

Dummy & Comforter Policy

Policy Statement

At Bushey Gan we recognise the importance for children to bring in a familiar toy, teddy or blanket from home when settling in, if needed, to ease this process.

We also recognise that many children use a dummy as a source of comfort when they are upset or unsettled. However, we know that overuse of dummies may affect a child's language development as it may restrict the mouth movements needed for speech.

As children develop they need to learn to move their mouths in different ways, to smile, to blow bubbles, to make sounds, to chew food and eventually to talk. As children 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 speech will be as they become more aware of their mouths. We therefore, do not encourage the use of a dummy, but are aware of the comfort that it may bring the child to soothe them when upset.

Procedures

- We will encourage every child starting at Bushey Gan to bring a familiar toy, teddy or blanket in with them.
- All items brought from home must be clearly named.
- All items brought from home should be of a sensible size to allow the child to carry it around with them, without it being a health & safety risk.
- Large blankets or muslins should be cut to a practical size.
- We ask that all toys, teddies or blankets are clean and washed regularly.
- We will discuss the use of dummies with parents/carers and include them in a child's individual care plan.
- Children should not come into Gan with dummies in their mouths
- We will only allow dummies to be used for comfort if a child is really upset, and it soothes them.
- Dummies must be provided by the parent/carer.
- Dummies will be used at the teacher's discretion.
- Children will be distracted by the adults and encouraged to participate in other activities before a dummy is given as they settle into the environment.
- Children will be made aware of a designated place where their toy, teddy, blanket or dummy is stored when they no longer require it.
- Dummies must be stored in individual hygienic dummy boxes labelled with the child's name to prevent cross-contamination with other children's and kept in the child's bag on their coat hook.
- We will immediately clean a dummy that falls on the floor or is picked up by another child.
- Once a child is more settled at Bushey Gan we will encourage less use of a dummy.
- We explain to older children who are settled in our nursery that they can have their dummy when they get home or at bed time.
- Extra caution will be given when a child is running around with a dummy in its mouth, especially out in the playground.
- If using a dummy, we recommend that parents choose an orthodontic dummy, as the shape of the teat causes less damage to the child's teeth.
- Once a child is in the oldest class of the Gan we discourage comforters and dummies in preparation for their transition to school. If a child really struggles with this, their bag may be used to store the comforters and dummies at the teacher's discretion. Children will be encouraged not to bring these into the classroom.
- Please note that we discourage other items brought in from home, as the children get upset when they get lost. We are lucky to have wonderful resources and do not feel that it is necessary.
- We will offer support and advice to parents/carers to discourage dummy use during waking hours at home and suggest ways to wean the child off of it when they are ready.