

DUMMY POLICY



Oyster Bay Nursery

Draft Prepared	Sept 2024
Signed by Executive Headteacher	Ms D Hines
Signed by Chair of Governors	Nikki Mattin
Date Policy to be Reviewed	Sept 2026

Be Ready, Be Respectful, Be Responsible

Use of Dummies Policy

Policy Statement

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we recognise that a dummy can be a source of comfort for a settling and/or upset child and may often form part of a child's sleep routine.

We know that as babies age, they need to learn to move their mouths in different ways, smile, blow bubbles, make sounds, chew food, and eventually talk. The more they practice, the more aware they will become of their mouths and speech. We know that the overuse of dummies may affect a child's language development as it may restrict these movements.

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Educational Programme states that:

'The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively.'

To support children's language development, Our Nursery aims to:

- Discuss the use of dummies with parents during transition phone calls/home visits as part of each baby/toddler's individual care plan.
- We will only allow dummies for comfort if a child is upset (for example, if they are new to the setting or parents let us know about changes or disruptions at home) and/or as part of their sleep routine.
- Store dummies in individual, hygienic dummy boxes labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children.
- Immediately clean or sterilise any dummy or bottle that falls on the floor and/or is picked up by another child.

When discouraging the dummy, staff will:

- Use a designated place for storing dummies and make the child aware that their dummy is there to help them feel more secure.
- Comfort the child and, if appropriate for the age/stage, explain why they are not allowed the dummy in a sensitive and appropriate manner.
- Distract children's attention from other activities and ensure they are settled before leaving them to play.
- Offer other comfort methods such as a toy, teddy or blanket.
- Explain to the child that they can have their dummy when they get home or at bedtime.

We will also offer support and advice to parents to discourage dummy use during waking hours at home and suggest ways the child can be fully weaned off their dummy (ideally by their 2nd birthday) through books and stories (when appropriate). We aim to work with parents to encourage children to be fully weaned off their dummies by their preschool year.

