

# BITING POLICY

Upton upon Severn CofE Primary and Pre School



Approved by: Julie Wills

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(Annually by Pre-School Manager)



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## **PRINCIPLE**

Biting is a common behavior that some young children experience and it occurs more often in younger children, usually under the age of 5 years. Biting is most commonly seen in settings in larger group situations, like Pre-schools, nurseries, schools and other social situations. The need or motivation to bite another child can be part of some children's learning journey, where words may be limited and communication is impacted, which may result in emotions such as anger, frustration or need.

Children bite for many different reasons and we aim to handle any biting incident with respect and sensitivity for all involved. It is Pre-school's policy to deal with each biting incident on a case-by-case basis, making sure parents/carers involved are kept up to date with what is happening, but at the same time, respecting the confidentiality of all children. This ultimately means that we are not able to divulge to identity of any child involved with the biting incident.

This policy has been created to help prepare staff, parents/carers for the possibility of experiencing a biting incident and to help put into perspective. As well as giving some proportion to what can be an upsetting experience for all involved.

## **WHY DOES BITING HAPPEN?**

Whilst biting is more common in larger, social situations than at home, a biting incident is not a negative reflection on the biter, the staff or the setting.

However, very young children often do not have the coping mechanisms, nor the self-regulations skills which adults and older children have that help us diffuse and express our emotions in a more socially acceptable way. Resulting in behaviors such as biting, which is can be very upsetting for us, but at the same time, developmentally normal. The most common reasons for biting are:

- **Teething and painful gums:** Swelling gums can be painful and cause discomfort; this can be relieved by biting or chewing.
- **Physical Exploration:** Babies and young children explore the world around them using their senses and they do not always know the difference between gnawing a toy and biting someone.
- **Seeking Attention:** When children are in situations where they feel they are not receiving enough attention, biting is a quick way of becoming the center of attention.
- **Expressions of Frustration:** Children can be frustrated by a number of things, such as wanting to be independent and doing things for themselves. Unfortunately, they do not have the vocabulary to express themselves clearly and this can sometimes lead to biting as a way of dealing with the frustration.

## **WHAT IS OUR PROCEDURE FOLLOWING A BITING INCIDENT?**

First and foremost, our pre-school manager will work with each parent/carer, the children and the staff team to discover why a child is biting and to comfort as well as reassure the child who has been bitten. This may have been an isolated incident, but records will always be updated, including ABCc behaviour logs, this will be used to look for possible triggers and patterns in behaviour.

## **WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF A BITE HAPPENED IN PRE-SCHOOL?**

- The child who had been bitten would be comforted, reassured and checked over. If first aid was required, this would be carried out straight away.
- The bite would be washed thoroughly and cleaned with an antiseptic wipe. If the wound was bleeding, a waterproof dressing would also be applied.
- If the bite broke or bruised the skin, parents/carers of the child would be contacted by the pre-school manager who would advise to seek medical attention.

- Even if the bite had not caused a further injury to the skin, both parents/carers of the biter and the child who was bitten would be contacted, by the pre-school manager to let them know what has happened.
- The child who had suffered the bite, would be monitored throughout the remaining session.
- The child whom carried out the biting, would be spoken too, using a calm language that is age appropriate to ensure the child is aware of what is being said. The child would have some time with the adult to try and communicate why it happened. The child will **NOT** be asked to say sorry, instead the staff member will explain to the child why we don't bite and reiterate our phrase, "*Our teeth are for our food, not for our friends.*"
- Staff members will complete relevant incident and accident forms for all children involved.
- In certain cases, we as a setting may seek additional, professional, early years' advice from our local early years' advisor.

## **SUMMARY**

The most important thing to addressing challenging behaviour is to work in partnership with all parties involved. We encourage parents/carers to work alongside us as the setting and support our behaviour management style. We will also work with parents/carers to ensure the behaviour management that is being used at home is reflected in setting too.

It is also important to remember, due to safeguarding and GDPR policy and producers, we cannot share with you any names of other children who might be involved in the situation. Young children do not usually bite maliciously, it is usually an act of frustration and not being aware of how else they should handle certain situations.

If a child continues to demonstrate re-occurring behaviours such as biting, the setting will work hard to try and resolve the issues. All staff members are highly trained and skilled within this area and will, if needed, call upon their external expertise to inform different options. We may also discuss the possibility of changing hours attended by the child to help maintain their wellbeing.