

This is a copy of the criteria for the Healthy Schools' Dental Health Award

Please use this as a guide only as we will only accept online submissions via our [website](#).





Dental Health Specialist Award

Welcome to the Bristol Healthy Schools' Dental Health Award

PLEASE NOTE, THIS AWARD IS FOR PRIMARY, INFANT AND/OR JUNIOR SCHOOLS ONLY

For secondary schools wanting to improve dental health in their setting, there is a wide range of advice and guidance for all schools on our [Healthy Schools Dental Health](#) topic page.

What is the Dental Health Award?

The Dental Health Award supports primary schools to teach and promote good dental hygiene, the impact of diet on teeth, and reduce any fear pupils might have about visiting a dentist.

It outlines the important role schools have in supporting families to register and attend a local dentist and highlights simple changes schools can make to reduce sugar.

The award is informed by local and national guidance and evidence.

Is this the right award for us?

Typically schools decide a topic of focus based on health need. The School Community Health Profiles provided by Bristol City Council/ Healthy Schools provide a good insight and schools may also have their own data and insight.

How long does it take?

There is no time limit on completing this award but we recommend that you try to complete the application within one year, so that your answers stay up to date.

How does the online system work?

Throughout your journey you can log in and out as many times as you like, updating your evidence as you go. Your email address becomes your login. Please keep saving your changes as you go.

Most of the criteria require a Yes/No response, others ask for more detail via a text box. We never ask you to upload documents or provide additional evidence. Only this form is needed.

IMPORTANT: Do not click the back button at the top left of your browser as you complete the form. To go back to the previous section, click 'previous page' at the bottom of the survey.

Do I get guidance?

Yes, there is guidance throughout. This will either help you make sense of what we are asking for, or signpost you to helpful documents. For example, we might ask you to write a policy about something. In that case, we have provided you with an example policy and that should save you time.

If you would like a word version of all the criteria and guidance for reference, please visit our [website](#).

At any point, you can email us for help or further guidance on healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk.

How do I know if I've passed?

Each application is assessed on a case-by-case basis. If required, the criteria can be adaptable to meet the specific requirements of your setting (e.g., for special schools). Please use this application process as a guide and do not feel discouraged if there is something you do not have in place just yet. The aim of the process is to work through it step-by-step and support can be provided where needed. To pass this award, you need to be able to answer 'yes' or 'correct' to every question, other than the text box questions. If you answer 'no' or 'incorrect' to any question, you will have the opportunity, at the end of the application form, to tell us why and what you are doing to work towards this criteria.

For unanswerable questions or "no" responses, you can briefly explain in the last section. Need more help? Please reach out. The Healthy Schools team offer drop-in sessions and network meetings throughout the year for support.

After you submit your application the Healthy Schools team will be in touch to let you know the outcome. It may be that you need some extra time to put the required practice in place. If this is the case, additional support will be provided.

At any point, you can email healthy.schools@bristol.gov.uk.

Good luck!

Establishing a Healthy Schools foundation (p.1)

The Healthy Schools team encourage all schools to sign up to the [Essential Award](#) before completing Specialist Awards. The Essential Award covers key health and wellbeing topics and sets the foundations for creating a healthy and happy school. You can sign up on the Healthy Schools website by filling out the first page of the [Essential Award application](#). By completing the Dental Health Specialist Award, you will have already made some progress towards the Essential Award.

1. Have you achieved or are you 'working towards' the Bristol Healthy Schools Essential Award?

('Working towards' the Essential Award means that you have started the online application, and you are implementing the criteria.)

Yes

No

Establishing a Healthy Schools foundation (p.2)

These initial steps involve completing a brief self-assessment and making sure that you have established a foundation for your healthy school's work. This foundation will provide you with a support network, leadership, and strategic focus, all of which will strengthen your successes.

Before proceeding with the application, it's important to complete this initial self-assessment. This short survey is designed to:

- act as a benchmarking tool to determine your current status.
- provide a quick overview of where you might focus your efforts.
- identify areas where the Healthy Schools' team can provide extra support.

[Please click here to fill in the short Dental Health Award Initial Self-Assessment.](#)

The answers to this survey will not be used in your final award submission. The information will only be used at the start of your process to highlight where we can be of support. Your honest responses are greatly appreciated as they will help us better understand your starting point.

2. Whilst establishing your Healthy Schools foundation or working on the Essential Award, have you completed the following?

Action	Yes	No
Our School Improvement Plan has a section on improving health and wellbeing.		
We have a Healthy Schools Coordinator.		
We have established a Healthy Schools Steering Group. The Groups meets at least 3 times a year and has a wide representation.		
We have a pupil Healthy Schools Team with representation from across the year groups OR We have included Healthy Schools as a standing item for every School Council meeting.		
Our school has taken part in the Bristol Pupil Voice Survey or/and we commit to taking part in the next round (2026). Sign up HERE!		

Key dental health messages

3. Dental health is promoted within our school community with the following key messages:

- 1) Consume less sugary foods and drinks
- 2) Brush teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste
- 3) Have your child registered with a dentist

Yes

No

Promoting these messages regularly means using every opportunity to embed the messages in day-to-day practice, rather than as a one-off event.

This could include regularly promoting these messages via school assemblies, lessons (especially PSHE), school book bags, parent apps, school website and newsletter, parents evenings, school display boards and information shared with parents as part of the National

Child Measurement Programme.

The key messages should be promoted to all year groups but with a particular focus on Reception and Year 1 as parents may be especially receptive at this stage.

You may find the following helpful:

Resources

- KEY STAGE 3: [BRIGHT dental health lesson pack \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](http://pshe-association.org.uk)
- [Dental Health Resources for Schools \(Bristol Healthy Schools\)](#)
- [A4 posters | Top Tips For Teeth | Campaign Resource Centre](#)
- [Children's teeth - NHS](#)
- [Change4life 'Top Tips for Teeth' campaign materials](#)
- [Keeping our Teeth Healthy lesson plans](#)
- [NHS Taking Care of Children's Teeth guidance](#)
- [Pupils reduce sugar intake by giving up fizzy drinks – news clip](#)
- [Supermarket-Sugar-Swap-Activity-Sheet](#)
- [Sugar-smart-Word-Search](#)
- [Oral Health Foundation's downloads and resources](#) for teaching oral health in the classroom.

4. Please describe briefly how you do this (ensuring you cover pupils, parents/carers and staff and give specific examples):

Staff training

5. We have at least 1 member of staff who has received specific training in dental health within the last 2 years:

- Yes
- No

We recommend the [E-learning for Healthcare Children's Oral Health Advice and training](#), and [At Home Dental's Big Brush Club](#) but other reputable online and off-line training is also acceptable.

6. Please provide the name(s) of the member(s) of staff who have undertaken dental health training within the last 2 years:

Tooth brushing skills

Supervised Toothbrushing – At Home Dental Big Brush Club. Supervised toothbrushing is available to eligible schools across Bristol (those with higher rates of deprivation). The evidence-based initiative is fully funded by the NHS and delivered by At Home Dental’s Big Brush Club. They provide training for staff to become Oral Health Champions and support schools to deliver the programme to children aged 3-5 in the classroom. It is simple, effective, and potentially life changing. They offer oral health education lessons and have information and resources available on their website. Please contact info@bigbrushclub.co.uk for more information and visit www.bigbrushclub.co.uk

7. For Reception and Key Stage 1 only: We promote practical tooth brushing skills to pupils and parents/carers on a regular basis:

- Yes
- No

7a. We ensure staff that aware of different textured and shaped toothbrushes suitable for children with sensory preferences i.e. silicone finger brush or three-sided toothbrushes. Inform children with sensory preferences (and their parents/carers) about the variety of toothbrushes available.

- Yes
- No

8. Please describe briefly how promote practical tooth brushing skills, giving specific examples and taking note of the guidance below

The ideal is that schools introduce daily supervised ‘dry’ tooth brushing with Reception and Year 1 pupils, whereby the school provides toothbrushes and toothpaste, and pupils brush their teeth in school, with supervision. Dry tooth brushing means not using water as this maximises the chance of absorbing fluoride from toothpaste, as well as being easier to implement in the classroom.

Supervised tooth brushing has already been trialled successfully in a number of early year’s settings and schools in Bristol and we can put you in touch with these settings to share

learning.

[Dental Health Resources for Schools](#) contains useful resources and guidance. Some of the resources have been designed for early year's settings but they are applicable to primary schools. [Supervised Brushing Toolkit](#) includes practical advice for schools and School Health Nurses may also be able to help.

If daily supervised brushing is not feasible at the present time, please tell us what the barriers are and how you might overcome these to work towards implementing supervised brushing.

Please also describe what you are doing to promote practical tooth brushing skills. This should involve demonstrating tooth brushing skills to pupils using puppets, video clips (e.g. YouTube), images and other resources, as well as sharing information and resources with parents.

The School Health Nursing team could assist with various Healthy Schools criteria. They can help you understand the health needs of your students via termly meetings, discuss individual children and young people who may benefit from one of the support packages available, support events like parent/carer drop-in sessions, or small group sessions/assemblies focused on public health interventions such as dental health, and connect you with local support services. To learn more about how the School Health Nursing Service can benefit your school, watch their [video](#), and visit their [website](#). If you would like to find out who your school health nurse is, you can email:

- East and Central Sirona.schoolnurseseastandcentral@nhs.net
- North Sirona.schoolnursesbristolnorth@nhs.net
- South Sirona.schoolnursesbristolsouth@nhs.net

Visiting the dentist

9. We provide information to parents on local NHS dentists and actively support parents who need extra support to register:

Yes

No

10. Please describe briefly how you do this, giving specific examples:

NHS dental treatment is free for all under 18-year-olds. Regular (six monthly) dental check-ups can prevent or lower the risk of serious dental problems in the future.

Local NHS dentists can be found on the [NHS website](#) or, for urgent care, via the [NHS 111](#) service.

Resources to share with parents/carers:

- [access to NHS dental care](#)
- [support for dental costs](#)
- [Oral Health Foundation's dental helpline](#)
- [Cange4Life food scanner](#)
- [Brush DJ](#)

11. We promote a positive dentist experience to pupils and parents/carers:

- Yes
- No

12. Please describe briefly how you do this, giving specific examples:

See [Dental Health Resources for Schools \(Bristol Healthy Schools\)](#) for educational YouTube videos that promote a positive dentist experience.

See [Oral Health Foundation's downloads and resources](#) for teaching oral health in the classroom, including lesson plans and presentations on visiting the dentist.

National dental health surveys

13. We would be willing to participate in any future dental health surveys conducted by NHS England, if requested to do so:

- Yes
- No

Every 10 years, NHS England conducts a [National Child Dental Health Survey](#) to measure and monitor changes in children's oral health over time.

The last survey provided statistical estimates on the dental health of 5, 8, 12, and 15 year old children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, using data collected during dental examinations conducted in schools, on a random sample of children, by NHS dentists and nurses.

Food and Drinks Environment

We have achieved the Essential Award and/or the Food Environment Specialist Award?

- Yes (if yes, skip to the final section)
- No (if no, go to next section on food and drinks)

14. We hold at least 3 assemblies a year which have a focus on reducing sugar:

Yes

No

- [Healthy eating | Overview | PHE School Zone](#)
- [Are you sugar smart? | Poster](#)
- [Pupils reduce sugar intake by giving up fizzy drinks – news clip](#)

15. We have reviewed all food provided by on-site services and by the school across the whole school day to ensure that they adhere to the National School Food Standards (including lunchtime, tuck shop, breakfast, and afterschool clubs).

Yes

No

To ensure your school meets the [National School Food Standards](#), the [Bristol Eating Better Award \(BEBA\)](#) and BEBA Checklists could be a valuable tool.

The BEBA is specifically designed for schools, to help make it easier to navigate the school food standards and share ideas/guidance on healthier and more sustainable menus. If your caterer isn't involved yet, the Healthy Schools Team can help them get started. [Just let us know](#) if you're interested!

Note: It is the statutory responsibility of the Governing Body/Trustees to ensure that the School Food Standards are met so you will need to engage them in this process. [The Department for Education outline the role of governing body in school food](#). The School Food Plan have produced a [guide for Governors](#), which covers their role in school food. If your school food is supplied by outside agencies, the school is responsible for ensuring that the school food standards are met.

16. We support healthy packed lunches and snacks by encouraging parents to avoid adding confectionery to packed lunches by promoting healthier lunch box ideas.

Yes

No

This criterion is about encouraging parents/ carers to provide healthy packed lunches rather than asking schools to monitor packed lunches. Good communication and a strong policy are key to success. Example packed lunch policies and advice on talking to parents are available in the 'Get Help' section of the [School Food Plan](#). We also recommend that packed lunch and school dinners are treated equally in terms of where pupils can sit to eat and allowing both sets of pupils to eat together.

The [School Food Standards](#) does not permit confectionary, which includes chewing gum, cereal bars, processed fruit bars, non-chocolate confectionary (whether or not containing sugar), chocolate, any product containing or wholly or partially coated with chocolate and any chocolate-flavoured substance.

17. We support healthy snacking by not **providing** unhealthy snack foods (i.e., foods with **added** fat, sugar, or salt). We also discourage unhealthy snack foods being brought to school (fruit or vegetables are recommended).

Yes

No

Foods brought in or provided at times other than lunchtime should be low in added fat, sugar, and salt. This applies across the school day from tuck shops, mid-morning break, vending machines to extra-curricular groups, clubs and activities run before or after school, e.g., sports clubs, drama clubs, breakfast and after school childcare provision.

- Examples of foods that meet this criterion include fruit, ready to eat vegetables (like carrot, cucumber, and pepper sticks), rice cakes (with no added salt or sugar), low sugar yoghurt, hummus and fresh vegetable sticks, malt loaf, savoury muffin, fruit bread, wraps with beans and salad, bagel with cream cheese and chives. For more ideas and recipes for snacks and light meals other than lunch, please go to [The School Food Plan What Works Well Recipe Hub](#).

- Examples of foods and ‘snacks’ that should be avoided at times other than lunch include savoury crackers or breadsticks, crisps, cakes, biscuits, pastries, or desserts.
- Examples of foods that should be avoided throughout the school day include confectionary, cereal bars, processed fruit bars, sweets, chocolate bars or chocolate coated products.

You should encourage parents to follow this guidance as far as possible.

We have provided you with a short statement below that you might like to use or adapt as guidance for parents/carers, depending on pupil age and phase. This could be for your website, newsletter, parent/carer letters or new starter pack:

We are proud to be a Healthy School

We are working with Bristol Healthy Schools to improve the food and drink we offer. As part of this work, we have a policy of only providing healthy drinks – water and milk – and healthy snacks with no added salt, sugar, and fat (fruit or vegetables are recommended). Exceptions can be made where specific dietary, sensory, and behavioural needs might apply.

We offer free water throughout the day for all students, and children in Reception to Year 2 can enjoy FREE fruits and vegetables. To maintain consistency, we kindly ask that parents of older students to supply healthy snacks adhering to the same criteria. [Better Health – Healthier Families](#) and [Food a Fact for Life](#) have lots of healthy packed lunch ideas and tips that you can try.

In addition to this we teach children about making healthier choices through our PSHE and DT curriculum, empowering them to make informed decisions around food. We have a pupil’s Healthy School team, and they help develop new and fun ideas to keep us healthy and well.

A note about nuts: Be allergy aware – information about food allergies and developing an allergy plan is available from www.allergyuk.org Nuts, especially peanuts, can cause severe allergic reactions in some children and all settings should have an allergy plan in place.

You can find information at: [AllergyUK | At school](#)

18. We avoid using food and drinks as a reward. (For example, for good behaviour or as a prize).

Yes

No

19. We are working towards providing and encouraging healthier and more sustainable options for occasions, such as birthday celebrations with pupils and staff, events, meetings, and fundraising activities in school?

Yes

No

The Healthy Schools team have produced a [Healthy Fundraising Ideas Pack](#) to help you achieve this. You will need to work with your PTA to get them on board. Ideas include swapping your cake bake for a sale of plants and veg from your school veg patch or homemade gifts from pupils or having a family fun run or teachers vs. parents football match.

Alternative ideas for birthday/special occasion celebrations include:

- for birthdays, picking one day each month to celebrate all birthdays from that month, as opposed to having multiple birthday celebrations.
- having a 'Golden Chair' for the birthday person to sit on.
- decorating the pupil's desk.
- having a class sing-along, and have the pupil bring in their favourite music.
- special birthday hat.
- having the birthday pupil bring in their favourite book to be read in class.
- if parents want to bring something in for the class to share, you could ask for non-food items only, such as stickers, pencils, or small school supplies.
- consider adding extra time to lessons that the birthday pupil might enjoy most, like art, music, or an extra game during PE.
- creating a healthy party idea booklet. Ask pupils, school staff, and parents to send in healthy recipes and ideas for activities and games. Compile these ideas into a booklet that staff and parents can use.
- playing other activities such as games or crafts that are saved for special occasions.

20. We are a water and milk only school.

Yes

No

This award criterion goes beyond the School Food Standards, as it specifically focuses on dental health. We recommend schools follow the latest guidance on fruit juice and squash from the updated [Eat Well Guide](#), which no longer recommends fruit juice and advises limiting its consumption. Of course, adjustments can be made for specific dietary or behavioural needs. The Healthy Schools team and the resources below can assist your school in making this transition.

Teachers should encourage students to stay hydrated throughout the day and ensure access to tap water, refill stations, or water fountains for bottle refills.

Resource:

- [Water Only Schools Toolkit | Healthy Schools London.](#)
- [Food Active | podcast and case studies on primary schools switching to being 'milk and water only'.](#)
- [British Dietetic Association \(BDA\) | importance of water in our diets, including recommended amounts across different age groups.](#)
- [Health matters | child dental health statistics.](#)

What are you most proud of?

21. Please tell us about something that you are particularly proud of in relation to your school's approach to dental health:

22. As a result of working with the Healthy Schools programme, have you noticed any positive changes?

(e.g., Have you achieved the goal you had in mind when completing the initial assessment?)

Please share a few examples.

Tell us what you think.

23. If you answered 'no' or 'incorrect' to any of the questions, please tell us why you are not able to comply with this criteria at present, what the barriers are, what steps you are taking to work towards being able to comply and when you expect this to be possible (if at all). We will consider your response when we review your application. Please state clearly which criteria/ question(s) your answer refers to, including the section heading and question number.

24. To help us improve, please give us some feedback on this award, e.g. What was your experience of completing it? Was it clear what was required? What did you think of the criteria? Does anything need to change?

Well Done!