



Biting Policy

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1. Policy Aims

This policy represents the agreed principles for behaviour at Little Prep Nursery (LPN). All staff will follow this policy to help children grow in a safe and secure environment and to become positive, responsible and increasingly independent members of our community. At LPN, we reward good behaviour as we believe this will develop an ethos of kindness and cooperation. This policy should be seen in the context that LPN seeks to foster positive behaviour, rather than merely deter unwanted behaviours.

2. Introduction

Many children go through stages in their development, where they exhibit behaviour that others find unacceptable. Biting is a very unpleasant form of behaviour that is particularly prevalent in children whose language skills are only just developing and can often be an expression of frustration that they have not yet acquired the skills to express what they are feeling.

When a child either bites another child or a member of staff whilst at nursery the following policy should be used to deal with the situation.

3. The child who has been bitten:

- > The bitten child will be the priority and should be comforted and given reassurance.
- > They should be inspected immediately for any visible injury. Any unbroken skin injury should be treated with a cold compress to alleviate any swelling.
- > If the child has a broken skin injury a dry compress should be applied until any bleeding has subsided, (and follow the procedure below). The incident should be recorded on an incident form as soon as possible, where possible this should be completed by any member of staff who has witnessed or was in close vicinity of the incident. Any witnesses should be recorded on the incident form. This form should then be passed on to either the manager or deputy and signed by the parent/carer.
- > Due to confidentiality purposes and possible conflict the information on who bit their child shall not be disclosed.

4. The child who has been bitten: (and skin is broken)

- > In the event of a bite breaking the skin, this can present a risk of infection from bacteria. Prompt treatment may be needed for both the 'biter' and the 'bitten'. This may include advice to be sought from the medical profession.
- > If a child or member of staff sustains a human bite wound where the skin has been broken they will require medical attention after initial first aid is carried out.
- > Nursery staff may seek the assistance from the School Nurse, if deemed necessary.

5. The child who has caused the bite:

- > This child should be taken aside and given an explanation of why that behaviour was not acceptable.
- > This incident is then reported to the parents. The nursery accepts this could be a one off incident and in many children this behaviour will not be repeated.
- > If the child shows any intention to bite another child at nursery on a second occasion, or actually bites for a second time, then the room leader should approach the child's parents or carer and inform them of the situation. If the room leader is not available then a senior member of staff should be responsible for informing parents.
- > Any discussions of this nature should be done in a private matter, away from other parents and children. The office is a suitable place for informing parents.

6. Key Points & Messages:

- > The staff member who witnesses the incident will complete an Incident Form for all children involved
- > The Nursery Manager must be informed of all biting incidents. The Nurser Manager will ensure the incident log is filled out and reviewed to check for patterns
- > The parents/carers of the child who has bitten should be informed
- > Where a child may repeatedly bite and/or if they have special educational needs or disability that lends itself to increased biting, the nursery will carry out a risk assessment
- > LPN staff acknowledge that biting incidents can cause parents a lot of worry and will be sensitive and supportive
- > As per LPN's Terms & Conditions, if a child causes persistent harm to other children despite suitable risk assessments in place or, in the judgement of the Nursery Manager

7. Potential Triggers for Biting

- > **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.
- > **Teething** – swelling gums can be painful and cause discomfort; this can be relieved by biting or chewing on something.
- > **Cause and effect** – at around one year old, children become interested in what happens when they do something. For example, they may bang a spoon on a table and discover it makes a notice. This behaviour may be repeated again and again to support their learning and development. This could be the case with biting as the child explores the reaction to biting someone.

- > **Attention** – when children are in a situation where they feel they are not receiving enough attention biting is a quick way of becoming the centre of attention.
- > **Independence** – toddlers are trying very hard to be independent using phrases such as “me do it” and “mine”. If a child wants a toy, or wants another child to do something this could lead to a biting incident.
- > **Frustration** – children can be frustrated by a number of things, such as long waiting times before or after transitions times. Wanting to do something independently, but not quite being able to manage the task. Also not having the vocabulary to express themselves clearly. This can lead to biting as a way of dealing with this frustration.
- > **Environment** – an environment that does not provide challenge, or allows children to become uninterested can lead to displays of negative behaviour such as biting.
- > **Not having their needs met** – children who are tired, hungry or uncomfortable may bite others as a way of expressing their emotions.

All these triggers should be considered – it could be one of these factors or a combination of them.

8. Potential strategies to support the management of biting incidents

- > Staff may need to increase the supervision of a child who is biting; this does not necessarily need to be one to one. It could be during particular times of the day, or by simply reducing the number of large group activities provided.
- > Staff should make sure a child who is biting receives significant encouragement when displaying positive behaviour, and avoids receiving excessive attention following an incident.
- > Staff should evaluate the routine and judge whether it is meeting the needs of the child. A good quality routine should provide experiences and activities both indoors and outdoors that have no waiting times. Whilst group activities should be for the benefit of the children and not as a holding exercise.
- > Staff should plan activities which help release frustration such as physical outdoor play and malleable experiences like play dough, gloop etc.
- > Staff should provide cosy areas for children to relax in and activities which release tension such as splashing in water, digging in sand and using sensory equipment.

9. If a child continues to bite...

- > If a child continues to bite, we will carry out observations to try to distinguish a trigger or pattern such as tiredness or frustration.
- > The nursery management team / phase leaders will work with parents, the child, and the staff team to discover why their child is biting. EYFS SENDCO will become involved as support and guidance.
- > Incident tracking forms will be used to help locate the key triggers of biting behaviour.
- > We will arrange for a consultation meeting with the child's parents to develop strategies to prevent the biting behaviour. Parents will be reassured that it is part of a child's development and not made to feel that it is their fault.
- > If it is identified that there is a trigger for the biting incident, we will then make changes to reduce or remove the cause. For example – we may buy duplicates of favourite toys to stop disputes, or we may increase the supervision of a child that is biting so that we can support them to find different ways to express themselves.

- > In some instances, we may consider if the child should be considered for a room move if it that the child is developmentally ready for the next room.
- > If a child's reoccurring behaviour is having a negative impact on a child's experience at nursery, we will work closely with all involved to reduce and eliminate these issues.
- > 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, then our nursery SENDCO will act in accordance with the child's individual needs.
- > In extreme circumstances, where all procedures have been followed and we have exhausted strategies that have been tried without success, the nursery must review and evaluate whether the nursery is able to meet this child's needs and ultimately withdraw the nursery place.