are not given as a reward. Children are rewarded with stickers and house points. Children are not allowed to bring sweets or confectionary into school.

We take part in dental health activities

An oral health promoter from STFT has been allocated to our school to work with staff. Our Early years and Year One children currently take part in the daily '*Supervised Toothbrushing Programme*'

We promote positive oral health messages in school

The school does not allow cakes, sweets and confectionery as part of birthdays celebrations, instead we allow children to come to school in non-uniform on their birthday.
if part of a celebration i.e. Christmas parties encourage savoury before sweet.

Regular Dental Care

It is very important that children have regular dental examinations starting as young an age as possible. Visit or phone the practice of your choice and ask if they are happy to see your child under the NHS. You are not obliged to stay at the same dentist and can change practice if you want to, however it is getting increasingly difficult to find an NHS dentist.

To locate an NHS dentist who is accepting new and/or emergency patients please access <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist> or dial 111 for dental emergency and out of hours care.

Guidance on Nutrition & Drinks

A balanced diet for children will include food from each of the four main food groups:

- Bread, potatoes and other cereals
- Fruit and vegetables
- Milk and dairy foods
- Meat, fish and alternatives such as pulses and tofu

Eating a healthy balanced diet which contains plenty of fruit and vegetables and is low in fat, salt and sugar and, based on whole grain products is important for promoting good general health. Children need to eat regularly, and so nutritious snacks between meals are an important part of the day. The best snacks to serve should be sugar free and so aren't likely to cause tooth decay, and healthier options prove popular with children and gives them a chance to sample foods not always served at home.

Ideas for nutritious snacks include:

- Peeled and chopped fruit and vegetables
- Any type of bread including sandwiches (healthy fillings)
- Dairy foods such as cheese or plain yogurt with added fruit
- Crackers such as water biscuits, plain breadsticks and cream crackers
- Crumpets, savoury muffins, toasted fingers with cheese spread, pitta bread with Homemade dips
- Homemade plain popcorn

The safest drinks for teeth, between meals are milk and plain water. Water is an ideal choice for quenching thirst at any time. Chilling or adding ice can increase its appeal to children. Tea, coffee, fizzy drinks and juices both the regular, 'diet', and no added sugar varieties should be avoided altogether. Read labels carefully for hidden sugars and remember even though it may say no added sugar, this simply means that no more sugar has been added.

Rewards

Sweets should never be offered to children as a reward, use of stickers, stars or even praise should be given to children for good behaviour or achievement.

Evaluation and Review

Next Review: Summer 2026