



Barnsley

Supervised Toothbrushing Club Toolkit

2024



BARNSELY
Metropolitan Borough Council

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1. Introduction



A healthy mouth and smile mean we can eat, speak and socialise without pain and discomfort. However, almost 30% of five-year-olds in Barnsley have tooth decay. Poor oral health can lead to pain and infection, resulting in sleepless nights, difficulty eating and time off nursery or school. Toothbrushing Clubs also help settings to meet the elements of the OFSTED framework.

Every time we eat sugary foods or drinks, plaque bacteria produce acid, which attacks the teeth. Frequent acid attacks lead to tooth decay. Tooth decay can be prevented by reducing the consumption of sugary foods and drinks; and by strengthening the teeth through brushing with fluoride toothpaste.

Nurseries and schools provide a supportive environment to teach children about oral health; run supervised toothbrushing clubs so children learn how to brush their teeth; and promote toothbrushing and healthy eating at home. Oral health is an important part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and health and science education.

This toolkit will help you run a supervised toothbrushing club, implementing the Government's [guidance to support commissioning of supervised tooth brushing programmes in early years settings and schools](#) (see references.)

This toolkit will be updated when guidance changes.

2. Supervised toothbrushing club key contacts



Barnsley Family Hubs

The supervised toothbrushing clubs within Barnsley Family Hubs are run by Sharron O'Rourke, Healthy Lifestyles co-ordinator.

Sharron can be contacted by calling 01226 775881 or 07736460749, or by emailing sharonorourke@barnsley.gov.uk.

Primary schools and Early Year settings

The supervised toothbrushing clubs within other Early Year settings and Primary Schools are run by the Children's Public Health team. If you're an Early Year setting or a Primary school please contact oralhealth@barnsley.gov.uk.



3. Setting up your supervised toothbrushing club

Speak to your setting's key contact for: help setting up your supervised toothbrushing club; training staff to become supervisors; ordering equipment; and for general advice and support.

Identify a toothbrushing lead within your setting to liaise with the setting's key contact and complete the agreement outlining roles and responsibilities (Appendix 1).

At least one person from each setting will be required to complete the Barnsley Council POD training, and all staff involved in the daily running of the brushing clubs will be required to read the 'Barnsley Supervised Toothbrushing Club Toolkit' and train on-site. Those who have undergone previous training should re-train as protocols have changed due to COVID-19. Training should be arranged through the key contact.

Online training is available on POD, the Council's learning platform – search 'Oral health and supervised toothbrushing clubs'. Make sure to keep records of training.

Equipment needed

*Please speak to your setting's key contact for all equipment and replacements (denoted *) to check compatibility and fit.*

Brush racks and covers*

The rack stickers and toothbrushes come in red, green, blue and yellow with different sets of pictures (e.g. animals, toys).

The toothbrush slots in the rack should be labelled with each child's name in indelible pen and an individual picture identifier.

One rack for each group of children. Where multiple racks are used in a setting, they should be different colours or have different sets of pictures.

Covers should always be replaced onto their own rack.

NB: Brush Buses are no longer being used. Speak to your setting's key contact for new racks.



Toothbrushes*

The colour of the toothbrushes will be the same as the colour of the rack stickers.

Each child should have their own toothbrush, which has their picture symbol sticker (corresponding to their rack slot picture) stuck onto the handle. The picture symbols should be visible when the brushes are in the rack. Please also write their name on their toothbrush handle in indelible pen. A layer of clear nail varnish on top may stop it rubbing off.

The toothbrushes stand upright with the bristles pointing towards the front of the rack, so they do not touch each other or the cover.



Toothpaste*

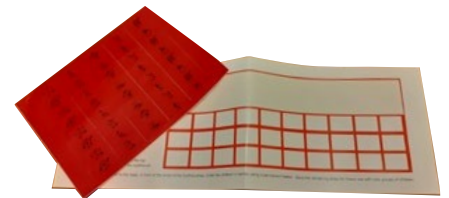
Containing 1350-1500ppm fluoride, and free from animal products. Non-foaming and non-flavoured fluoride toothpaste is also available upon request for children with swallowing or sensory difficulties.



Label with the date upon opening and use within time specified on tube.

Replacement toothpaste, toothbrushes and rack/toothbrush stickers*

Toothbrushes must be replaced termly or if they are damaged, the bristles become splayed or the brush falls on the floor or touches another brush. Replacement picture stickers for brushes will be needed every time a brush is replaced or if they start to peel.



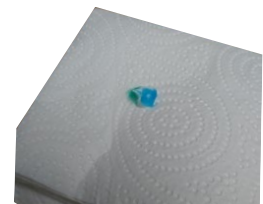
Replacement rack stickers are needed so racks can be cleaned, disinfected and reused with a new set of children.

Wallcharts

For recording children's names against picture symbols for each rack. See thetoothbrushrack.co.uk/pages/symbols-and-wallcharts-for-bus-rack.

Paper towels and plates

Toothpaste is dispensed onto individual paper towels, which are also used to spit excess toothpaste into.



Toothpaste could also be dispensed, well-spaced, onto paper plates.

Hand sanitiser, and sink area for handwashing and rinsing brushes

Supervisors and children must wash their hands (or use hand sanitiser) before and after the toothbrushing session. Supervisors and children must cover cuts, abrasions or breaks in skin with a waterproof dressing. Children individually rinse their brush immediately after use.

Household gloves and standard cleaning and disinfectant products (e.g. detergents and bleach)

For cleaning and disinfecting racks and covers, storage area, toothbrushing area and sinks.

Mouth model and demonstration toothbrush

For demonstration only if available – not to be used in anyone's mouth.

Disposable nitrile gloves (optional)

Disposable nitrile gloves (optional): Supervisors may wish to wear these. Before putting them on, they should wash their hands and cover cuts, abrasions or breaks in the skin with a waterproof dressing. Wash hands again after removal.

Children aged two and over may participate. Please note children will be brushing their own teeth.

Supervisors must not brush any child's teeth or touch any toothbrushes.

Any child taking part must be able (under supervision) to:

- collect their toothbrush from their slot in the rack
- transfer their dispensed blob of toothpaste onto their brush
- brush their teeth
- rinse their toothbrush after use, and
- replace it into the correct slot in the correct toothbrush rack



There are very few medical reasons why children should not participate in the club. Anyone with respiratory illnesses or COVID-19 should not participate.

Children with other infections or oral ulcerations, such as mouth ulcers or cold sores, maybe temporarily excluded. Toothbrushing at home can continue as this will usually aid healing.

If parents or carers inform the setting of specific medical conditions, like cystic fibrosis or blood-borne viruses, you should seek advice regarding the risk for individual children through the supervised toothbrushing club key contacts and local health protection team. For further information, see the [health protection in children and young people settings, including education guidance](#) (see references.)

Parents or carers should provide consent, which could be included within induction processes (see Appendix 2 for model information and consent letter).

Consent forms should be retained by the setting. Staff must know who is not consented or not taking part for medical reasons.

Decide on a convenient time and location to run your toothbrushing session once a day and how you will ensure good supervision.

Complete the quality assurance checklist (Appendix 3) once a term and email it to your setting's key contact.



4. Infection prevention and control

Toothbrushes are a possible source of cross-infection, so the supervised toothbrushing club must be carried out carefully following the guidance below.

Wet brushing at a sink is no longer recommended due to the risk of droplet and contact transmission, so children will do 'dry brushing' in a well-ventilated area that is easy to clean and disinfect.

Supervisors can provide verbal support but must not handle the toothbrushes or brush any child's teeth. Each child must collect their toothbrush from their rack slot; collect and transfer their dispensed blob of toothpaste onto their brush; collect a paper towel or tissue (to spit into and wipe their mouth); brush their teeth; rinse their brush and put it back in their rack slot.

Hand hygiene

Supervisors and children should wash their hands or use hand sanitiser before and after the toothbrushing session.

Supervisors and children should cover any cuts, abrasions or breaks in their skin with a waterproof dressing. Supervisors may also wish to wear disposable latex-free nitrile gloves. Vinyl gloves are not suitable.



Equipment

Toothbrushes are individually labelled with the child's picture identifier sticker and name in an indelible pen. A layer of clear nail varnish on top can prevent the name from wearing off. The toothbrush will be the same colour as the rack stickers. The child's rack slot will also be labelled with the child's name and the same picture identifier as the toothbrush. The picture sticker on the toothbrush should be positioned so it is visible when the toothbrush is in the rack.



The toothbrushes stand upright with the bristles pointing towards the front of the rack so they do not touch each other or the cover. Ensure toothbrushes do not touch each other when being removed from or replaced into the rack by the child. Toothbrushes must be replaced timely, or if damaged, the bristles become splayed, or it falls on the floor or touches another brush.

Each child must know their toothbrush and rack slot picture and colour. They should be able to identify their rack and their toothbrush slot to collect their brush. They must always replace their brush into their slot in their rack following rinsing.

Wall charts at thetoothbrushrack.co.uk/pages/symbols-and-wallcharts-for-bus-rack are available for each rack to write each child's name against their identification picture and the colour of the rack stickers and toothbrushes.

The rack should not be placed directly beside the toothbrushing area or toilet area to avoid contamination via aerosol spread.

Racks should be replaced if cracks, scratches or rough surfaces develop.

Rack covers should be replaced on their rack after the brushing session. They have ventilation slits that provide adequate ventilation to enable the brushes to dry.

Store racks in a designated toothbrush storage trolley or a clean, dry cupboard. Racks in toilet areas must have covers and be stored at adult height or in a storage trolley.

Toothpaste



Toothpaste must not be dispensed onto toothbrushes. Instead, the supervisor should place a small blob onto a clean surface, such as an individual paper towel or paper plate, for the child to transfer onto their brush.

Ensure sufficient spacing of dispensed toothpaste to allow transfer to each child's brush without cross-contamination.

Encourage children to raise their paper towels to their mouths to spit out excess toothpaste and dispose of used paper towels immediately into a waste bag. Children should not rinse their mouths.

Cleaning and disinfection

Water used for cleaning, should meet drinking water standards.



Cleaning of toothbrushes

The toothpaste must not be allowed to dry on the brush, and toothbrushes must not be washed together.



Each child should rinse their toothbrush and handle individually at a sink under cold running water straight away after brushing, taking care not to make contact with the sink or taps. Leave the tap running to avoid the children touching the taps.

Toothbrushes must not be soaked in bleach, other cleaner or disinfectant. Throw away any toothbrushes which fall on the floor.

Cleaning and disinfection of racks, covers and surfaces



Cuts, abrasions or breaks in the skin should be covered with a waterproof dressing. Supervisors should wear dedicated household gloves when cleaning and disinfecting racks, covers, trolleys, storage areas, toothbrushing areas, and sinks using hot water.

Use the standard cleaning and disinfection products which your setting has decided to use as part of their system of controls during COVID-19. They should be effective against bacteria and viruses. For further information see the preventing and controlling infections chapter in the [health protection in children and young people settings, including education guidance](#) (see references.)

After every toothbrushing session, all surfaces in the toothbrushing area and sinks should be cleaned and disinfected using the setting's standard cleaning and disinfection products such as detergents and bleach.

Racks, covers, trolleys and storage areas should be cleaned, disinfected, rinsed and dried at least once a week (more if soiled) by staff using the setting's standard cleaning and disinfection products such as detergents and bleach. Rinse with hot water.

- Please make sure that cleaning and disinfection products meet manufacturers' guidelines and do not remove the picture symbols, names or labels.
- Cleaning and disinfection of the racks should ideally be done once children have collected their brushes to begin brushing.
- If you plan to reuse storage racks with a new set of children, remove the old rack stickers, clean and dry racks thoroughly, and apply new stickers.

Anyone who has respiratory symptoms, has tested positive for COVID-19, or has another infectious disease must not take part in the toothbrushing club.

The [health protection in children's and young people's settings including education guidance](#) (see references) provides details around specific infectious diseases and how to contact the UKHSA Health Protection Team for advice in the event of a case(s) who may have taken part in the supervised toothbrushing club. Please ensure you ask for specific advice regarding your supervised toothbrushing club. Whilst awaiting this advice, please suspend your toothbrushing club and inform the setting's key contact.



**"I like cleaning
my teeth at
nursery; it gives
me a nice smile."**

5. How to carry out a toothbrushing club session

1. Make sure there are enough supervisors to oversee the session.
2. Supervisors and children wash hands or use hand sanitiser. Supervisors and children cover cuts, abrasions or breaks in the skin with a waterproof dressing. Supervisors may also wish to wear disposable nitrile gloves.
3. The supervisor should dispense a blob of toothpaste onto an individual paper towel or paper plate (with spacing) for the child to collect and transfer onto their brush. The amount they need depends on their age.
 - A smear of toothpaste is needed for children under three
 - A pea-sized amount is used for children aged three to six years
4. Children, under supervision, should collect their toothbrushes from their rack, a paper towel and their dispensed toothpaste.
5. Children should sit or stand in the toothbrushing area and brush for at least two minutes. A supervisor may wish to demonstrate brushing on a model or play toothbrushing music.
6. Children should be encouraged to raise the paper towel to their mouth, spit out excess toothpaste into it, and wipe their mouths. Children should be discouraged from swallowing toothpaste and should not rinse.
7. Dispose of paper towels and paper plates immediately into a refuse bag.
8. Each child should individually rinse their toothbrush and handle straight away (with supervision) under cold running water at a sink and shake off excess water. Leave the tap running so any child doesn't touch the tap. Toothbrushes should not touch the sink or tap. Brushes must not be washed together.
9. Each child, under supervision, returns their brush to their slot in the correct rack.
10. Replace the rack cover. The brush rack covers have ventilation slits in them so they can be replaced after the brushing session and the brushes can still dry.
11. Supervisors should use paper towels to mop up all visible drips on the rack.
12. Supervisors should cover cuts, abrasions or breaks in the skin with a waterproof dressing and wear household gloves for cleaning and disinfecting. Clean and disinfect surfaces in the toothbrushing area and sinks after each session. Racks, covers, trolleys and storage areas should be cleaned and disinfected at least once a week (more if soiled) after children have removed their toothbrushes.
13. After the session, children and supervisors must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser.



6. References

Public Health England (2016). Improving Oral Health: A toolkit to support commissioning of supervised toothbrushing programmes in early years and school settings. Available at: [gov.uk/government/publications/improving-oral-health-supervised-tooth-brushing-programme-toolkit](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-oral-health-supervised-tooth-brushing-programme-toolkit) [Accessed 21.03.2022].

Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, Department of Health and Social Care (2021). Delivering Better Oral Health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention. Available at: [gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence-based-toolkit-for-prevention) [Accessed 21.03.2022].

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UKHSA (2022). People with symptoms of a respiratory infection including COVID-19. Available at: [gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/people-with-symptoms-of-a-respiratory-infection-including-covid-19) [Accessed 03.05.22].



APPENDIX 1:

Agreement between Supervised Toothbrushing Club (STC) partners

Supervised Toothbrushing Club key contact responsibilities

1. Provide every setting with the Supervised Toothbrushing Club (STC) Toolkit (2024) for implementation.
2. Provide training for all staff that supervise and deliver the STC to ensure effectiveness and safe delivery. Training includes infection prevention and control.
3. Have access to a dental professional for advice if needed.
4. Provide resources for STC.
5. Ensure parents are fully informed about the STC by providing the setting with model information and a consent letter.
6. Quality assure the STC by making sure settings complete the quality assurance checklist each term and by observing a session every year.
7. Keep records of all the above.

Toothbrushing club setting responsibilities

1. Identify a named toothbrushing lead with overall responsibility for the setting.
2. STC supervisors should read the STC toolkit (2024) and complete POD training before supervising any sessions.
3. Provide supervised daily toothbrushing sessions.
4. Follow the protocol and infection prevention and control procedures as described in the STC Toolkit (2024).
5. Send information letters and consent forms out to parents and carers.
6. Ensure all children taking part have a signed consent form retained by the setting.
7. Ensure staff are aware of any children not taking part due to non-consent or medical reasons.
8. Ensure equipment is looked after and maintained in line with the STC toolkit and replaced as required.
9. Contact the STC setting's key contact for advice, training, and new or replacement racks, covers, toothbrushes and toothpaste.
10. Complete a quality assurance checklist once a term and email a copy to the STC setting's key contact.

Council responsibilities

1. Identify areas where children are at high risk of poor oral health and appropriate for targeted STC.
2. Facilitate coordination of the STC scheme in locality, and provide funding and oversight.

Provision of equipment

1. The STC setting's key contact will provide all initial and replacement racks, covers, toothbrushes, toothbrush and rack stickers, and toothpaste.
2. In addition, toothbrush and toothpaste 'home packs' may be provided to support the programme and encourage the continuation of toothbrushing at home.

Opting out of the programme

If the decision is made to stop running the toothbrushing club at any time, the setting lead should inform the STC setting's key contact so arrangements can be made to collect any equipment and surplus stock. They should also inform the parents and governors.

We agree to working in partnership with the STC setting's key contact and the council to run a supervised toothbrushing club at our setting.

Name of setting (e.g. nursery or school)	
Address of setting	
Approximate number of children to take part in STC	
Toothbrush lead in setting	PRINT NAME: SIGNATURE: DATE: TELEPHONE NUMBER: EMAIL:

APPENDIX 2:

Model information and consent letter

Contact details for setting

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Supervised Toothbrushing Club

We are giving children **aged two and over (amend as appropriate)** the opportunity to take part in a supervised toothbrushing club as part of the Council's efforts to improve oral health. This letter will explain the toothbrushing club, why we are doing it, and what you need to do if your child would like to participate.



What will the toothbrushing club involve?

All children taking part in the toothbrushing club will be provided with their own labelled toothbrush and brush their teeth with a fluoride toothpaste when they attend the **Family Hub/nursery/school (delete as appropriate)**. They will be closely supervised by trained staff who have received oral health training. All toothbrushes will be kept in a clean storage rack and replaced termly.

Why are we doing it?

Almost 30% of five-year-olds in Barnsley have tooth decay. It's really important that children learn how to brush their teeth with fluoride toothpaste to strengthen their teeth and prevent tooth decay.

Why are we doing it?

For your child to take part in the toothbrushing club, we need your consent. If you would like your child to be involved, please fill out the consent form at the bottom of this letter and return it to us. We will keep you up to date with how the toothbrushing club is going and may ask you for feedback from time to time. You can opt out of the toothbrushing club at any time, but please let us know.

If you have any questions about the programme or want any information, please ask the **Family Hub/nursery/school staff (delete as appropriate)**.

The toothbrushing club does not replace toothbrushing at home, so please continue to help your child brush twice a day at home (last thing at night and on one other occasion).

For maximum protection, check on the toothpaste packaging that it contains 1,350-1,500 parts per million (ppm) fluoride. Use a smear-sized amount of toothpaste for children under three years and a pea-sized amount for children aged 3-6 years. Encourage children to spit out but not rinse after brushing, so the fluoride can strengthen the teeth.



Please remember to take your child to the dentist regularly.

NHS dental care is free for children and they can have fluoride varnish painted on their teeth to help strengthen teeth and prevent decay. If you do not have a dentist, you can find your nearest NHS dentist at [nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist).

Yours faithfully,

Family centre manager/nursery manager/headteacher (amend as necessary)

Please complete this consent form for the Toothbrushing Club

Name of Family Hub/nursery/school	
Child's name	
Please tick one of the following:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I give permission for my child to join the toothbrushing club	
<input type="checkbox"/> I do not give permission for my child to join the toothbrushing club	
Signature of parent/guardian	
PRINT NAME	
Date	



APPENDIX 3:

Supervised Toothbrushing Club (STC)

Quality Assurance Checklist

Toothbrushing lead to observe a session and complete checklist once a term, and email to STC setting's key contact . Where there are several classes or rooms, complete a checklist for each one.

Name of setting	
Class or room name	
Toothbrushing lead observing session	PRINT NAME Sign Date
Number of children in class or room consented for STC	
Number of children in class or room not consented	
Have there been any compliments or concerns about the STC this term?	
Have any oral health activities taken place this term?	

	Quality standard	Is the standard met?		
		Yes	No	Comment
	Organisation and equipment			
1	All supervisors have read STC Toolkit 2024.			
2	All supervisors have received STC POD training (with records kept) and know how to seek advice from STC key contact or Children's Public Health Team.			
3	There are signed consent forms for all children doing STC (and records kept).			
4	Supervisors know which children are not taking part due to non-consent or medical reasons (and records kept).			
5	Each child has their own toothbrush. The colour, picture symbol and names on the toothbrushes correspond to those on the racks.			
6	Picture symbol stickers are visible when brushes are in racks.			
7	Where there are multiple racks, they have different coloured rack stickers or different sets of pictures.			
8	Toothbrushes have been replaced this term (or sooner if damaged, the bristles become splayed, it fell on the floor or touched another brush).			
9	Wallcharts are in use for each rack to match the child's name with their picture identifier and the colour of the rack stickers and toothbrushes.			

	Quality standard	Is the standard met?		
		Yes	No	Comment
	Organisation and equipment			
10	Toothbrushes in the racks are upright with bristles pointing towards the front of the racks, and are not touching each other or the cover.			
11	Racks are being stored in a clean, dry, cupboard or storage trolley.			
12	Toothpaste tube is dated with the date it was opened and is within time specified on tube.			
13	Children take part in a STC session every day.			
	Observing session			
14	Supervisors and children wash hands (or use hand sanitiser) before and after each session. Supervisors and children cover cuts, abrasions or breaks in their skin with waterproof dressing (please also indicate if supervisors are wearing latex-free disposable nitrile gloves).			
15	The correct amount of 1350-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste is dispensed onto individual paper towels or well-spaced out on paper plate (smear for under 3's and pea sized for 3 years and over).			
16	Racks are not placed directly beside toothbrushing area or toilet area.			
17	Each child (under supervision) collects their own toothbrush from the rack (without touching other brushes), a paper towel and their dispensed toothpaste.			
18	Children brush their own teeth. Supervisors do not handle toothbrushes or brush any child's teeth.			
19	Children are encouraged to spit into paper towels, which are disposed into refuse bag straight away. Children are discouraged from swallowing toothpaste and do not rinse their mouths.			
20	Each child rinses their own toothbrush individually at the sink (under supervision) with tap left running, and shakes off excess water into sink. Toothbrushes are not soaked in bleach, cleaner or disinfectant.			
21	Each child replaces their own brush into their own slot in the correct rack without touching other brushes.			
22	Covers are replaced onto their own rack after the session.			
23	Supervisors cover cuts, abrasions or breaks in the skin with waterproof dressing and wear household gloves for cleaning.			
24	After toothbrushing session, toothbrushing area and sinks are cleaned and disinfected with standard cleaning and disinfection products.			
25	There is a system to ensure racks, covers, trolleys and storage areas are cleaned, disinfected, rinsed and dried at least once a week (more if soiled) using standard cleaning and disinfection products.			
26	The toothbrushing session has been well-supervised by a sufficient number of staff.			



Thank you for reading
to find out more please email
oralhealth@barnsley.gov.uk

