



Greatstone Primary School

Dummy Policy

Author(s):	Kate Bovingdon
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Review Frequency:	Every two years
Review Date:	December 2027
References:	NHS Guidance on Dummies The Lullaby Trust
To be read in conjunction with	Foundation Stage Policy Keeping Children in Education Behaviour Policy
Key contact personnel	Designated Safeguarding Leads: Mrs Kay (Head of School), Mrs F Roberts (Deputy Headteacher) Hannah Ferris (Lead DSL), Kate Bovingdon (DSL and Early Years Lead/Senco and named Governor with lead responsibility).

Dummy Policy

Purpose:

This policy sets out our approach to the safe and appropriate use of dummies within our early Learning Zone. It is designed to promote children's health, comfort, emotional wellbeing, and development while supporting parents in transitions such as weaning, self-feeding, and speech development.

Policy Statement:

At Greatstone School and Nursery, we recognise that bottles, cups, and dummies can play a role in children's comfort and development, particularly during infancy. However, we also acknowledge the importance of encouraging healthy habits as children grow. Our aim is to support children's transitions in a way that is sensitive, developmentally appropriate, and in partnership with families.

With increasing understanding of the impact of dummies on children's development it is key that as an early years setting we consider our role in promoting their good use and how a policy would support this in practice. Although it is not statutory for settings to have such a policy, we believe we have a professional responsibility to provide care based on evidence and best practice. The research that is available, along with considerable feedback from speech and language, dentistry and dietetic professionals, highlights that the use of bottles, cups and dummies can have a direct impact on children's oral health, speech and language skills and even general health.

Aim

It is our aim to work with parents to ensure that the children in our care receive the best outcomes. This policy is designed to support practitioners and parents on the best way to use dummies with their children. It focuses on the importance of good practice in supporting children to give up dummies at the right time to ensure that children's speech and language development is not hindered. The links between ear infections, gastrointestinal infections, speech development difficulties and dental decay due to the inappropriate use of bottles and dummies is quite significant when considered in conjunction with the impact that poor overall communication development has on children's life chances and futures.

Best Practice

Dummies

- If using a dummy, we as professionals will recommend that parents choose an orthodontic dummy as the shape of the teat causes less damage to teeth.
- A dummy will only be used within the setting for sleep / nap times or to soothe when upset.
- We will recommend that from two years, that dummy use is reduced with the aim of moving on completely.
- Practitioners will attempt to find alternative ways of soothing / distracting the child, using a dummy as a final resort (e.g. gentle singing, humming, whispering, providing a favourite toy or listening to relaxing music).

- All dummies will be stored in a labelled, clean, individual container provided by parents, not a plastic bag.
- All practitioners will be trained to use the 'Look, Listen and Think' rule.

LOOK at the child - Can you see something that is making them sad? Can you fix it?
LISTEN to their cries – you might be able to tell what they want by their different cries.
THINK about what else could help – try distracting them with a song, cuddle, favourite toy etc.

Oral Health and Speech Development:

We are committed to supporting children's **oral health** and **language development**. Prolonged or inappropriate use of bottles and dummies may impact speech, teeth alignment, and feeding habits. We work closely with families to:

- Encourage age-appropriate transitions
- Provide oral health advice
- Signpost to health professionals where needed

Working in Partnership with Parents

We understand that every child is different, and transitions should be handled gently and individually. We will:

- Discuss your child's routine and comfort needs during registration
- Respect home routines while gently encouraging developmentally appropriate habits
- Keep you informed of your child's progress and preferences

The setting will work in partnership with parents and will offer ideas and strategies to move the child on to the next stage of their development in accordance with the 'Dummy Policy.

Links with other Policies

This policy considers the following policies:

- Health and Safety Policy, ensuring that we keep children safe and healthy
- SEND policy
- Learning and Development policy to ensure that children can achieve the best outcomes
- Sleep and Rest Policy
- Self-Regulation Policy
- Food Hygiene and Healthy Eating Policy

Review and Monitoring:

This policy is reviewed annually or when guidance changes. All staff are trained to follow this policy as part of our wider health, hygiene, and development framework.

Policy Reviewed: December 2027