**04.6 Oral Health Policy**

**Policy statement**

We promote healthy eating at Gilah which includes food and drink low in sugar to limit damage to children’s teeth. We promote good oral health habits through discussion, activities, and parent education.

This has been included because good oral health habits need to be formed from the earliest age. Tooth decay is largely preventable, but it’s still a serious problem among young children.

Nearly a quarter of 5-year-olds in England have tooth decay, with 3 or 4 teeth affected on average. Tooth extraction is one of the most common procedures for children under 6 in hospital. Extraction is also the most common reason for hospital admission for children aged 6 to 10. Children from more deprived backgrounds are more likely to have tooth decay.

Children who have toothache, or need treatment, may have pain or infections. This can have a wider effect and lead to problems eating, sleeping, socialising, and learning.

**Procedures**

We follow these procedures to promote good oral health at Gilah.

* Children are encouraged to drink frequently throughout the day. Only milk and water are provided to drink.
* We encourage children to use open top cups.
* Snacks contain a variety of low sugar foods including dairy which is enriched in calcium which is essential for the health of teeth and gums.
* We discuss the importance of healthy eating and oral hygiene in an age-appropriate way.
* We include healthy cooking activities limiting foods high in sugar for special occasions, birthdays, festivals etc.
* We advise parents to brush their children’s teeth and visit the dentist regularly.
* We have resources to encourage good oral health habits in play through using toothbrushes in waterplay, role play and using model teeth.
* We read stories about teeth and smiles, talk about healthy food and drinks that grow strong teeth and those that do not. We look at each other and our teeth using mirrors.

**Legal framework**

* EYFS framework 2021

**Further guidance**

* <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/oral-health>
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-oral-health-supervised-tooth-brushing-programme-toolkit>
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/oral-health>
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-supervised-toothbrushing-programmes>
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/smile4life-in-north-west-england>
* <https://www.pacey.org.uk/working-in-childcare/spotlight-on/oral-health/>

**Other useful publications**

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