Warwickshire Child and Family Wellbeing

Part of hcrg Care Group

Welcome to our School Health Newsletter

Supporting you and your family every step of the way.

We're here to help children, young people, and families across Warwickshire stay happy and healthy. Our team brings together health visitors and school nurses to provide joined-up support from pregnancy through the school years and into young adulthood - up to age 25 for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

We offer advice and support on everyday topics such as feeding, sleep, emotional wellbeing, healthy lifestyles, and important changes like starting school or growing up. Whether you need guidance, reassurance, or extra support, we're here to help.

You'll see our team in schools, Family Hubs, clinics, and community settings, and sometimes through home visits. We work closely with schools, GPs, and other local services to make sure families get the right support at the right time, focusing on early help and prevention.

Our School Age Health Service supports children from starting school through secondary education. School nurses and health professionals work with families and schools to promote good health, spot concerns early, and support children's wellbeing. We also deliver health programmes such as the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) and health needs assessments to help us understand and support children's health across Warwickshire in partnership with Healthy Futures (Compass).

Most importantly, we aim to help children grow into confident, healthy young people - ready to learn and thrive.

Contact our service by telephone or email or visit our website.

0300 247 0072

warkschildandfamily.co.uk

wcfw.contact@hcrgcaregroup.com

School Health Newsletter

Designed for Schools and Families in Warwickshire

Edition: March 2026

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of our School Health Newsletter, created as part of Warwickshire's new Child and Family Wellbeing service for children, young people and their families.

This newsletter is designed to keep you informed and connected with our service. Each edition will share health advice, service updates, and insights from our team as we work together to help children and families in Warwickshire lead healthier, and happier lives.

As a 0-19 service that supports families, your feedback is invaluable to us. If there's something you'd like us to explore in future newsletters, we'd love to hear from you.

We Want Your Feedback

To help us ensure our newsletters are filled with information which is relevant to you and your family, please click here to complete our online feedback form.

Your March Newsletter Includes

Health and Wellbeing Focus of the Month

This month we'll recognise World Oral Health Day and use oral health as our health topic focus of the month. We'll also share tips and strategies to support your child with their dental hygiene from our SEND practitioners.

Upcoming Public Health Campaigns

We'll share tips and signposting for any public health campaigns and awareness days which your schools or families might be interested in taking part in.

Service and Local Countywide Updates

This section will highlight any updates from our service, along with local updates which could be relevant to you and your family.

Health Focus of the Month

Healthy Smiles: Supporting Your Child's Oral Health and Hygiene

A healthy smile plays a big role in your child's overall wellbeing. From helping them eat and speak comfortably, to boosting confidence in the classroom and around their peers. This month, we're sharing practical tips and helpful information to support good dental hygiene at home.

Why Does Oral Health Matter?
Tooth decay is one of the most common childhood health issues, but it's also highly preventable. Developing healthy habits early, sets children up for a lifetime of confident smiles and good health.

Brush Twice a Day for Two Minutes

Children need help and supervision with toothbrushing until they are around 7 years old. They should brush twice a day - last thing at night and on one other occasion. For children under 3, use only a smear of toothpaste, and for those aged 3 and over, use a pea-sized amount. After brushing, they should spit out the toothpaste but not rinse, as leaving the fluoride on the teeth helps to protect them.

Choose Tooth-Friendly Snacks

The food your child eats can significantly impact their oral health. Try to limit sugary snacks, sweets, fizzy drinks and fruit juices. You should also try to discourage grazing on sugary and acidic food and drink throughout the day as this increases the risk of tooth decay – These should only be consumed during mealtimes.

Prioritise Water

- Water and milk are the healthiest and tooth friendly drinks.
- The tap- water in Warwickshire is fluoridated, which helps to protect teeth.
- Limit sugary drinks to mealtimes only.

Make Brushing Fun!

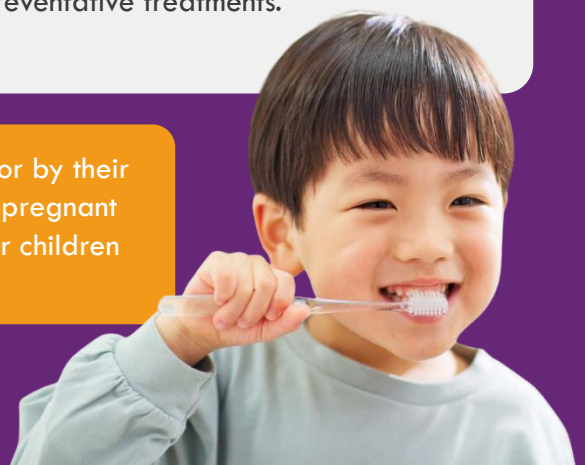
Try these ideas to help motivate your child to brush:

- Let your child pick their own toothbrush in a fun colour
- Use sticker charts to award good brushing
- Play music to help them reach their 2-minute target

Regular Dental Visits

Children should visit the dentist every 6-12 months depending on their individuals needs. Check-ups allow dentists to spot early signs of tooth decay and provide preventative treatments.

Visit the dentist when their first tooth appears, or by their first birthday. Dental treatment is also free for pregnant women until their baby is 12 months old and for children up to 18 years.



How To Brush Your Teeth

Brush the right-hand side and the left-hand side.

Brush behind your teeth.

Brush your top teeth.

Clean your tongue with a brush or scraper.

Brush your bottom teeth.

Brush the back of your front teeth.

Smile with healthy and clean teeth.

We do not recommend using mouthwash straight after toothbrushing as this will wash the fluoride away- please use at another time of day if needed. Interdental cleaning is usually recommended for children over 12 years old. Ensure all surfaces of the teeth are cleaned, including the gum-line.

Health SEND Spotlight

SEND Spotlight: Supporting Children with SEND and Sensory Difficulties

Helping your child to brush their teeth while managing sensory processing differences.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), particularly those with sensory processing differences, may find tooth brushing a distressing or overwhelming task. Sensory input during brushing, such as taste, touch, smell, sound, and proprioception - can trigger discomfort, anxiety, or avoidance. Understanding how each sense may affect a child and implementing tailored strategies can significantly improve oral care routines.

Tactile Sensitivities

Children may avoid brushing due to the feel of bushes or toothpaste foam. To help, you could:

- Use ultra-soft or silicone brushes.
- Let your child brush their own teeth so they control the pressure.
- Try finger toothbrushes or textured oral swabs.
- Desensitise gradually - start with touching lips, then teeth.

Oral Sensitivity (Taste and Texture)

Some children dislike minty, spicy or foamy toothpaste. Instead, you could:

- Offer unflavoured or mild-tasting toothpaste (e.g. strawberry, banana, plain).
- Try toothpaste alternatives such as gel or non-foaming varieties.
- Use very small amounts and increase gradually.
- Allow your child to spit frequently if the foam starts to build up.

Smell Sensitivities

Strong toothpaste or bathroom scents might be off-putting. To combat this, you could:

- Choose unscented or naturally scented products.
- Avoid air fresheners or strong-smelling cleaning products in bathrooms.
- Let your child choose their own preferred scent.

Noise Sensitivities

Bathroom acoustics or electric toothbrush noise may be overwhelming: Strategies could include:

- Using a manual toothbrush if noise is distressing.
- Brush in a quieter space if possible.
- Use noise-cancelling headphones or calming music.
- Let your child control turning on the water or toothbrush.

Visual Sensitivities

Bright lights or visual clutter may be overstimulating:

- Try to use soft lighting or dimmable lights.
- Minimise visual distractions in the space.
- Offer sunglasses if bright lights are too much.

Health SEND Spotlight

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Proprioceptive and Motor Needs

Children may struggle with coordinating brushing movements or body awareness:

- Use wider or textured handles for better grip.
- Provide hand-over-hand support.
- Offer proprioceptive input before brushing (e.g., chew toys, jaw massage).
- Practice brushing on a stuffed toy or model.

Establishing a Positive Routine

- **Visual Schedules:** Use pictures or step-by-step guides.
- **Timers:** Sand timers or musical cues for brushing duration (2 minutes).
- **Social Stories:** Personalised narratives that explain tooth brushing.
- **Songs and Videos:** Use familiar songs or character-led routines
- **First-Then Boards:** "First brush teeth, then watch a show."

Behavioural and Emotional Strategies

- **Offer Choices:** Let your child choose toothbrush colour, flavour, brushing location.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Use stickers, rewards, or praise for successful attempts.
- **Consistency:** Same time, same place each day to build predictability.
- **Modelling:** Siblings or adults can brush alongside to demonstrate.

Vestibular Difficulties

Balance or body position can impact your child's ability to brush:

- Allow the child to sit while brushing.
- Use a mirror at eye level to reduce neck strain.
- Create a stable, predictable brushing position.

Collaboration and Professional Support

- **Occupational Therapists:** Can provide individualised sensory strategies.
- **Speech and Language Therapists:** May help with oral-motor coordination.
- **Dentists Experienced with SEND:** Offer desensitisation visits and adapted dental care.
- **Caregiver and School Collaboration:** Use consistent strategies across settings.

Tooth brushing can be a sensory challenge for children with SEND, but with the right tools, understanding, and patience, it can become a manageable and enjoyable part of daily life. Tailoring the approach to the child's sensory needs fosters independence and supports long-term oral health.

Public Health Campaigns

Upcoming Public Health Campaigns and Awareness Days

Ideas for exploring these health campaigns at home with your children.

World Sleep Day

13th March

Helping your child understand the importance of good sleep: Design a bedroom routine chart – Create a step-by-step routine that works for your family which your child can then refer to each night. Your child can get creative and design their own chart for steps like, bath time, putting on their pyjamas, brushing their teeth, reading a bedtime story etc. It can then be hung somewhere visible for your child to follow and tick off once they've completed each task.

World Book Day

5th March

Celebrating reading, stories and imagination: Most children will celebrate World Book Day in school, however you can also explore this campaign at home with your whole family. You could try a Family book swap – Everyone chooses a book they've enjoyed and swaps it with someone else in your family. You can then share reviews and ideas about the stories you've read together.

World Oral Health Day

20th March

Set a 2-minute brushing challenge each day: Choose some of their favourite music and set a timer for them to brush their teeth. You could use a sticker chart to record how many times in the week they complete their challenge – at the end of the week you can celebrate their efforts.

Nutrition and Hydration Week

16th - 22nd March

Set your children the rainbow plate challenge: Each day they need to try and eat different fruit and vegetables from each colour of the rainbow. They could draw or photograph their meals to create a rainbow collage.

Service and Local Updates

Warwickshire Child and Family Wellbeing Service Updates

Explore recent updates from your 0-19 health service and the local area.

Are Your Child's Vaccinations Up To Date?

Keeping your child's vaccinations up to date is one of the simplest and most effective ways to protect them from serious illnesses. Vaccines help build strong immunity, stop the spread of preventable diseases, and keep both your child and the wider community safe. If you're unsure whether your child is fully up to date, please check their Red Book or speak with your GP.

Your Voice: Your Feedback

Share your ideas and feedback on the Warwickshire Children and Family Centre Padlet. An open space that's friendly and safe, where you can anonymously share your ideas and experiences about your local Children and Family Centre. You can also read other families' comments and rate suggestions you agree with, helping to build a clearer picture of what's important to you. Click here to share your voice!

Easter Civic Fayre – Bedworth

Sunday 29th March 2026 @ 10am

Bedworth Civic Hall, Bedworth, CV12 8NF

This event will be a celebration of local talent, community engagement, and family-friendly activities, bringing together performers, craft vendors, and interactive experiences.

Entry is FREE of charge – Click here to book!

Service and Local Updates

Warwickshire Child and Family Wellbeing Service Updates

Explore recent updates from your 0-19 health service and the local area.

Stratford 'Feel Good Fest'

On Sunday 15 February, our team attended the 'Feel Good Fest' in Stratford to promote the new 0–19 Service and share key public health information. The event was well attended and provided a great opportunity to connect with families and other local organisations. Our practitioners spoke with a wide range of service users, offering guidance and signposting families to our referral form where additional support was needed.

Supporting Health and Wellbeing in the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

Our school nursing team continues to work closely with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families in Warwickshire, building trusted relationships and sharing vital public health messages. This month, practitioners visited two sites to deliver emotional wellbeing sessions for local children.

Children were able to take part in creative activities and fun games - helping them explore feelings, grow in confidence and enjoy active play in a space with limited outdoor facilities. Families unable to attend the sessions received wellbeing resources to use at home.

The team will also be returning to local GRT sites to run further interactive sessions focused on understanding emotions and developing simple strategies for managing stress and building resilience. Children have already shared their excitement for future visits, especially with Easter activities approaching.

By offering accessible, hands-on support in familiar settings, we aim to improve health outcomes and reduce inequalities while continuing to strengthen relationships with GRT families across Warwickshire.

Service and Local Updates

Healthy Futures: Update for Warwickshire Schools

Health Futures is delivered by Compass, who are working alongside the Warwickshire Child and Family Wellbeing Service to support the health needs of children, young people and families across the county.

The National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP)

Our Health Promotion Practitioners have been completing this year's NCMP across Warwickshire. The NCMP involves height and weight checks for children in Reception and Year 6, providing essential insight into healthy growth, informing local planning, and helping address health inequalities.

Health Needs Assessments (HNAs)

In parallel, we have delivered confidential HNAs with pupils. These identify the priority health themes within each school community – such as, emotional wellbeing, nutrition, online safety, physical activity, and more – so we can target support and shape tailored interventions.

PSHE Network Provision Reviews

Engagement in our PSHE Network continues to increase, with more schools collaborating and sharing best practice. Recent Provision Reviews have helped schools identify clear actions to meet the upcoming statutory requirements from September, building confidence and compliance.

If your school for like to join the free PSHE Network in Warwickshire, please click here to complete our online form to receive more information.

Health Education Packages

With NCMP and HNAs underway, we are now rolling out our curriculum-aligned health education sessions, covering oral health, puberty, relationships, mental wellbeing, online safety and more – available to all Warwickshire schools.

What's Next?

Next month: A spotlight on our Health Impact Leads and Health Champions – showcasing how they are driving improvements in outcomes across schools.

Find out more or book a session

Our services are free for all Warwickshire schools – including PSHE support, parental workshops and health lesson delivery. Email HealthyFutures@compass-uk.org

Service and Local Updates

Updates from the Warwickshire Health Visiting Team

Information and updates shared from your Health Visitors.

Introduction to the Warwickshire 0-5 Health Visiting Service

We are delighted to introduce the Warwickshire 0–5 Health Visiting Service as part of the newly integrated Warwickshire Child and Family Wellbeing 0–25 Service. The Health Visiting team is excited to join this new, unified offer for children, young people, and families across Warwickshire.

Each month, the Health Visiting Service will share updates, information, and helpful resources from the 0–5 sector to support families and professionals working with early years children.

We continue to provide a universal service for all children aged 0–5 years living in Warwickshire, offering guidance and support on a wide range of topics including feeding, child development, sleep, emotional wellbeing, and preparing for school.

If you need advice or would like to get in touch, the service can be contacted via:

0300 247 0072

warkschildandfamily.co.uk

wcfw.contact@hcrgcaregroup.com

Service and Local Updates

Updates from the Warwickshire Health Visiting Team

Information and updates shared from your Health Visitors.

Chicken Pox Vaccine for Children

This month our focus is to highlight the updated immunisation schedule - specifically the Chickenpox vaccine. The chickenpox vaccine helps protect against chickenpox and is available on the NHS to people in close contact with someone who has a higher risk of getting seriously ill from chickenpox.

Children are now offered the MMRV vaccine, which protects against measles, mumps, rubella and chickenpox (varicella).

They are offered 2 doses of the vaccine when they are 12 months and 18 months old. Older children born on or after 1 January 2020 are also offered 1 or 2 doses of the vaccine.

Although chickenpox may usually mild, it can be very serious for some people, including:

- Pregnant women
- Babies
- Those with a weakened immune system

The chickenpox vaccine is recommended to help protect certain people who have a higher risk of getting seriously ill from chickenpox.

Where to get the chickenpox vaccine

Contact your GP surgery if you think you or other members of your family need the chickenpox vaccine to protect you or someone you live with. If you are pregnant and believe you have been exposed to chicken pox speak to your midwife or GP for support and advice ASAP.

More about vaccine safety

Find out more about why vaccinations are important and the safest way to protect yourself

How well the chickenpox vaccine works and how long it lasts

After 2 doses, the chickenpox vaccine provides around 98% protection in children and about 75% protection in adults. Further booster doses are not needed.

If you get chickenpox after being vaccinated, you'll usually have milder symptoms than someone who has not been vaccinated. Please contact the Warwickshire Child and Family Health Visitor Advice line to speak to a member of the team about pre-school immunisations on **0300 247 0072.**

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Thank You For Reading

Supporting every child, every step of the way

As we wrap up this edition of our newsletter, we wanted to say thank you for taking the time to stay connected with our service and for working to support your child's health and wellbeing. Nurturing and supporting children is a shared effort, and as a service we value the partnership between professionals, school, home and our wider community.

Need support, or have questions?

If you'd like to contact our service for support for your child or for any additional information about what we can offer to your family, please use the contact details below, or visit our website: warkschildandfamily.co.uk

0300 247 0072

wcfw.contact@hcrgcaregroup.com

Helpful Signposting and Resources

Here are some trusted agencies and organisations offering information and resources for supporting children, young people and their families with their oral health and hygiene.

NHS: https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth

Oral Health Foundation: https://www.dentalhealth.org/

NHS: Find a dentist – NHS

NHS Food Scanner App: NHS Food Scanner app - Healthier Families – NHS

Our next School Health Newsletter is due out Wednesday 25th March.