



The Acorns
Primary and Nursery School

Biting Policy for EYFS

Promoting Positive Behaviour

May 2023

BITING POLICY FOR EYFS
PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Statement

Biting is a common behaviour among children and is typical behaviour for children of 2-3 years of age. Biting can often be painful and frightening for the child, who has been bitten, and also frightening for the child who bites. Biting happens for different reasons, with different children and under different circumstances. Biting is part of some children's development and can be triggered when they do not yet have the words to communicate their emotions or needs. At The Acorns Primary & Nursery School we follow our relationship policy to promote positive behaviour at all times.

Aim

We aim to act quickly and efficiently when dealing with any case of biting in the EYFS.

At The Acorns Primary & Nursery School, we use the following strategies to prevent biting: sensory activities, biting rings, chew toys and we employ skilled staff who can effectively tune into individual children's behaviours and recognise when children need more stimulation or quiet times. We treat each incident sensitively: with care and patience, offering comfort to intense emotions, as well as investing time in co-regulation, to help children manage their feelings.

Procedure

In the event of a biting incident:

1. The child, who has been bitten, will be the priority and should be comforted and given reassurance. Staff will not look at the child, who has bitten, but focus all attention on the child who has been bitten. This is important, as we do not want the biting child to learn that biting results in immediate adult attention - as this may reinforce this behaviour.
2. Once the bitten child is calm, staff (ideally key person) will check for any visual injury. If there is a bite mark, this will be washed with warm soapy water and wiped with an antiseptic wipe. Staff will explain to the child what is happening and support the child as this process may be painful. Staff will wear gloves. Parents will be contacted immediately.
3. If the skin is broken, it will be allowed to bleed, as covering the wound can increase the risk of infection. Staff will wear gloves and an apron. EYFS leader, class teacher or room leader will contact the parent/carer of the child immediately. This phone call will be sensitive and give reassurance to the parent/carer and offer an explanation of the procedure which has been followed. We will advise parents/carers to contact the child's GP the same day.
4. The staff member who witnessed the incident should complete a Green Slip (Incident & Illness register) to be handed to parents/carers.
6. The incident must be uploaded onto CPOMs by EYFS leader, class teacher or room leader as quickly as possible, so that the head teacher, deputy and SFLOs are fully informed.
7. Immediately after the bite, and for the next two sessions, our aim is to prevent another bite occurring by:
 - keeping the child, who has bitten, busy and next to an adult at all times (1:1)
 - offering a selection of items for the child, who has bitten, to hold. Having full hands, and carrying and using sensory resources, can sometimes reduce the desire to bite
 - not talking to the child, who has bitten, about the bite/incident; however, encouraging the child to give the child, who was bitten, a toy. This can help the child, who was bitten, to feel less fearful of the child who has bitten them previously

8. For the following week, we will monitor with parents if any biting has occurred at home. If not, we will start allowing the child to play without an adult next to them for *short* periods of time. We will ensure that, at these times, the child is not hungry or tired and is in a different part of the provision to where the initial bite took place. The child will also be kept away from the child, who was bitten, during these *short* periods. For the rest of the time, the child will be with an adult and kept busy, although other children will be included.

9. Where a child may repeatedly bite and/or if they have a particular special educational need or disability, that lends itself to increased biting, we will carry out the risk reduction document. We will closely monitor any patterns and triggers to prevent further bites and offer parental support.

Arrangements to Support this Policy

1. Key messages

- Staff will acknowledge that biting incidents can cause parents a great deal of distress and worry, and staff will be sensitive and supportive at all times.
- Staff will reassure parents that biting is an age/stage related behaviour.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers is a key factor in our policy. Staff will involve parents/carers every step of the way, and suggest strategies and next steps that could be implemented in the home as well as in our school.
- Staff recognise that following a bite, a child is likely to bite again. Therefore, a strategy will be put in place immediately.
- Staff are aware that children do not deliberately plan to bite – the strong, immediate, pleasurable, sensory feedback gained from the original bite is often the trigger.
- Staff are aware that there are a range of triggers which can cause children to bite. Staff will work as a team to identify and reduce them.

2. Potential triggers for biting

- Expression – biting can occur when children are happy, excited, sad or angry. Young children cannot always label their emotion, so biting can be their form of expressing themselves to others.
- 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.
- 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 try 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.
- Transitions – children can become over-excited at transition times. Therefore, songs, objects of reference, Sign Supported English and images will be used. The child’s key person will also be present to support them during transition. If these strategies do not work, routines will be adapted and changed.
- Cause and effect – toddlers become interested in what happens when they do something. For example, they bang a spoon on a table and discover it makes a noise. This behaviour may be repeated again and again to support their learning and development. This can also be

the case with biting as the child explores the sensory feedback and reaction to biting someone.

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

3. Potential strategies to support the management of biting incidents

- As a school, we will increase the supervision of a child who is biting; this will be one to one for the following two sessions (or until the cycle has been broken).
- Staff will evaluate the routine and judge whether it needs adapting to meet 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 will plan activities which help release frustration such as physical outdoor play and malleable experiences like play dough, gloop etc.
- Staff will 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.

Staff will not disclose the names of children who have bitten: this information is confidential.

This policy is focused around biting within Early Years. For pupils older than this, the SEND, Relationship and Positive Handling Policies should be considered.