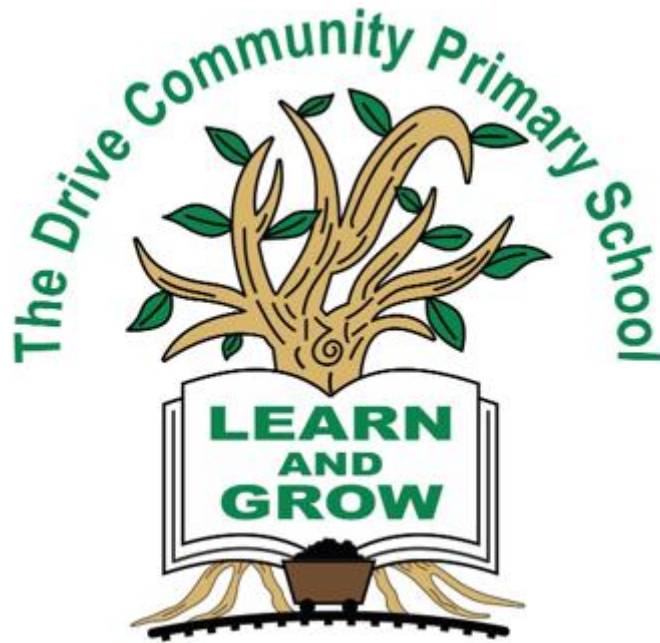


The Drive Community Primary School



Oral Health Policy

Date: September 2026

Review Date: September 2027

Introduction

At The Drive Community Primary School and Nursery, we recognise that oral health is an important part of a child's overall health, wellbeing and development.

Good oral health enables children to eat, speak, smile and socialise with confidence. Poor oral health can lead to pain, infection, difficulty eating, poor concentration, disturbed sleep and absence from school.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires providers to promote the good oral health of children attending their setting. We are committed to supporting children and families to develop positive oral health habits that can last a lifetime.

Oral health is important from the earliest years. Healthy baby teeth:

- Help children bite and chew food.
- Support speech and language development.
- Build confidence and self-esteem.
- Hold spaces for developing adult teeth.
- Support children's overall health and wellbeing.

We promote good oral health through healthy eating, regular oral health education, partnership working with parents and carers, and supportive school practices. In Nursery and Reception, children have the opportunity to participate in a supervised toothbrushing programme designed to support the development of lifelong oral health habits.

The school works in partnership with South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust and benefits from support from an Oral Health Promoter who helps staff deliver consistent oral health messages and activities.

Aims

We aim to:

- Promote positive oral health habits across the school and nursery.
- Support children and families to understand the importance of oral hygiene.
- Reduce the risk of tooth decay and gum disease.
- Encourage healthy food and drink choices.
- Support regular dental attendance.
- Ensure oral health messages are embedded throughout children's learning and development.

How We Promote Oral Health

Oral health is promoted throughout everyday school life and through the curriculum.

Children are supported to learn about:

- Brushing teeth twice a day using fluoride toothpaste.
- The importance of visiting the dentist regularly.
- Healthy food and drink choices.
- The impact of sugar on teeth.
- Personal hygiene and self-care.

- Looking after their bodies and overall health.

Oral health messages are incorporated into learning opportunities across the curriculum, particularly within:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development.
- Physical Development.
- Understanding the World.
- Science.
- Health and Relationships Education.

Healthy Food and Drink

We recognise the important link between diet and oral health.

To support healthy teeth and gums:

- Fresh drinking water is available throughout the school day.
- Children are encouraged to bring a water bottle to school.
- Water bottles must be taken home daily for cleaning.
- We discourage sugary drinks, squash and juice during the school day.
- Fizzy drinks and energy drinks are not permitted in school.
- Fresh milk and water are offered at snack times to KS1 and Early Years
- Healthy snacks are promoted and encouraged.

Water and plain milk are the recommended drinks for children between meals

Snack Time

Snack times provide an opportunity to reinforce healthy eating and oral health messages.

Nursery

Children are offered snacks during both morning and afternoon sessions consisting of:

- Fresh milk or water.
- Fresh fruit or vegetables.

Reception and Key Stage 1

Children are offered:

- Fresh fruit or vegetables.
- Water or milk where appropriate.

Children are encouraged to drink whilst eating their snack to support good oral health and overall wellbeing.

Dried fruit is not routinely offered as a snack because it can stick to teeth and contribute to tooth decay. If dried fruit is provided, this will be offered appropriately and staff will encourage children to drink water afterwards.

School Meals

School meals are provided by Gateshead Council and are designed to support healthy eating and balanced nutrition.

The school will continue to work alongside catering providers to promote healthy food choices and positive oral health messages.

Packed Lunches

Children may bring a packed lunch from home.

We encourage parents and carers to provide a healthy, balanced packed lunch that supports both general and oral health.

Please do not include:

- Fizzy drinks.
- Energy drinks.
- Sweets intended for consumption during the school day.
- Chocolate bars.

Children bringing packed lunches should have water available to drink during lunchtime.

Where concerns arise regarding the nutritional value of a packed lunch, staff may discuss this supportively with parents and carers.

Dental Visits

Regular dental check-ups are an important part of maintaining good oral health.

Parents and carers are encouraged to register their child with a dentist as soon as their first tooth appears, or by their first birthday, and continue attending regular dental appointments as recommended by their dental team.

To locate an NHS dentist accepting new patients, visit:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

For urgent dental advice or emergency dental care, contact NHS 111.

Information about local dental services may be shared with families where available.

Birthdays, Celebrations and Special Events

We recognise that celebrations are an important part of school life and children's experiences.

Nursery Birthdays

Parents may provide a birthday cake for their child's nursery class if they wish.

To support oral health:

- Children will continue to be offered healthy snack options.
- Water will be available alongside any birthday treat.
- Birthday celebrations should not replace a healthy meal or snack.

Sweets and Confectionery

If sweets are brought into school for classmates:

- They will be sent home with children where appropriate.
- They will not normally be consumed during the school day.

Special Events

This policy does not prevent occasional treats during:

- School parties.
- Religious celebrations.
- Cultural events.
- Fundraising activities.
- Whole-school celebrations.

Such events will be occasional and balanced by the school's overall commitment to healthy lifestyles.

Rewards and Positive Recognition

The Drive Community Primary School uses a range of positive behaviour and achievement strategies, including:

- Verbal praise.
- Certificates.
- Stickers.
- Class Dojo points.
- Celebration assemblies.
- Positions of responsibility.

The school seeks to avoid using food or confectionery as rewards wherever possible.

On rare occasions where food forms part of a special event or celebration, this will be provided in moderation and alongside healthy lifestyle messages.

Dental Emergencies

If staff believe a child may be experiencing a dental emergency, injury or significant dental pain:

- Appropriate first aid will be provided where possible.
- Parents or carers will be contacted immediately.
- Parents or carers may be asked to collect their child and seek urgent dental or medical advice.

Where a dental injury occurs at school, it will be managed in line with the school's First Aid and Accident Procedures.

Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting children's oral health.

We encourage families to:

- Brush their child's teeth twice daily using fluoride toothpaste.
- Supervise toothbrushing where appropriate.
- Limit the frequency of sugary foods and drinks.
- Choose water and milk as the main drinks.
- Attend regular dental appointments.
- Share any concerns about their child's oral health with the school.

We will continue to provide information, support and signposting to help families promote good oral health at home.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff will:

- Promote positive oral health messages.
- Model healthy eating habits.
- Encourage children to drink water regularly.
- Support oral health education through learning opportunities.
- Share concerns relating to a child's oral health with parents and carers where appropriate.
- Work alongside external professionals to support oral health initiatives.

Supervised Toothbrushing in Early Years

As part of our commitment to promoting good oral health, children in Early Years may participate in a supervised toothbrushing programme.

The programme aims to help children develop positive oral hygiene habits and understand the importance of looking after their teeth from an early age.

Our Early Years Staff will:

- Obtain parental consent before a child participates in supervised toothbrushing.
- Follow current oral health guidance and local authority procedures.
- Ensure each child has their own clearly labelled toothbrush.
- Store toothbrushes hygienically to prevent cross-contamination.
- Replace toothbrushes regularly and whenever necessary.
- Use age-appropriate fluoride toothpaste in accordance with current guidance.
- Ensure staff supervising toothbrushing have received appropriate training.
- Promote independence while providing support where needed.

Children will be encouraged to:

- Brush all tooth surfaces carefully.
- Spit out excess toothpaste after brushing.
- Avoid rinsing with water immediately after brushing, as this helps fluoride continue protecting the teeth.

Appropriate cleaning, storage and infection control procedures will be followed at all times.

Parents and carers will be informed if there are any concerns regarding their child's oral health, oral hygiene, or participation in the programme.