



Safeguarding children

1.13.2 Why children bite, and what to do about it

Up to a quarter of all children will bite someone at some stage in their young lives. School House Nursery understands that this is a difficult situation for parents, whether it is your child that has been bitten or your child biting others. This note will give you more information about why biting may occur, how biting incidents are managed at nursery and what steps we take to protect your child's health and safety while in the nursery.

Why do some children bite?

- Teething – swelling gums can be painful and cause discomfort; this can be relieved by biting or chewing on something.
- Exploration – babies and young children explore the world around them using their senses. Young children do not always know the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting someone.
- Attention – when children are in situations where they feel they are not receiving enough attention biting is a quick way of becoming the centre of attention.
- Frustration – children can be frustrated by a number of things (for example, wanting to be independent and to do things for themselves) and when they don't have the vocabulary to express themselves clearly, biting can be the end result.

How do you care for my child if they are bitten?

- Your child will be comforted and reassured.
- The bite wound will then be washed with warm soapy water and cleaned with an antiseptic wipe.
- If the wound is bleeding, compression will be applied and the wound site covered with a plaster to reduce the risk of further infection.
- If the bite has broken or bruised the skin, you will then be contacted by telephone so that you are aware that your child has been bitten.
- If the bite has broken the child's skin, under the Health Protection Agency guidelines, you may need to seek medical attention. This could be through your GP or an Accident and Emergency department.
- When you collect your child there will be an incident form completed with all the information about the biting incident and any treatment given.

How we deal with an incidence of biting

- If a child bites, staff show disapproval and very firmly but calmly say: "Biting hurts, your friend is sad, we must not bite." We use gestures and facial expressions to reinforce the message.
- We will fill in a Monitoring Behaviour Form to assess at what happened just before the incident.
- If we identify a possible trigger for the biting incident we will do what we can to reduce or remove the possible cause.



- We will increase the supervision of a child that is biting by asking a member of the classroom team to shadow the child so that they can support him/her in their interactions with other children. This ensures the child that is biting is given support to find different ways to express themselves.
- This shadowing may also include activities like playing with play dough to help release the frustrations that young children experience.
- The parents of both children will be informed of the incident. The parent/carer of the biter will be asked to talk to their child while the parent/carer of the child who has been bitten will be asked to sign our 'Accident and incident form'.
- If, despite our best efforts, the child does bite again we will talk to their parent/carer about a plan to stop the biting. This can include:
 - Regular updates about what's being done in nursery and at home to modify the child's behaviour.
 - Observations and written notes at nursery to see if there is a pattern of behaviour.
 - A meeting with the Health Visitor for extra guidance and support.

A partnership with nursery

- The key to putting a stop to any challenging behaviour is a partnership approach. Work with the nursery team and support any behaviour management techniques we propose by using them at home.
- We appreciate that if your child has been bitten or has bitten someone, this can be distressing but please speak to staff calmly – remember that staff cannot give you any information about any other children in the nursery, and will not disclose who has bitten your child or who your child has bitten.

If a child continues to bite – the option of last resort

- If all procedures are exhausted and a child continues to bite we may have no alternative but to re-evaluate whether the nursery is able to meet the child's needs.

This policy was updated and reviewed in:

Reviewed date	Name	Signature
September 2015	Stuart Watt	
May 2016	Stuart Watt	
August 2016	Stuart Watt	
September 2016	Stuart Watt	
April 2017	Stuart Watt	
April 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
August 2018	Lindy Baldwin	
April 2019	Lindy Baldwin	
May 2019	Stuart Watt	
January 2020	Stuart Watt	
January 2021	Stuart Watt	
January 2022	Stuart Watt	

March 2023	Stuart Watt	
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