

BITING POLICY

In the setting we acknowledge that biting is a common behaviour among young children and it evokes a strong emotion in adults, both parents and educators. Biting is often very painful and frightening for the child who is bitten. It can also be very frightening for the child who bites. We recognise that the majority of children will learn not to bite in time and are very clear, firm and calm when a child does bite and offer praise and warmth when they don't.

If an incident of biting does occur, the parents of both children will be informed of the event. This will also be recorded in the accident book. If your child has bitten another child, you should not bite them as a punishment. It sends a very confused message to your child.

We ask that you make us aware of any incidents of biting that have occurred outside of the setting as this will enable staff to be more prepared and vigilant.

Reasons why children might bite

Biting happens for different reasons with different children under different circumstances. The first step in learning to control it is to look at why it may be happening. Not all children bite out of anger or to hurt another child - young toddlers can't really understand how much pain they're causing. Teething aside, children may bite for a number of reasons including:

- Curiosity - toddlers may bite to see what their friends arm may taste like or to see the reaction. It's impulsive and they don't mean to hurt. Often, a baby chomps on someone when they're teething. Sometimes toddlers nip when they're over-excited.
- Emotions - This can be frustration, stress, and feelings of lack of power or as a way of showing love.
- Defending - Young children learn to bite as a defence, especially if they can't talk and will bite other children whenever they feel

anxious or threatened. Sometimes changes or upsets at home can bring on this type of biting.

- Seeking attention or control - Some children know biting is a way of getting others to do what they want or to gain attention. They don't always do this consciously. It may happen when a group of children are jostling to be leader or gain power. Biting is a good way of getting others to take notice, even if the attention gained is negative.
- Copying - children who see another child or adult biting may think that this is a good idea.

When a child bites

We show disapproval and very firmly and calmly say something like "No we do not bite! It hurts and it's not nice!" We use gesture and facial expression to reinforce the message.

We will remain calm and firmly remove the child who bites away from the person (whether child or adult) whom he is biting. Depending on the child's stage of development, we will implement a period of "time out" in accordance with our behaviour policy.

If the child who has bitten is not calm we will remove them until they have started to calm down, ensuring that they do not try to bite the victim again.

We make it clear that it is the biting behaviour that we disapprove of - not the child and to reinforce this, positive behaviour will be encouraged and praised.

If a child persists with biting the setting we will make a plan to monitor and support the child. Through monitoring and recording incidents we may identify particular triggers for the behaviour. Understanding why a child bites is key to beating the problem using this information will inform possible intervention strategies

The environment of the setting will also be evaluated in order to establish any causes within the provision.

Within this plan we will regularly meet with the parent/carer of the biter to discuss underlying reasons and common strategies to ensure consistency

between the home and setting. Where necessary, permission will be sought from the parent/carer of the child to refer concerns and involve outside agencies and professionals.

If a child is a victim of biting

Staff are trained to deal with this situation, staff will follow first aid procedures to relieve pain and injury. Biting is always taken seriously and staff do their best to ensure that it is stopped as soon as possible.

We will not disclose to parents the name of the child who has bitten. It is unnecessary to know their identity, however if a parent finds out who has bitten their child we strongly recommend that they do not complain directly to the other parents.