

6.3 Biting Policy

At Wonderland we promote positive behaviour through role modelling, reminding children of our behaviour expectations and following our behaviour management policy. We encourage the use of signing to help the children to express their emotions through appropriate stories and puppets. We also have children music groups, Tiny Mites and Signing Sam, which uses signs to support children personal, social and emotion development and the children's communication needs.

We understand that children may use certain behaviours, such as biting to communicate their feelings and needs. Biting is a common type of behaviour that some children use to help them make sense of the world around them and manage interactions with others. It can be triggered when they do not have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need. It can also be used to fulfil an oral stimulation need, such as during periods of teething or developmental exploration. Sometimes biting can be due to a Special Educational Need and or/disability.

Children bite for a variety of reasons. This may be because they are teething, frustrated, exploring using their mouth asserting their independence and wanting to gain control, maybe of a toy or they could be stressed. It may also be because they want to gain attention or to make sense of the world around them and manage interactions with others.

The nursery uses the following strategies to help prevent biting:

- Individual 1:1 and small group times so that each child is receiving positive attention.
- Quiet/cosy areas for children who are feeling overwhelmed to go to
- Stories, puppets, discussion about emotions and feelings including activities and stories that help support children to recognise feelings and empathise with characters and events.
- Additional resources for children who have oral stimulation needs, such as teething rings or chew necklaces
- Vigilant staff that know the children well are able to identify when children need more stimulation or quiet times
- Adequate resources are provided and, where possible, more than one resource or toy is sought to minimise conflicts.

Biting can be upsetting for both the child who has bitten and the child who has been bitten. It is also an emotive issue for both sets of parents, so we'll always give parents a courtesy call to let them know about the incident.

We will work with parents and the child to establish when and why they are biting. We will observe the child closely to see if certain conditions or situations trigger the behaviour and then work with them to try and avoid the incident occurring. This may involve altering the child's routine, giving them more one to one attention, purchasing additional resources so sharing is not such a major issue, or if it is because a child is teething, provide teething resources.

We will ensure that if a child is bitten that they are comforted and given lots of attention. We will ensure that any first aid is applied correctly if required and the incident will be recorded in the provision's incident book and parents asked to sign it.

If a child bites, then we will remove them from the situation. We will explain to them, according to their age and understanding, that biting is unacceptable behaviour.

For younger child this may be by the tone of voice and facial expressions rather than lots of words.

For any child it may be necessary for the member of staff dealing with the incident to remove the child from an activity and give them some quiet calming time, until they are calm enough to return. We will also encourage the child to apologise in a way that they are comfortable with, and what is age appropriate, we will work with them to develop strategies to help them deal with it. We actively encourage children to say sorry but will not force them. When someone is going to say sorry, they should mean it and not just because they have been told to do so. We will explain the reason as to why they should be saying sorry highlighting the emotions everyone is feeling and how they should be interacting.

Strategies to prevent biting include sensory activities, teething or biting rings, adequate resources, and a stimulating exciting environment.

However, in the event of a child being bitten the following procedure will be followed:

- The child who has been bitten will be comforted and checked for any visual injury. First aid will be administered where necessary.
- An accident form will be completed, and the parents will be informed via telephone as soon as possible. The bitten area will be observed for signs of infection.
- For confidentiality reasons and to avoid possible conflict the name of the child who has bitten will not be disclosed to the parents of the child who has been bitten and vice versa.

- The child who has caused the bite will be told in a way appropriate to their age or stage that biting is unkind (the behaviour and not the child).
- If appropriate the adult will explain that the other child is sad and how being bitten hurts.
- The child will be asked to say sorry if developmentally appropriate or show they are sorry, e.g., through hugging.
- An incident form will be completed on Famly, and parents will be informed of the incident by telephone.
- In the event of the bite breaking the skin and to reduce infection caused by bacteria we would give prompt treatment to both children.
- If a child or staff member sustains a bite wound where the skin has been severely broken, arrange for urgent medical attention after initial first aid has been carried out.
- Arrange for a meeting with the parent whose child has been bitten, particularly if the child has been bitten several times, to provide reassurance that the nursery is managing biting incidents effectively

If a child continues to bite, observations will be carried out using an ABCC chart to try to find a cause or pattern, e.g., does the child bite at a particular time or in a particular area of the nursery. A meeting will be held with the child's parents and a member of the management team firstly to reassure parents that this is a normal stage of development and is rarely an aggressive act and secondly to develop strategies together to prevent future biting incidents.

Each child is an individual and different strategies will work with different children. We may also seek the support of outside agencies such as Herts County Council early years advisors and inclusion officers and can signpost parents to drop in speech and language clinics should this support be necessary.

In cases where a child may repeatedly bite and/or if they have a particular special educational need or disability that lends itself to increased biting, for example, in some cases of autism where a child doesn't have the communication skills, the nursery manager will carry out a risk assessment and may recommend immunisation with hepatitis B vaccine for all staff and children.