



Child Protection

1.9 Biting Policy

Biting can be fairly common among young children and can be a concern for staff. Biting can often be painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten. It can also be frightening for the child who bites, because it upsets the child and can make adults cross. Biting happens for different reasons with different children and under different circumstances.

If you have any concerns about biting, either by your child or another please speak to the Manager in confidence.

Below is some advice regarding biting which we hope you will find useful and help to understand why some children bite.

You may want to explain why children bite:

Exploration

Babies and toddlers learn by touching, smelling, hearing and tasting. If you give a baby a toy, one of the first things they will do is put it in their mouth. Tasting or mouthing objects is something that all children do. Young children do not always understand the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting a person.

Teething

Children begin teething around the ages of four to seven months. Swelling gums can be tender and can cause a great deal of discomfort. Babies sometimes find relief from this discomfort by chewing on something and sometimes the object they chew is a person. Children of this age do not understand the difference between chewing on a person or a toy.

Cause and effect

Around the age of 12 months, babies become interested in finding out what happens when they do something. When they bang a spoon on the table, they discover that it

makes a loud sound. When they drop a toy from their cot, they discover that it falls. They may also discover that when they bite someone, they get a reaction.

Attention

Older toddlers may sometimes bite to get attention. When children are in situations where they feel that they are not receiving enough attention they often find a way to make others take notice. Being ignored is not fun and biting is a quick way to become the centre of attention, even if it is negative attention.

Imitation

Older toddlers love to imitate others. Watching others and trying to do what they do is a great way to learn things. Some children see others bite and decide to try it out themselves.

Independence

Toddlers are trying so hard to be independent, "mine" and "me do it" are favourite words. Learning to do things independently, making choices and needing control over a situation are part of growing up and biting is a powerful way to control others. If you want a toy or want a playmate to leave you alone or move out of your way, it is a quick way to get what you want.

Frustration

Young children experience a lot of frustration and growing up is a struggle. Drinking from a cup is great, but sucking from a bottle is also wonderful. Sometimes it would be nice to remain a baby. Toddlers do not always have good control over their bodies and cannot always express themselves. A loving pat sometimes turns into a push and they sometimes experience difficulty in asking for things or for help. They have not yet learned how to interact with others. At times, when they are unable to find the words to express their feelings, they resort to hitting, pushing or biting.

Stress

A child's world can be stressful. A lack of interesting things to do or not enough interaction with adults is a stressful situation for children. Children also experience traumatic events in their lives, such as bereavement, moving to a new home or even starting a new nursery. Biting is one way to express feelings and relieve tension. Young children are not always able to fully understand what they are feeling so they just act up.

At Fernhurst Pre-school we have experienced very few cases of biting but if this does occur the staff follow the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy (7.1).

When a child is bitten

For the child who has done the biting:

We immediately remove the child from the situation and discuss in a quiet area why they have done this. We explain what affect it has on the child, question the child as to why they have done this and then we allow a thinking time. The child is then asked to apologise to the child they bit. We shall then record this in the accident book if a mark has been left and inform both sets of parents about the incident.

For the child who has been bitten:

We comfort the child and try to understand why the incident occurred. First Aid will be given if necessary. Once the child who has done the biting has had time to reflect we then ask the child to apologise. We shall then record this in the accident book if a mark has been left and inform both sets of parents about the incident.

If biting continues:

If biting continues staff shall refer to the Promoting Positive Behaviour policy (7.1) and work in conjunction with the parent/carer of the child. Regular meetings will be held between staff and parents to ensure the best procedure and strategy is developed to control the issue. Key persons may shadow children who have a tendency to bite.

Try prevention

If you find out that biting is happening as a result of exploration or teething you may want to provide the child with a teething ring.

If the child seems to bite when they are tired or hungry, you may want to look at your daily routine to make sure they are getting enough sleep and food.

Try to keep group play to short periods and small groups.

This policy was adopted by Fernhurst Pre-school *(name of provider)*

On _____ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____