

Biting Policy

Reviewed: October 2024

Next Review Date: October 2026

Introduction

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. 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 the 'bite'. Generally biting occurs at the toddler age; but sometimes, in rare cases with children older than this. 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 Broomhall Nursery School are taught to share, wait their turn, to take turns and to play together. 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?

1. We comfort the child who was bitten and administer first aid if required. We make an effort to comfort the child who has been hurt in front of the child who acted as the aggressor. This is designed to teach the child who bit that they will not get attention from the incident.
2. When a child bites, the key person will inform the parents/carers. 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.
3. 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. We help them to find something nice to do for the friend that they have bitten.
4. Incident and/or accident forms are filled out for both children. The parent/carer of the child who received the bite will be informed by the signing of the accident form.
5. 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.

6. Incident records will be reviewed by the Headteacher and if one child is showing a pattern of consistent biting then the parents/carers will be informed.

7. When biting has become a pattern of behaviour, we will shadow and observe the individual child looking for 'triggers'.

8. In extreme cases we may seek professional advice from our Inclusion Teacher or Educational Psychologist.

9. We encourage the child who bit to use words to 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. Please feel free to arrange time to talk with your child's key worker or the Headteacher should you have any questions.