



Oral Health

Legislative Framework

This policy has been developed in accordance with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework for Group and School-Based Providers (Effective 1 September 2026)
- Department for Education Early Years Nutrition Guidance
- NHS Oral Health Guidance
- Delivering Better Oral Health: An Evidence-Based Toolkit for Prevention (OHID)
- Food Standards Agency (FSA) Guidance
- Public Health England / Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID)

The EYFS requires providers to promote the good health of children attending the setting. This includes promoting good oral health and healthy eating habits as part of children's overall health and wellbeing.

Aim

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that good oral health is an essential part of children's overall health, wellbeing and development.

Our aim is to work in partnership with families to establish positive oral health habits from an early age by promoting healthy eating, reducing sugar consumption, encouraging good oral hygiene and providing children with opportunities to learn about caring for their teeth.

Practitioners play an important role by acting as positive role models, promoting healthy lifestyles and embedding oral health throughout everyday practice.

Our Objectives

We aim to:

- Promote good oral health from the earliest stages of life.
- Encourage healthy eating and drinking habits.
- Reduce children's consumption of foods and drinks high in free sugars.
- Promote drinking water throughout the day.
- Support families with information about oral health.
- Encourage regular dental check-ups.
- Embed oral health within everyday learning experiences.
- Work in partnership with parents and healthcare professionals where appropriate.

Healthy Eating and Drinks

Good nutrition plays an important role in maintaining healthy teeth.

Practitioners will:

- Promote healthy, balanced meals and snacks.
- Encourage children to drink fresh water throughout the day.
- Limit foods and drinks that are high in free sugars.
- Promote fresh fruit, vegetables and nutritious snack options.
- Encourage children to develop positive lifelong eating habits.

Where meals and snacks are provided, they will follow current Department for Education nutrition guidance.

Drinks

Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.

Milk is provided as appropriate for children's age and dietary needs.

The nursery does not provide:

- Fizzy drinks
- Sugary drinks
- Energy drinks

Parents providing packed lunches are encouraged to provide water rather than sweetened drinks.

Learning About Oral Health

Practitioners will embed oral health into the curriculum through age-appropriate learning opportunities, including:

- Stories about visiting the dentist.
- Role play using toothbrushes and dolls.
- Songs and rhymes.
- Healthy eating discussions.
- Identifying foods that help keep teeth healthy.
- Exploring the importance of drinking water.
- Activities during National Smile Month and other health campaigns where appropriate.

Learning experiences will be fun, positive and appropriate to children's age and stage of development.

Talking to Children About Oral Health

At Clare House Nursery, we use child-friendly language to help children understand the importance of looking after their teeth. We talk about "**sugar bugs**" that can stick to our teeth after eating and drinking. Through conversations, stories, activities and mealtimes, practitioners encourage children to think about how many "sugar bugs" different foods and drinks might contain and how making healthy choices can help keep their teeth strong and healthy.

Children are encouraged to recognise that drinking water, eating a balanced diet and brushing their teeth regularly helps to wash away sugar bugs and protect their teeth from decay. Practitioners present these messages in a positive, fun and age-appropriate way to develop children's understanding of healthy lifestyles and encourage lifelong healthy habits.

Positive Role Modelling

Practitioners will act as positive role models by:

- Encouraging healthy food choices.
- Talking positively about brushing teeth.
- Promoting water as the preferred drink.
- Encouraging independence during mealtimes.
- Supporting positive attitudes towards visiting the dentist.

Partnership with Parents

Clare House Nursery recognises that parents and carers play the primary role in supporting children's oral health.

We will:

- Share information about healthy lunchboxes.
- Promote healthy snack choices.
- Encourage families to register children with a dentist as soon as their first teeth appear.
- Signpost families to NHS oral health guidance where appropriate.
- Share information about reducing sugary foods and drinks.
- Offer advice where concerns about oral health arise.

Supporting Individual Needs

Some children may require additional support due to:

- Medical conditions.
- Additional needs.
- Sensory differences.
- Feeding difficulties.
- Developmental delay.

Practitioners will work closely with parents and relevant professionals to ensure children's individual health needs are safely supported.

Safeguarding

Poor oral health may occasionally indicate wider health or welfare concerns.

Practitioners will remain professionally curious where there are concerns regarding:

- Persistent tooth pain.
- Untreated dental decay.

- Difficulty eating or drinking.
- Repeated dental infections.
- Poor oral hygiene that may affect a child's wellbeing.

Any concerns will be discussed with parents where appropriate and, if necessary, recorded using the nursery's **Record of Concern Form** and shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with the nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Staff Responsibilities

All practitioners are responsible for:

- Promoting healthy eating.
- Encouraging water consumption.
- Supporting positive attitudes towards oral health.
- Following the Healthy Eating and Nutrition Policy.
- Sharing concerns with the Nursery Manager or DSL where appropriate.
- Working in partnership with families.

Monitoring and Review

The Nursery Manager will monitor the implementation of this policy through observations, supervision meetings, audits and discussions with staff.

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation, national guidance or best practice changes.

