

Severn Beach Preschool

Biting Policy

Biting is a common behaviour among children and can be a concern for parents and staff. 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. This is part of some children's development and can be triggered when they do not yet have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need. At preschool we follow our positive behaviour policy to promote positive behaviour at all times.

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

The preschool uses the following strategies to prevent biting: sensory activities, biting rings, adequate resources and staff who recognise when children need more stimulation or quiet times. We will treat each incident with care and patience, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.

Because of the potential serious medical repercussions of biting we feel it is necessary to have a policy in place to help us to manage any incidents effectively and safely.

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.
2. Once the child is calm staff should check for any visual injury. If there is a bite mark, this should then 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.
3. **If the skin is broken:** If the wound is bleeding it should be allowed to bleed as covering the wound can increase the risk of infection.

In cases where the bite has broken the child's skin, a senior member of staff must contact the parent/carer of the child immediately. This phone call should be sensitive and give reassurance to the parent/carer and offer an explanation of the procedure which has been followed. You will need to advise the parents/carers to contact the child's GP.

If the skin has been severely broken the child should be taken to Accident and Emergency immediately by staff if necessary and practical.

If further guidance is required staff should contact the local Health Protection Unit (HPU).

4. If the skin is not broken: Staff should inform parents/carers at collection time.

If the child continues to be distressed then member of staff should contact the parents of the child to inform them of the incident. Parents may wish to come and collect or comfort their child.

5. The staff member who witnessed the incident should complete an Incident Form for all children involved.

6. The Manager and Deputy Manager must be informed of all biting incidents.

7. Wherever possible the child who has bitten should have their behaviour managed by their key person and the consequence of this behaviour should be explained in a way which is appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.

The child who has caused the bite will be told in terms that they understand that biting (the behaviour and not the child) is unkind and will be shown that it makes staff and the child who has been bitten sad. The child will be asked to say sorry if developmentally appropriate or develop their empathy skills by giving the child who has been bitten a favourite book or comforter and asking them if they are ok.

If a child continues to bite, observations will be carried out to try to distinguish a trigger, e.g. tiredness or frustration. Meetings will be held 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.

8. The parents/carers of the child who has bitten another person should be informed at collection time; this must be handled in a sensitive and confidential manner and not discussed openly in front of other parents/carers and children. Parents/carers may ask you the name of the child who has bitten or been bitten. Staff must explain that they cannot disclose this information as confidentiality must be maintained.

However their children will generally tell them when asked.

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, e.g. in some cases of autism where a child doesn't have the communication skills, the nursery will carry out a risk assessment.

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. Staff should make sure a child who is biting received significant encouragement when displaying positive behaviour, and avoid 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.

If a child appears to be biting due to frustration we will supply a teether connected to a bib which the child can bite instead of biting their peers.

The book "Our teeth are not for biting" will be shared with the family.