



Fairfield Nursery School Biting Policy



Introduction

At Fairfield we aim to handle any biting incident with respect for all involved. It is our policy to deal with each biting incident individually. This policy is to help prepare you for the possibility of experiencing a 'bite'.

Biting is a very upsetting but normal part of early childhood. Parents/carers, who face a biting situation, whether as the parent/carer of the biter or the bitee, have many questions and concerns. Children bite for many reasons.

Generally biting occurs at toddler age; but sometimes, in children older than this or with children with Special Educational Needs (SEND). Whilst biting is more common at nursery than at home, a biting incident is not a negative reflection on the biter, the staff or the nursery.

Children at Fairfield are taught to share, wait their turn, to play together and to take turns. These experiences can be difficult for adults, but we have the language and skills to help us in these situations. Young children do not have the coping mechanisms, nor the self-regulation skills which adults and older children have that help us to diffuse and express our emotions in socially acceptable ways. Young children often result to hair pulling, hitting and biting which are upsetting for us, but at the same time, developmentally normal.

What happens when a biting incident occurs at Fairfield?

- We comfort the child who was bitten and administer first aid if required, including applying a cold compress. We make an effort to comfort the child who has been hurt in front of the child who bit. This is designed to teach the child that they will not get attention from the incident.
- When a child bites, the key person will inform their parent/carer by sharing an incident sheet at the end of the session. The purpose of informing the parent/carer is to see if the parents are experiencing the same behaviour at home. This also provides the parent/carer with the opportunity to ask any questions.

- An incident sheet will also go home with the child who was bitten explaining the incident. Where possible we will try to discuss the incident sheets with you prior to collecting your child, so we are not talking about the incident in front of them.
- We do not talk with the parent/carer about who was involved in the incident. Children do not bite maliciously, they bite because they don't know how else to act or react. Whilst most parents/carers understand this, there are cases in which parents/carers are very angry about the incident. Parents/carers of a child who bites feel terrible about the situation. Giving their names to an angry parent/carer would be unfair and serve no purpose.
- We talk to the child who has bitten, age appropriately, explaining that we don't bite. We try to help them understand that there are other ways to express themselves and deal with the situation. We talk about what we use our mouths for and suggest other things we could use or bite when we are frustrated such as chewy toys.
- Incident records will be reviewed by the Headteacher and Teacher/SENCo. If biting has become a pattern of behaviour, we will shadow and observe the individual child looking for 'triggers'. Parents/carers will be informed and this is dealt with on an individual basis.
- In some cases we may seek professional advice from our Inclusion Teacher or Educational Psychologist if it is felt necessary.
- We encourage the child who bit to find other ways to communicate and express their feelings. We explain out loud how we think the child is feeling. For example, "I can see that you feel angry that someone took your toy. Let's go over and tell them that you were playing with it". We also encourage the child who was bitten to use their words and say, "No biting. I don't like that. It hurts me". This helps the child to feel more in control, and may sometimes prevent a bite.

We work hard not only in dealing with bites when they happen, but also at finding methods of prevention: keeping children active, working in smaller groups, observing and shadowing a child and offering soothing activities are all designed to lessen aggression.

It is important that all parties involved work closely together. Each case will be different.