

# Netherton Park Nursery School



Netherton Park  
Nursery School

## Healthy Lifestyle Policy

Date: September 2024	Review date: September 2027
Approved at:	Approved by:
Chair of Governor signature:	

## Relevant documents:

- Safeguarding and child Protection Policy
- Bereavement Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Health Policy
- Sleep Policy

## National & local documents

Overweight children aged 2 to 5

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/overweight-children-2-5/>

Public Health Matters - Influencing healthy eating habits through early years settings

<https://publichealthmatters.blog.gov.uk/2017/11/28/influencing-healthy-eating-habits-through-early-years-settings/>

Public Health England Guidance - Childhood obesity: applying All Our Health Updated 1 May 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childhood-obesity-applying-all-our-health/childhood-obesity-applying-all-our-health#promoting-a-healthier-weight-in-your-professional-practice>

Sleep Foundation – children & sleep

<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/children-and-sleep>

Annals of Nutrition and Metabolism - Sleep and Early Brain Development

<https://www.karger.com/Article/Fulltext/508055>

How much sleep do children need? - Sleep and tiredness

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-much-sleep-do-kids-need/>

Dept of Health & Social Care - Policy paper

Tackling obesity: empowering adults and children to live healthier lives

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-obesity-government-strategy/tackling-obesity-empowering-adults-and-children-to-live-healthier-lives>

LEICESTER-SHIRE HEALTHY TOTS TOOLKIT

<https://www.leicestershirehealthytots.org.uk/uploads/healthy-tots-toolkit.pdf>

Little Explorers: Growing interest in healthy eating -The definitive guide to active learning in early year

Dudley Health & Wellbeing 2017 – 2022

[http://cmis.dudley.gov.uk/CMIS5/Document.ashx?  
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H M Government - Childhood Obesity A Plan for Action August 2016

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/546588/  
Childhood\\_obesity\\_2016\\_2\\_acc.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/546588/Childhood_obesity_2016_2_acc.pdf)

Eat better start better Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England – A Practical Guide

[http://cft-staging-cdn.core-clients.co.uk.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/2015/06/  
CFT\\_Early\\_Years\\_Guide\\_Interactive\\_Sept-12.pdf](http://cft-staging-cdn.core-clients.co.uk.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/2015/06/CFT_Early_Years_Guide_Interactive_Sept-12.pdf)

**Dudley’s Health & Wellbeing Strategy states:**

“From ages 5 and 11, overweight and obesity increases in Dudley. More adults are overweight and obese in Dudley relative to England, and levels are higher in our more disadvantaged areas. We know that if we establish healthy habits early in life our children and young people are more likely to be a healthy weight as adults”.

At Netherton Park Nursery School we believe that eating the right food, drinking lots of water, getting the right amount of sleep and being active, is essential for good health and effective learning and teaching. We believe that all children should be taught what a healthy lifestyle is and encouraged to follow one.

A healthy lifestyle gives us physical and mental wellbeing and good social connections. Being healthy is a good way to be kind to yourself. A healthy lifestyle includes a balanced diet and regular exercise. It should include plenty of rest, especially sleep.

*“Sleep is an essential part of everyone’s routine and an indispensable part of a healthy lifestyle”.*

**Rationale**

Levels of childhood obesity in England are amongst the highest in the developed world, with almost one in four children being overweight or obese before they start school. Therefore, reducing childhood obesity is a key priority. Obesity rates are highest in the most deprived 10% of the UK population, more than twice that of the least deprived 10%. English Indices of Deprivation 2019 indicates that Dudley has a high percentage of areas of deprivation.

Research suggests that there is a link between diet and chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, dental health and obesity. Many children experience bullying, poor psychological and emotional health linked to their weight. Children living with obesity are more likely to become adults living with obesity and have a higher risk of morbidity, disability and premature mortality in adulthood.

We know that the experience of a variety of different foods at an early age increases acceptance of new foods, and provides a more diverse diet with the range of nutrients, vitamins and minerals needed for health, therefore the time that children spend in early years settings provides an ideal opportunity to shape healthy behaviours.

The Early Years Foundation Stage profile 2021 handbook states that *“Children know the importance for good health of physical exercise and a healthy diet, and talk about ways to keep healthy and safe”*

We believe Netherton Park Nursery School has an important role to play in helping our children develop healthy lifestyles.

*“Schools have a fundamental role to play in helping equip children with the knowledge they need to make healthy choices for themselves and creating a healthy environment for children to learn and play.”*

Government report of Childhood obesity 2019

### **Our Aim**

We aim to encourage our children to develop a healthy lifestyle, by promoting clear and consistent messages about food and healthy eating habits, keeping hydrated, sleep and exercise that will last a lifetime.

### **At Netherton Park Nursery School:**

- We encourage children to eat breakfast every day
- We encourage regular brushing of teeth / good oral hygiene
- We encourage good hygiene routines i.e. regular hand washing, daily bath or shower
- A selection of healthy options is offered for snack. This consists of fresh fruit, water or milk
- All children are encouraged to participate in the snack routine
- We provide water to drink throughout the session and at lunchtime for children who attend for 30 hours
- We promote the eating of healthy foods with appropriate portion control for children who bring a packed lunch
- We promote sun safety by encouraging all children to wear a high sun factor, wear a sun hat and to limit the amount of time spent in the sun
- We offer a range of sessions, provide information on our website and in literature for parents/carers to ensure they have the correct information to make informed choices
- Encourage and support children’s physical and mental health through providing a range of outdoor learning opportunities on a daily basis

### **Safeguarding**

We encourage parents/carer’s to respect that every child has the right to basic needs: a balanced diet, adequate clothing, sufficient shelter, and proper healthcare. This also includes any other requirements to lead a healthy and active life. If the parent/carer is not acting to make changes that are needed to the child’s lifestyle to promote healthier options, then this can come within the definition of neglect. We offer support through food bank vouchers, The NEST and requests for support from Early Help to enable their child to thrive.

## Healthy and balanced diet

A healthy balanced diet for children aged under five years is based on the four food groups, which provide a range of essential nutrients that children need to grow and develop.

Starchy foods

Fruit and vegetables

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Milk and dairy foods

One of the basic principles of healthy eating is variety, as eating a wider range of different foods provides a better balance of nutrients. Planning meals and snacks to include a variety of food and drinks from these four food groups each day will provide children with the good balance of nutrients they need.

It is also important that children do not eat too much sugar and salt. Eating sugary food and drinks too often can lead to tooth decay and provide 'empty calories' which fill children up but do not provide other essential nutrients.

At Netherton Park Nursery School we promote and support a healthy diet for all children through our daily snack time. All children have access to a range of fruits to eat. For those children who attend for 30 hours and therefore stay for their lunch we provide parents with information about 'healthy' lunchbox ideas. This includes information on appropriate portion sizes, varying the foods over the week, limiting crisps and other processed foods, including fruit and vegetables and ensuring that small items such as grapes, cherry tomatoes and sausages are cut up correctly.

## Drinks

All living things need water to survive. Along with milk, plain water is the best drink choice for children because it is really healthy with zero calories and no added sugar. It is good for the body - keeps joints, bones and teeth healthy, helps the blood circulate, and can help children maintain a healthy weight into adulthood. Being well hydrated improves mood, memory and attention in children. Milk and water are the only drinks that should be provided between meals and with snacks as they do not damage teeth or cause tooth decay.



Water and milk are all the children need. Fizzy drinks and many other drinks marketed for children usually contain way more sugar than children need in a day and can contribute to poor health.

### Here's what to avoid:

**Sugary drinks:** Try to limit them for children as much as possible. This includes sports drinks, juice cocktails, sodas, lemonade, and sweetened water. These drinks discourage a habit of drinking plain water, and can add extra "empty calories" to the diet. They can also leave children less hungry for the nutritious foods they really need. Added sugars can lead to excess weight gain, dental cavities, diabetes, and more.

**Fruit Juice:** Even 100% juice should be strictly limited. While it can contain some vitamins, these drinks are high in sugar and calories and low in the healthy fibre found in whole fruit. Because of its sweet taste, once children are offered juice, it can be difficult to get them to drink plain water.

Keep these amounts in mind:

Children 1-3 years of age should have no more than 4 oz per day. For older children, juice is only recommended if whole fruits are not available. Children ages 4–6 years, no more than 4–6 oz per day.

If fruit juice is offered it needs to be at meal times only, and diluted - half juice and half water)

**Fruit juice drinks** – these are not the same as fruit juice. Products labelled as fruit juice drinks generally contain only a small proportion of fruit juice with water and added sugar, and provide little nutritional value. Check the ingredient list on product labels and avoid products containing added sugar.

Avoid all soft drinks such as squash, fizzy drinks, energy drinks and flavoured water, even if they are labelled ‘sugar-free’, ‘no-added-sugar’ or ‘reduced sugar’. These drinks can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value.

Avoid tea, coffee, cola and other drinks or foods with added caffeine or other stimulants. These are not recommended for young children, as caffeine is a stimulant which can disturb children’s sleep, behaviour and concentration. Tea and coffee also contain tannins which can interfere with a child’s ability to absorb iron.

**Flavoured milk:** Even though you get the benefits of the calcium and vitamins found in milk, flavoured milk can be much higher in sugar. These added sugars should be avoided to discourage a preference for sweet flavours, which can make it difficult to have success when offering regular milk.

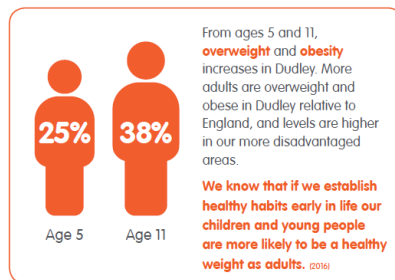
**Milk** is a good drink for 1-4 year olds but it is also a ‘food’ and it is important that milk consumption is gradually reduced as food intake at meals and snacks increases. Semi-skimmed milk can be introduced gradually after the age of 2 years, provided that the child is a good eater and has a varied diet. Skimmed milk is not suitable as the main drink for children under 5 years of age. Children over the age of 1 year **should not** rely on fortified, sweetened growing up milks for their nutrients. Children should be encouraged to get the nutrients they need from good food as they grow up, and not rely on milk drinks which may blunt their appetite at meal times. On average, a 1-2 year old is likely to need no more than 400ml of milk a day as a drink (about 2/3 pint) and a 3-4 year old is likely to need no more than 300ml of milk a day as a drink (about 1/2 pint). At Netherton Park Nursery School each child will be offered a carton of milk each day—this contains 1/3 pint.

### **Signs of dehydration**

Even with the best habits and intentions, trouble can arise. It is important to know the signs of dehydration so you can address them quickly. Symptoms in children include:

- Dry lips or sticky mouth
- Less urination or dark-coloured urine - remember urine should be very light yellow, almost clear
- Sleepy and irritable
- Flushed skin

At Netherton Park Nursery School we support children being hydrated correctly and provide both water and milk for all snack times. All children are provided with a water bottle to use during their session. These are filled with fresh water daily and topped up during the session as needed.



## Outdoor learning and physical activity

The NHS promotes that children “should spend at least 180 minutes (3 hours) a day doing a variety of physical activities spread throughout the day, including active and outdoor play. The more the better. “ and that “Children under 5 should not be inactive for long periods, except when they're asleep. Watching TV, travelling by car, bus or train, or being strapped into a buggy for long periods are not good for a child's health and development. “

As part of an active lifestyle, at Netherton Park Nursery School we offer our children the opportunity to engage in a range of outdoor learning opportunities including our woodland area, where we aim to develop self-awareness, self-regulation, intrinsic motivation, empathy, independence, good social communication skills, a positive mental attitude, self-esteem and confidence. Children are supported to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food through a range of activities and group time sessions.

## Sleep

Studies have shown that children who regularly get an adequate amount of sleep have improved attention, behaviour, learning, memory, and overall mental and physical health. The early years of life are characterized by dramatic developmental changes. Sleep is one of the primary activities of the brain during early development and plays an important role in healthy cognitive and psychosocial development in early life

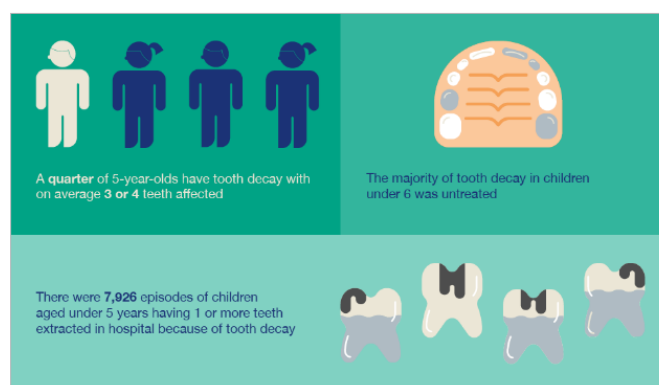
Sleep plays a crucial role in the development of young minds. In addition to having a direct effect on happiness, research shows that sleep impacts alertness and attention, cognitive performance, mood, resiliency, vocabulary acquisition, and learning and memory. Sleep also has important effects on growth.

**Lack of sleep** causes irritability, increased stress, forgetfulness, and difficulties with learning and low motivation, over time, it can contribute to anxiety and depression.

At Netherton Park Nursery School we encourage parents/carers to make sure their child gets a good quality nights sleep which ensures they will have a sound foundation for proper mind and body development. This is achieved by setting a regular and consistent bedtime routine which provides children with a sense of predictability and security.

**The NHS advises children 3 to 5 years old need 10 to 13 hours of sleep daily including naps.**

## Oral Health



Every child who has teeth is at risk of tooth decay, but the risk increases for children who are more likely to be eating a poor diet that is high in sugar or less likely to be brushing their teeth twice daily with fluoride toothpaste. In 2015-2016 tooth decay was the most common reason for hospital admission for children aged 5 to 9 years-old and the sixth most common procedure in hospital for children aged 4 years and under. Oral health is therefore an important aspect of a child's overall health status and to children's school readiness, and is seen as a marker of wider health and social care issues including poor nutrition and obesity.

### NHS advice:

- Parents or carers should brush or supervise tooth brushing.
- Brush teeth twice daily for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush last thing at night before bed and on 1 other occasion.
- Use children's fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1,000ppm of fluoride (check label) or family toothpaste containing between 1,350ppm and 1,500ppm fluoride.
- Use only a smear of toothpaste.
- Make sure children don't eat or lick toothpaste from the tube.
- Spit out after brushing and don't rinse – if you rinse, the fluoride won't work as well.

NHS dental care is free for children and all children should attend a dental check up regularly.

**Limit or avoid some foods.** Sugary foods, juices, candy (especially sticky gummy candy, gummy vitamins, or fruit roll-up) can erode enamel and cause cavities. If your children eat these foods, they should rinse their mouth or brush their teeth after eating to wash away the sugar. The same goes for taking sweetened liquid medicines: children should always rinse or brush afterward.

### **Dummies**

Sucking a dummy can help relax and settle babies but many parents are concerned about the effect of a dummy on their child's teeth and mouth. For many children, sucking a dummy, thumb or finger can cause changes to the teeth and jaws. The younger the age at which a child stops sucking a dummy, the more likely their teeth and jaws will correct the growth problems naturally. If a child is still sucking a dummy when their adult teeth come through, there is a much higher risk of permanent changes to the growth of the teeth and jaws.

**Never** put anything sweet on a dummy as this can cause severe tooth decay very quickly.

Follow good hygiene procedures. Dummies may cause infection if they are shared with other children or picked up from the floor.

Long-term dummy use may lead to:

- incorrect positioning of teeth – upper teeth may be pushed further forward than is ideal, or the top and bottom front teeth may not touch. This can change the way the teeth meet when the child bites and can also affect speech development, especially 's' and 'z' sounds
- mouth breathing – children may tend to breathe through their mouth rather than their nose.
- speech and language problems – having a dummy in the mouth may delay children using sounds to communicate, and prevent them from exploring the full range of tongue movements required to make all the speech sounds
- tooth decay (especially the front teeth) – if the dummy is dipped in sugary substances such as honey or jam

At Netherton Park Nursery School we encourage the use of dummies for our youngest children on Acorn Time for Two's to be for when children are settling in or are very distressed. We discourage the use of dummies within our Oak Nursery and ask that parents do not allow their child to come into Nursery with their dummy in their mouth.

### **Bottles and cups**

Once a child is aged over 1 year feeding from a bottle should be discouraged. When using a bottle or trainer cup, don't put anything in it other than breast milk, formula milk or water and do not add anything else (including

sugar, cereals, baby rice or chocolate powder) to the feed. Comfort sucking from a bottle on sweetened drinks causes tooth decay in young children. Drinks flow very slowly through a teat, which means the sugary substance will be in contact with their teeth for longer.

There's no need for a child to use a sippy cup. They're similar to a bottle in that they require the child to suck to make them work. A free-flow feeder cup is better, as it doesn't have valves and the flow of liquid is unrestricted. This means that children learn to drink normally rather than by sucking.

### **Sun Safety**

Children's skin is much more sensitive than adult skin, and damage caused by repeated exposure to sunlight could lead to skin cancer developing in later life.

With this in mind Netherton Park Nursery School regularly reminds parents/carers apply sunscreen to their children BEFORE they attend Nursery each day. We promote and encourage that this must be a factor of 30 or higher - preferably factor 50. We ensure that during the warm and sunny weather all children wear a sun hat whilst outside and we limit the amount of time children spend in the sun. We also offer extra drinks of water during these times. If parents/carers choose not to put sun cream onto their child then the child MUST only go outside for very limited periods of time/stay inside when the weather is very warm. Staff will monitor this and make informed decisions.

### **Emotional and Mental Health**

Mental health is the way children think and feel about themselves and the world around them. It affects how children cope with life's challenges and stresses.

Children with good mental health:

- feel happy and positive about themselves most of the time
- are kind to themselves during tough times or when things don't go the way they expect
- enjoy life
- learn well
- get along well with family and friends
- can manage sad, worrying or angry feelings
- can bounce back from tough times
- are prepared to try new or challenging things

Children experience all sorts of emotions as part of growing up - fear, disappointment, sadness, anxiety, anger, joy, hope and so on. When children cope with big emotions or calm themselves down in difficult or emotional situations, they're likely to feel good about themselves.

At Netherton Park Nursery School we support parents with developing their child's emotional and mental health through having regular open and honest discussions. This can include strategies for behaviour management, appropriate expectations, consistency and boundaries. Our Safeguarding and Pastoral Lead offers a range of strategies and sessions for parents that support the role of the key worker. The Nursery School Behaviour Policy also supports and promotes this.

### **Safe Internet use and use of devices**

The internet can be a really useful and positive tool – for our everyday lives, for education, networking and entertainment. It helps with learning and makes doing homework more interesting. Children's access to the online world is here to stay. This will invariably lead to a level of concern and risk.

Current research (Jan 2019) by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health looking at the impact of screen time on children:

- There tends to be a trend towards poorer educational outcomes, sleep and fitness for children using screens for long periods of time – there isn't however any evidence for and consistent health and well being benefits of screen time.
- Children with higher screen time tend to have a less healthy diet, higher energy intake and pronounced indicators of obesity.
- Screen time could be displacing positive activities such as sleep, time with family, exercise and we need to consider the effects this might be having.

### **Screen time - recommendations**

- Families should negotiate with older children, screen time limits based on the needs of the individual child – however with younger children (under 5) parents need to make an informed decision about the amount of time that is spent on devices and the type of activity they are doing.
- It is important that screens do not interfere with bedtime routines and it is recommended that all screens (TV and devices) are avoided at least an hour before bedtime – for adults and children.
- Agreeing a length of time that your child can use a device in each 'sitting', and each day.