

## Biting Policy

### **Statement of intent**

Biting can be fairly common amongst children and can be a concern if it is reoccurring. Biting can often be painful and frightening for the child that has been bitten but it can also be frightening for the child that has bitten. Biting happens for different reasons with children and in different circumstances.

Children bite for the following reasons:

### **Exploration**

Babies and toddlers learn by touching, smelling, hearing and tasting. If you give a baby a toy they will usually put it straight into their mouth. Very young children do not know the difference between chewing a toy and biting a child.

### **Teething**

Children begin teething around the age of 4-7 months. Swelling gums can be tender and can cause a great deal of discomfort and pain. Babies sometimes find relief from pain by chewing on something.

### **Cause and effect**

Around the age of 1, babies become interested in how things work and what happens when they do something. When they bang a spoon on the table for example, they discover it makes a noise; similarly they may also discover that by biting someone they get a reaction.

### **Attention**

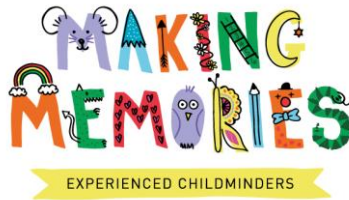
Older toddlers may sometimes bite to get attention. When children are in situations where they feel that they are not getting enough attention they will often find a way to get noticed. Being ignored is not fun and biting is a quick way to become centre of attention, even though it of course negative attention.

### **Imitation**

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

### **Frustration**

Young children experience a lot of frustration and they cannot always express themselves. A loving cuddle sometimes turns to a push as they have not yet learnt to interact with one another. At times when they are unable to express themselves 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 stressful. Children also experience traumatic event in their lives, such as bereavement, moving to a new home, starting nursery or the birth of a sibling. Biting is just one way they can use to express this.

### **Independence**

Quite often you hear children say "my do it" or "mine" which are some of their favourite phrases. Learning to do things for themselves and making choices are all part of growing up and biting is a powerful way to control others or get what they want.

### **Method**

When a child has bitten, we will:

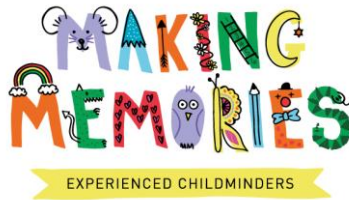
- Immediately remove that child from the situation. We talk calmly and, in an age- appropriate manner, explain to the child that what they have done is unkind. We point out to the child that they have hurt the other child from their action and encourage them to understand the consequences of their action
- We notify the parent of the incident and the steps that they have taken
- An incident form will be completed for the parent(s)/guardian(s) to read and sign at the end of the session

When a child has been bitten, we will:

- Carry out the relevant first aid procedure and reassure the child
- Comfort the child
- Once we feel the child has recovered from the incident they can go and play, more likely with an adult initially
- An accident form will be completed detailing the incident and the first aid that was given
- The parent will be informed. The parent will be asked to read and sign the form

If biting continues, we will:

- Talk to the parents. We will offer reassurance to the parent and explain it is quite normal for some children to do this. We will discuss and agree the steps we will take to prevent it from re-occurring.
- Work with the parents to ensure consistency at home and the setting.
- Where the issue continues to happen again and the steps in place are not effective, it may be necessary to arrange another meeting with the parent and suggest different methods.
- We may "shadow" the child. This is where we will 'follow' the child from a distance to monitor and prevent any situations occurring. We will observe the child who bit to note any triggers to their behaviour and aim to keep other children safe through risk assessment and ongoing supervision.



In extreme situations, and where every effort has been made to prevent biting, it may be necessary to request that the child who has been biting is removed from the setting temporarily. The child can be reintroduced with settling-in session and a specific monitoring programme to ensure that the biting ceased

### **Confidentiality**

Under no circumstances will the name of the child that has bitten be disclosed in conversations or on the accident/ incident form.