



FLASH LEY COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL
& NURSERY

DUMMY POLICY

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Approved by: Jo Banks May 2025

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Intention:

It is our aim across our Early Years provision to ensure all children are happy, settled and secure. We understand that it is parental preference for some children to use a dummy as a form of comfort. As babies get older they need to learn to move their mouths in different ways, to smile, blow bubbles, make sounds, chew food and eventually to talk. As babies move their mouths and experiment with babbling sounds they are learning to make the quick mouth movements needed for speech. The more practice they get the better their awareness of their mouths and the better their speech will be in the future. This policy sets out the use of dummies within our early years provision to ensure a balance between comfort for children in our care and the effective promotion of children's development.

Implementation:

On Admission:

Parents will be made aware of our dummy use policy and supported in understanding the reasoning behind our practise before admission to our setting.

Babies 0 - 12 months:

Dummies can form an important part of a babies routine offering comfort, aiding sleep and supporting the development of babies natural sucking instincts. Where Parents and Carers show preference for dummy use we will work in partnership to implement safe dummy use within our setting.

As a setting we follow NHS guidance and guidance provided by Speech and Language professionals and dummy use in our 'First Steps' baby room will follow the below practises:

- Dummies will only be provided at set times such as sleep time. Dummies will only be given when children are lay down to sleep and not for prolonged periods beforehand. This will support your child in developing self-soothing skills and emotional regulation. Over reliance on dummies for soothing can result in children experience a delay in their emotional development and tooth growth.
- As dummies limit the amount of babbling and mouth movements in Babies dummies will not be provided during times children are awake and actively learning.
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Dummy Hygiene:

- At times when dummies are not in use each child has a named dummy pot filled with a sterile solution for dummies to be stored.
- Should a child's dummy be dropped onto a surface or floor they will be dipped into sterile solution for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- Dummies will be returned to parents at the end of each day.

Children 1 - 2 years:

We understand that as children develop from babies to toddlers it is difficult to cease the use of a dummy and we aim to work in partnership with parents to eliminate dummy use by 18 months at the latest. Children 1 – 2 years will follow the below practises within our setting:

- From 1 years old dummies will only be provided for sleep when necessary and we will always attempt to relax and soothe children who sleep without their dummy first. Dummies will be given as a last resort only.
- Dummies will not be given during times when children are awake and actively learning to ensure children's physical development and speech skills are fostered.
- We will support parents in reducing the use of dummies from 12 months with individual dummy plans.
- Staff will share ongoing guidance and support with parents to work in partnership to reduce and ultimately cease dummy use by 18 months.

Children 2 - 5 years

By the age of 2 children will not be permitted to use dummies within our Early Years setting. This is to ensure children are developing their speech and language skills. We will foster an environment which supports children in regulating their emotions through a variety of strategies and replace the use of dummies for soothing with age appropriate techniques.

Impact:

- Dummies in our setting are provided in line with NHS guidance and Speech and Language professionals to ensure we promote the holistic development of all children.
- Dummy use is prohibited beyond 2 years within the setting to ensure children's oral health, physical development and emotional regulation skills are fostered.
- All children are supported in developing in line with expected age-related milestones and no child's development is hindered.
- Parents are supported in removing dummies from children when developmentally appropriate.

Dummy Tips for Parents

Golden rules

1. Don't let a dummy become a habit.
2. Dummies and bottles are not suitable for breast fed babies until feeding is established.
3. Use it at set times - when cross & tired or settling down to sleep.
4. Never dip a dummy in drinks, honey, jam, etc - this leads to teeth becoming rotten and decayed.
5. Wait until your child needs the dummy rather than automatically giving it to them.
6. Wean your baby off the dummy as soon as you can, preferably by 12 months old. It is much easier than at 2-3 years old!
7. Speech and language therapists recommend that children over 12 months old do not use a dummy/bottles.

Potential dummy problems

Using a dummy too much can lead to later problems.

- incorrect positioning of teeth so that the bottom and top teeth at the front don't meet properly.
- Encourage tooth decay (especially the front teeth) if the dummy is dipped into sweet things
- your child may not use the full range of tongue movements that are necessary for making all the speech sounds
- your child has fewer opportunities to babble and use sounds to communicate with you and others limiting their social development
- Mouth breathing - your child may tend to breathe through their mouth rather than their nose. This is often linked to long-term dribbling.

How do you get rid of a dummy?

Aim to get rid of the dummy/bottle around 12 months or sooner with these top tips:

- Wean them off it by gradually decreasing its use.
- Persuade them to give (all) their dummies to their setting.
- Get the child to throw the dummy/bottle in the bin.
- Try cuddling or reading to your child before bedtime instead of giving the dummy/bottle.
- Use a star chart to motivate them.
- Give your dummy/bottle away at a special time i.e. to Santa.
- Leave your dummies/bottles at a special place.