



Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Health

Where children are provided with meals, snacks and drinks, they must be healthy, balanced and nutritious.

6.5(2) Oral Health

Policy statement

Impact Montessori Nursery recognises the importance of promoting good oral health from the earliest years. Early childhood is an important time for establishing healthy eating, drinking and toothbrushing habits that can support good oral health throughout life.

We are committed to promoting good oral health through healthy food and drink choices, age-appropriate learning, good hygiene practices and partnership with parents and carers.

Our approach reflects the current Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements and relevant government guidance on early years nutrition and oral health. Where we provide food and drink, these will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and we will promote healthy choices that support children's oral health. GOV.UK+1

Aims

We aim to:

- promote good oral health and healthy lifestyle habits;
- provide healthy, balanced and nutritious food and drinks;
- minimise children's exposure to foods and drinks containing free sugars;
- encourage children to drink water and milk;
- support children to develop appropriate toothbrushing and oral-health habits;
- provide age-appropriate information about oral health;
- work in partnership with parents and carers;
- support families to access appropriate dental services and advice where required; and
- ensure staff have appropriate information and training to promote oral health safely and effectively.

Food and snacks

- Food and snacks provided by the nursery will be healthy, balanced and nutritious and will take account of current EYFS nutrition guidance. GOV.UK
- We will offer a varied range of nutritious foods and encourage children to try a variety of healthy foods appropriate to their age and developmental stage.
- We will minimise the amount and frequency of foods containing free sugars, in line with current oral-health guidance. GOV.UK+1
- Sugary foods and drinks will not be routinely provided as snacks.
- Where foods containing sugar are provided as part of an appropriate meal or special occasion, this will be managed in accordance with our nutrition and oral-health policies.

- Dried fruit and other naturally sweet foods will be offered appropriately and, where provided, will preferably be included as part of a meal rather than as a snack, because frequent exposure to sugars can increase the risk of dental caries. GOV.UK
- Food will be provided or supervised by staff in accordance with our Food and Nutrition Policy, allergy procedures and safeguarding requirements.
- Children will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits without pressure or coercion.

Drinks

- Fresh drinking water will be freely available to children throughout the day.
- Milk may be offered in accordance with the nursery's nutrition arrangements and the child's age and dietary requirements.
- Water and milk will be the routine drinks provided by the nursery.
- Fizzy drinks, squash and other sugar-sweetened drinks will not be provided.
- Fruit juice and smoothies will not normally be provided. Where they are provided on an exceptional basis, this will be consistent with current nutrition and oral-health guidance.
- Staff will encourage children to drink water regularly.

Government guidance advises minimising both the amount and frequency of sugar-containing foods and drinks and avoiding sugar-containing foods and drinks at bedtime. GOV.UK+1

Birthdays and special occasions

- Sweets, chocolates and sugar-sweetened drinks will not routinely be provided by the nursery for birthdays or celebrations.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss any proposed birthday or celebration food with the nursery in advance.
- Where possible, healthier alternatives will be used for celebrations.
- Any food brought into the nursery must comply with our Food, Nutrition and Allergy policies.
- The nursery will take account of individual dietary requirements, allergies and cultural or religious dietary needs.

Toothbrushing in the nursery

Where the nursery participates in a supervised toothbrushing programme or provides toothbrushing activities:

- Toothbrushing will be carried out in accordance with current NHS/Department of Health and Social Care guidance and any local authority oral-health programme requirements.
- Written parental consent will be obtained before a child participates in a supervised toothbrushing programme where required.
- Staff involved in supervised toothbrushing will receive appropriate training.
- Toothbrushing will be supervised by appropriately trained staff at all times.
- Individual toothbrushes will be clearly identified and stored hygienically so that they cannot be shared or contaminated.
- Toothbrushes will be replaced in accordance with the requirements of the relevant supervised toothbrushing programme or when they become worn or damaged.
- Toothpaste containing an appropriate level of fluoride will be used in accordance with the child's age and the guidance provided by the relevant oral-health programme.
- Children under three years should use no more than a smear of fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1,000 parts per million (ppm) fluoride; children aged three to six years should use a pea-sized amount of toothpaste containing at least 1,000 ppm fluoride, unless a dental professional has advised otherwise. GOV.UK+1

- Children will be encouraged to spit out after brushing rather than rinse with water, where developmentally appropriate. GOV.UK
- Staff will follow appropriate infection prevention and control procedures before, during and after supervised toothbrushing.
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste and associated equipment will be stored and handled in accordance with current supervised toothbrushing guidance. GOV.UK

Toothbrushing at home

- Parents and carers will be encouraged to establish and maintain a regular toothbrushing routine at home.
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to brush their child's teeth at least twice a day, including last thing at night or before bedtime and on one other occasion.
- Parents or carers should assist or supervise toothbrushing in young children, with current guidance recommending parental assistance up to at least seven years of age. GOV.UK
- Parents and carers will be encouraged to use age-appropriate fluoride toothpaste and follow advice from their dentist or other oral-health professional.
- Parents will be reminded that children should spit after brushing rather than rinse with water where appropriate, as rinsing can reduce the fluoride remaining on the teeth. GOV.UK
- We will provide parents with information about oral health and signpost them to reliable sources of advice.

Promoting oral health through learning

- Oral health will be incorporated into children's learning and development in age-appropriate ways.
- Children will learn about healthy eating and drinking, personal hygiene and caring for their teeth.
- Activities may include stories, songs, role play, discussions, creative activities and visits from appropriate dental or oral-health professionals.
- We will encourage children to understand that caring for their teeth is part of looking after their overall health and wellbeing.
- Children will not be made to feel anxious or ashamed about their teeth, eating habits or dental treatment.

Dental care and access to services

- Parents and carers will be encouraged to register their child with a dentist and attend regular dental appointments.
- Where appropriate, parents may be asked to provide details of the child's dentist as part of the child's registration information.
- We will signpost parents to NHS dental and oral-health services and other reliable sources of advice.
- Where a child appears to be experiencing dental pain, discomfort or other oral-health concerns while attending the nursery, staff will inform the parent/carer and follow the nursery's procedures for illness, medication, accidents and safeguarding as appropriate.
- The nursery will not diagnose dental conditions or provide dental treatment.

Children with additional needs

- We recognise that some children may require additional support with eating, drinking, toothbrushing or oral hygiene.
- Individual needs will be considered as part of the child's care and support arrangements.
- Where appropriate, we will work with parents, carers, health professionals, dentists, speech and language therapists or other relevant professionals to support the child's oral health.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary to enable children with additional needs or disabilities to participate safely in oral-health activities.

Parents and carers

- Parents and carers will be provided with information about the nursery's approach to oral health.
- We will encourage parents and carers to share relevant information about their child's dental care, dietary needs and oral-health requirements.
- Parents and carers will be informed about supervised toothbrushing arrangements where applicable and will be asked to provide consent where required.
- Information about oral health will be made available through the nursery's information resources and parent communications.
- We will work in partnership with families to promote consistent healthy habits between home and nursery.

Staff responsibilities and training

- Staff will be familiar with this policy as part of their induction.
- Staff will receive appropriate information and training relating to oral health where required for their role.
- Staff will follow the nursery's Food and Nutrition, Allergies, Infection Prevention and Control, Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies.
- Staff will model positive oral-health behaviours and healthy food and drink choices.
- Staff will maintain appropriate professional boundaries and will not provide dental advice beyond their level of training and competence.
- Any concerns about a child's welfare, health or development will be dealt with in accordance with the nursery's relevant policies.

Monitoring and review

- The manager is responsible for implementing and monitoring this policy.
- The policy will be reviewed at least annually, or sooner where there are changes to legislation, EYFS requirements, government guidance or local oral-health arrangements.
- Feedback from staff, parents and relevant professionals will be considered when reviewing the policy.
- Any supervised toothbrushing programme will be reviewed to ensure that equipment, storage, hygiene, consent, supervision and staff training remain appropriate.

Related legislation and guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework – current version. GOV.UK
- Department for Education – **Early Years Foundation Stage Nutrition** guidance, 2025. GOV.UK
- Department of Health and Social Care/NHS England – **Delivering Better Oral Health: An Evidence-Based Toolkit for Prevention**, updated September 2025. GOV.UK+1
- Office for Health Improvement and Disparities – **Improving Oral Health: Supervised Toothbrushing Programme Toolkit**, updated April 2025. GOV.UK

This policy was adopted by: Impact Montessori Nursery

Date adopted: _____

Date to be reviewed: _____

Signed on behalf of the provider: _____

Name of signatory: _____

Role of signatory: Nursery Manager