

Biting policy

Date: September 2018

Review Date: October 2019

Biting can be an uncomfortable subject for parents of both the biter and the child who is bitten. Biting is often very painful and frightening for the child who is bitten. This policy will explain how biting will be dealt with within the nursery. If you have any concerns regarding this issue then please discuss these with a member of our management team.

At Newton Westpark Nursery we want to ensure that every child is safe while in our care. Our nursery provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. This means that is a particular concern for the staff working with children who are 2 and 3 years old. For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and practitioners. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or staff, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, frustration or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behaviour that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mind set, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. Our staff plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Our policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The child's Key Worker will work with both the parents and child to establish when and why they are biting.
- The Key Worker will observe the child closely to see if certain conditions or situations trigger the behaviour and then work with them to try and avoid the incidents occurring. This may involve altering the child's routine, giving them more one to one attention, purchasing additional resources so sharing is not such a major issue or if it is because a child is teething provide suitable teething resources.
- Staff will work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- Staff will try to adapt the environment and work with parents to reduce any child stress.
- Staff will ensure that if a child is bitten that they are comforted and given lots of attention.
- First aid will be applied correctly if required and the incident will be recorded onto an accident log and parents asked to sign it. The name of a biting child will not be released as this is due to confidentiality and it serves no useful purpose only making an already difficult situation more difficult.
- The child that has been bitten will be given lots of attention through first aid and lots of cuddles. The child that has bitten will then be taken to the side and a member of staff will explain to them, according to their age and understanding that biting is unacceptable behaviour. For younger children this may be by the tone of voice and facial expressions rather than lots of words. It may be necessary for the child to have some time to calm down but this will be alongside a member of staff.
- The member of staff will show the biter what they have done and discuss feelings of both children and staff.
- The child will be encouraged to apologise and give cuddles to the child they have bitten and work with them to develop strategies to help them deal with the reasons.

Management Signature:

Date: