GEMS TINEY HOME NURSERY

HOME FROM HOME CHILDCARE

Dental Hygiene Policy

Purpose

We promote good oral health through everyday routines, healthy food and drink, play and partnership with parents. Oral health contributes to children's comfort, confidence and wellbeing. Our role is to encourage healthy habits and seek appropriate help for concerns.

Learning about healthy teeth

We use age-appropriate conversations, stories, songs, pictures and models to help children learn why teeth matter, how dentists help and how to care for their mouths. Activities are inclusive and reassuring, without judging children or families.

We do not provide routine or supervised toothbrushing at the setting. Parents remain responsible for brushing at home. Any proposed future toothbrushing programme would require separate planning, infection control arrangements and parental discussion before introduction.

Healthy food and drinks

We offer tooth-friendly meals and snacks and limit the frequency of sugary foods. Water is the usual drink between meals; plain milk is offered where suitable for the child's age and dietary needs. Babies' breastmilk or formula and age-appropriate feeding arrangements are respected.

We avoid sugary drinks and encourage age-appropriate open or free-flow cups. Bottles are not used for juice or sweetened drinks. We discuss suitable food and drink with parents, taking account of allergies and individual requirements.

Supporting families

We encourage parents to begin brushing when the first tooth appears, twice daily including last thing at night, using fluoride toothpaste containing at least 1,000 ppm fluoride. NHS advice is a smear for children under three and a pea-sized amount for children aged three to six.

Parents should brush or help children until at least age seven and encourage them to spit out excess toothpaste without rinsing. Toothpaste must be kept out of children's reach. Families should follow individual advice from their dentist where it differs from general guidance.

We encourage early dental attendance from the first tooth and regular visits as advised by the dentist. Concerns about pain, decay or difficulties accessing care are discussed privately and sensitively, with signposting to a dentist, health visitor or NHS services.

Hygiene and daily care

Children do not share drinking vessels or utensils. Cups, utensils and resources are cleaned appropriately, and adults support handwashing and safe handling of items that children put in their mouths. Dental teaching models and resources are cleaned between uses as needed.

Any individual oral care needs are discussed with parents and recorded in an agreed care plan where appropriate. Medicines are only administered under our medication procedures and written permissions.

Dental injury or pain

A trained adult provides appropriate first aid, assesses the child and contacts parents promptly about an injury or significant pain. We seek urgent dental advice or NHS 111 for a knocked-out tooth or other dental injury, rather than waiting for a routine appointment.

A knocked-out baby tooth must never be put back into its socket. For a knocked-out permanent tooth, urgent dental treatment is needed; we handle the tooth by its crown and, if it is not replaced, keep it in milk while obtaining professional advice. We do not place a loose tooth in a young child's mouth because of choking risk.

We call 999 for life-threatening symptoms such as breathing difficulty or a serious associated injury and follow emergency advice. Necessary emergency first aid and help must not be delayed while trying to reach parents. Injuries, treatment, advice and parent contact are recorded under our Accident and Injury Policy.

Concerns and review

We do not diagnose dental conditions. We record and discuss observed concerns and support families to obtain professional advice. Persistent concerns that may indicate unmet health needs are considered under safeguarding procedures in the context of the child and family.

This policy is shared with assistants and families and reviewed annually or sooner if guidance or individual needs change. References: current EYFS childminder framework; NHS Baby and toddler tooth care, www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/how-to-take-care-of-your-baby-or-toddlers-teeth/; NHS Knocked-out tooth, www.nhs.uk/conditions/knocked-out-tooth/.

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