

Biting Policy

At Green Roots we promote positive behaviour at all times. We understand that children may use certain behaviours, such as biting to communicate their feelings and needs. Biting is a common type of behaviour that some children use to help them make sense of the world around them, and to manage interactions with others. It can be triggered when they do not have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need. It can also be used to fulfil an oral stimulation need, such as during periods of teething or developmental exploration. Sometimes biting can be due to a Special Educational Need and/or Disability.

Our procedures

The nursery uses the following strategies to help prevent biting:

- Individual, one-to-one and small group times so that each child is receiving positive attention
- Quiet and cosy areas for children who are feeling overwhelmed to go to,
- Stories, puppets and discussion about emotions and feelings including Activities and stories that help support children to recognise feelings and empathise with characters and events.
- Additional resources for children who have oral stimulation needs, such as, teething rings or chew necklaces
- Vigilant staff that know the children well and are able to identify when children need more stimulation or quiet times.
- Adequate resources are provided and, where possible, more than one resource or toy is sought to minimise conflicts.

Every child is treated as an individual and we work with families to support all children's individual needs. With this in mind, it will be necessary to implement different strategies depending on the needs of the child carrying out the biting.

In the event of a child being bitten we use the following procedures.

The most relevant staff member(s) will:

- Comfort any child who has been bitten and check for any visible injury. Administer any paediatric first aid where necessary and complete an accident form once the child is settled again. If deemed appropriate the parents will be informed via telephone. Staff will continue to observe the bitten area for signs of infection. For confidentiality purposes and possible conflict, we do not disclose to the parents the name of the child who has caused the bite

- Tell the child who has caused the bite in terms that they understand that biting (the behaviour and not the child) is unkind and show the child that it makes staff and the child who has been bitten sad.
- Ask the child what they can do to make the 'child who has been bitten' feel better (this could be fetching them a toy or sharing toys with them, a rub on the back etc.)
- Complete an incident form to share with the parents at the end of the child's session.
- In the event of a bite breaking the skin and to reduce the risk of infection from bacteria, give prompt treatment to both the child who has bitten and the child who has been bitten.
- If a child or member of staff sustains a bite wound where the skin has been severely broken, arrange for urgent medical attention after initial first aid has been carried out.

Green Roots will follow the additional steps in the event of more than one incidents of biting:

- The child will be 'shadowed' and observed by a team member for periods of the day to try and prevent incidents before they occur and to try and establish 'patterns' in the behaviour or distinguish a cause, e.g. tiredness or frustration.
- We will discuss with team members the incidents concerned and evaluate and monitor the situation for the future.
- Arrange for a meeting 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
- Arrange for a meeting with the parent whose child has been bitten, particularly if the child has been bitten several times, to provide reassurance that the nursery is managing biting incidents effectively

In cases where biting is persistent and a cause of serious concern, we will enlist the help of other professionals eg. health visitor, area Special Educational Needs Coordinator or Early Years Consultant to look closely at any other contributory factors.

- A risk assessment will be carried out
- If age appropriate, we may accelerate a room move for the child so they are mixing with older children that they may be less likely to bite.
- We may recommend immunisation with hepatitis B vaccine for all staff and children.
- Where the risk assessment identifies the need for a child to have ongoing close supervision the Manager will discuss with the child's parents (and their professional advisers if appropriate) the adjustments that can reasonably be made for the child.