

University of Warwick Nursery

Biting Policy

- understanding and dealing with incidents where a child is bitten by another child.

For many children, biting is a normal part of their development. Babies bite objects as a means of exploring the world. For those who are teething, biting into objects can help to relieve the pain and discomfort.

Biting can also be a form of communication, particularly for those who have not developed the vocabulary they need to express strong feelings such as anger, frustration, or fear. Some children bite to gain attention; others do it in self-defence if they feel threatened. It may be an extension of their natural curiosity – what happens if I do this to someone? Or a child may be satisfying a need for oral stimulation to self-regulate, to relieve anxiety or cope with stressful situations.

Biting is a common occurrence, as many children pass through this stage of development. It is therefore important to acknowledge this.

It is also important that we have clear strategies to minimise incidents and ensure staff can respond sensitively when biting does occur to reduce the distress for all involved as quickly as possible.

There are lots of reasons why children bite and even with a range of strategies in place to minimise the incidents that occur, it is impossible to eliminate it completely. This is due to the range of reasons children may choose to express themselves through biting and the speed in which a biting incident can happen.

When an incident does happen it's important to identify the key reasons behind it. Does it tend to happen at specific times of the day, e.g. lunchtime? Are children arguing over a precious object such as a favoured toy? Is the child seeking some oral stimulation? Is the child unable to verbalise their feelings? By gathering as much information about each incident as we can, we can then plan which strategies need to be implemented to reduce further incidents. For example, sitting a staff member next to the child at the lunch table, or, for a child seeking oral stimulation, providing them with a chew toys to provide the stimulation they need.

In all instances, the child that has bitten will be treated in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development.

Generally

- When a child has been bitten s/he will be comforted, and first aid applied if appropriate.
- A record of the incident will be completed on an accident form on the iPad which will be sent to the parents on Parent Zone. Depending on the severity of the bite, the parent/carer will be informed via telephone immediately.

- The child who caused the bite will be removed from the immediate area and given time to calm down with a staff member. If appropriate, the staff will talk to the child and explain why biting is not acceptable. If not appropriate, the staff will use tone of voice and facial expressions to indicate disapproval. **It is not acceptable for staff to shout at or physically punish a child in the care of the Nursery.**
- Positive behaviour is promoted and when the child who bit displays positive behaviours, this is praised.
- Biting other children can be a result of communication difficulties and the child who bit may find it difficult to verbalise their feelings or misunderstand what was said to them. This may need investigation and support.
- The parents of the child who has caused the bite will be informed of the incident and strategies will be put in place to discourage this behaviour in the future.
- In cases where the child persistently bites, a member of staff will be allocated to shadow the child to prevent incidents re-occurring.
- It is not the policy of this Nursery to inform parents of the names of children who have been bitten or who have caused the bite.