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**Oral Health**

Dental decay is a serious problem in young people – and it is largely preventable. In 2017 in England, almost a quarter of five-year-olds had experienced tooth decay, having an average of 3 or 4 decayed teeth. Figures suggest that more than 105 children a day have their teeth removed in hospital due to tooth decay.

Muddy Boots have set out to ensure we are working together with parents to improve dental hygiene and reduce the risk of tooth decay. Tooth decay is the most common reason for hospital admissions for children aged 5-9years old, oral health is therefore an important aspect of health status and physical readiness. The long-term effects for children with poor oral health can impact them on into adulthood. Poor dental hygiene can lead to serious health problems including an increase in risk in Alzheimer’s disease and heart disease. Other conditions that have been linked to poor oral health are endocarditis, an infection of the inner lining of the heart chambers or valves, this occurs when bacteria comes from another part of the body like the mouth and enters the bloodstream attaching to the heart.

**Why?**

* Tooth decay is the most common oral disease affecting children and young people in England
* Poor oral hygiene can affect children and young people’s ability to sleep, eat, speak, play and socialise with other children.
* A quarter of 5-year-olds have tooth decay

**How?**

Food/snacks

* A variety of tooth friendly snacks will be provided daily, and children will be encouraged to try new foods through our Eat the Rainbow project
* Any food containing sugar will only be provided on a very limited basis

Drinks

* Milk and water will be the only drinks offered to the children throughout the day.
* We request parents only put water or milk in children’s bottles and not squash.
* No fizzy drinks will never be offered in nursery, and we discourage children having fizzy drinks at home
* Fresh water will be provided all day for the children to access

Teeth brushing

* For children at high risk of tooth decay or already displaying signs, we will offer tooth brushing at the nursery.
* All children will be supervised whilst brushing their teeth

Promoting oral hygiene

* Oral health will be included in curriculum work and any learning opportunities where it is appropriate
* Visits from a dentist, hygienist or someone that can talk about oral health will be arranged during the nursery year
* The nursery will provide books in going to the dentist, big teeth and brush to play with and teeth brushing in our role play areas.
* Staff undertake oral health training and talk to children about looking after their teeth
* As part of our school readiness, we will assess the children’s understanding of oral health

Parents/ Guardians

* Muddy Boots will post regular information and advice on oral health and how parents can prevent tooth decay.
* Parents are encouraged to speak to the nursery if they are finding barriers to accessing dental services for their children.
* We request that parents have a good oral health routine at home that includes, supervising teeth brushing twice a day until the children at 7years old and that they take their child to the dentist as soon as the first tooth erupts.

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| **This policy was adopted on** | **Signed on behalf of the nursery** | **Date for review** |
| **Sept 2022** | **Dani Bowen** | **Sept 2023** |