

Dental Team
NHS England
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Edgbaston
Birmingham
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Email: ENGLAND.dentalcontractswm@nhs.net

30 November 2018

Dear Head teacher

Re: NHS Dental Services for Children on school premises

It has come to our attention that in some areas schools have been arranging NHS dental treatment from an NHS Primary Care Dentist on the school premises. As a result, NHS England would like to clarify the contractual arrangements that we've agreed with our primary care dentists in the West Midlands.

Within their NHS Dental contracts it states that dentists must provide primary care dental services to patients only at an agreed premises location(s). This agreement does not include locations such as schools and therefore dentists should not be providing NHS dental treatments on the school premises – any check-ups undertaken in this way would be private dental work and would not be provided under the NHS. This is because the dentist would be unable to provide the required standard of care without the appropriate facilities and would find it difficult to share important oral health prevention messages without the presence of a parent or carer. The matter has been discussed with the dentists concerned and subsequently these visits will no longer be undertaken.

Please note that this letter does not relate to activity carried out by Community Dental Services or other organisations as part of the National Epidemiology Programme for England: Oral Health Survey of 5-Year-Old children which takes place every other year and is due again during the academic year 2018/2019. These Dental Teams are commissioned by the Local Authority and NHS England would encourage all schools approached to support this survey.

We would like to clarify that NHS dentists are permitted and encouraged to visit schools to undertake “oral health promotion” group sessions which do not involve providing dental treatments but instead provide advice and support on how children and/or parents can improve their oral health and general well-being. NHS dentists are obliged to follow the national guidance which is covered within the “Delivering better oral health: an evidence-based toolkit for prevention” and can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/delivering-better-oral-health-an-evidence->

[based-toolkit-for-prevention](#).

This document is extremely useful to patients and the general public as it provides information on important topics such as:

- the principles of tooth brushing,
- preventing tooth decay
- healthy eating advice
- avoiding sugary drinks

all of which can be included into any general well-being session. NHS England is committed to increasing the number of young children who regularly see a dentist as this is important in building good habits to prevent dental problems in later years.

Lastly, if in the future your school is approached by an NHS dentist that seeks to provide NHS dental examinations for children, you should decline the offer and report this to our Customer Contact Centre 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday (Wednesdays 9.30am to 6pm) on Telephone: 03003112233, or by Email: england.contactus@nhs.net immediately.

If you require further clarification on the above information please do not hesitate to contact me via nuala.woodman@nhs.net .

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nuala Wood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nuala" and the surname "Wood" clearly distinguishable.

Nuala Woodman
Deputy Head of Commissioning (Dental)