



## **Biting Policy**

Most children go through a stage of biting, on occasion with no apparent reason and the situation in which they bite may be random. Young children can experience frustration at the inability to communicate their needs effectively or they may show anger at having a toy taken, for example, and biting is their way of expressing their feelings. Sometimes with close observation of the situations in which the biting occurs a pattern does emerge.

We approach each incident and the children concerned, both the “biter” and “bitten”, with a positive and caring attitude. It is our duty to protect each child. The incident will be recorded for both children, on an incident record sheet, and the parents of both children will be informed, remembering we are unable to name children to other parents. Depending on the severity of the bite, the parent of the bitten child may be contacted by phone and informed.

It must be made clear to the child who has bitten that it is unacceptable to do so, at a level that is age and stage appropriate, we must remember that small children can only see the world from their own perspective and may bite again once the situation has been forgotten. The child will only be removed from the situation if the intent to bite becomes more apparent, but they will always be encouraged to play and join in an activity elsewhere.

Practitioners will be vigilant if a child is known to bite and will observe what happens before an incident arises and intervene when they see a bite coming. This will help them to see any patterns emerging and intervene before the situation escalates in future. Intervening can be done by distraction, verbal warning or removing, depending on the age and understanding of the child. Practitioners will always encourage gentleness and will encourage and praise a child when they have successfully dealt with a situation without resorting to biting,

All incidents will be observed, recorded, including how they were dealt with and the outcome, and evaluated. From this we can decide on a course of action and discuss and agree this with the parents. It is important we all try to deal with this in the same way, at home and at nursery, to best support the child through this stage. It is also important that parents inform us of any incidents or circumstances, outside of nursery, which may be affecting the child and their behaviour. Again this allows us to come up with an effective strategy to best support the child and the situation.

The bitten child must be immediately comforted and reassured if frightened. If they appear to be anxious near the child who bit them, stay with them and try to include them together in a safe activity so the bitten child can be allayed. If one child bites the same child regularly, they must then be separated completely for the sake of the bitten child.

Always remember a child’s displays of unwanted behaviours are a normal part of growing up. Children explore and experiment unaware of consequences, they have to learn how to deal with anger, frustration, irritation and feeling unwell. We must not judge them, but help them to cope with the situation and express those feelings in other ways, when age and stage of development allows it. Deal with the situation, show our displeasure, but love them still.