



BEHAVIOURS THAT HARM POLICY

Why do children bite?

Exploration – some children bite as a tool for learning, to understand the taste or texture of different things.

Teething – some children chew or mouth to gain relief from teething pain. Most children truly do not understand the difference between an object and a human.

Cause and Effect – some children will bite to discover what happens when they do.

Attention – some children bite for attention, even negative attention is better than NO attention.

Imitation – children of pre-school age love to copy others and find this is also a great way to learn. They may see a sibling, peer or older child bite and copy them. Please bear in mind that if an adult bites the child back, this is sending the signal that it is okay to bite!

Independence – biting is a powerful way to control others 'It's mine and if I bite you, you'll leave it alone' and can be a quick way to get what they want.

Frustration – not having the right words to convey a message can be very frustrating and to vent this anger some children may bite.

Stress – sudden changes in their daily routine, or stressful events in children's lives can cause them to bite to express feelings.

What can we do?

Pinpoint What? When? Who? Where? When did it occur?

Who was involved?

Where did it happen?

What happened before or after?

Prevent! If a child only bites at a particular time of day, is he/she hungry?

If it is always when the adult is with another child and not paying them attention?

This organisation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If their home life is unsettled, try to make it as normal as possible for the child. If a child bites when fighting over a toy – suggest setting buys another – toddlers do not know how to share. Tell the child it is not okay to bite – it hurts.

If the child is angry and frustrated allow them to calm down before talking with them. They will not be listening if they are upset.

All adults/carers, if possible, should have same approach to biting.

Be firm and say “STOP!” Never shout at a child.

How we deal with biting

Working with parents

Staff will speak to and support both sets of parents. Staff will not tell parents which child their child has bitten, or which child has bitten their child (confidential information). This is to protect both the children involved and their families. We ask the parents of the child who has bitten to work with us as a team and work on gaining an agreed plan of action for the child in order to gain consistency at home and nursery i.e. the child's routine and discipline etc. We recommend that parent's do not bite their child back if they bite at home as this form of discipline is not carried out in the nursery therefore does not keep discipline consistent.

The child that has been bitten

After being bitten, staff instantly comfort them and treat any injury with a cold compress applied to the affected area. This process continues until the child has settled and feels comfortable enough to play again.

The child who has bitten

If the child has the understanding, we will explain to them that they have hurt another child and that biting is not acceptable. If biting/ attempting to bite becomes a regular occurrence a member of staff will try to shadow the child to minimise the chance of them hurting other children as best they can.

Recording the incidents

All incidents are recorded on our incident and accident portal and sent to the registered email address of parent/carer.

Using these methods, staff will be able to identify any patterns that may be forming for the child who bites, i.e. if the biting happens at a particular time of day, does it happen for the same reason each time etc.

Using this information, it may be possible for staff to identify reasons for the biting and identify a method for preventing the biting i.e. changing a child's routine if it happens when they are tired etc

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There is no instant cure to biting. It may take time and patience from all parties before the child understands the message that is being conveyed.

BUT REMEMBER Biting is not anyone's fault. It is a phase of development some children go through. Everyone needs to be realistic about the expectations of the child.

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