



St Helens College



University Centre
St Helens

Nursery Childcare Policy - Biting

Relating to: Nursery

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Principle

Biting is a common behaviour that some young children experience, and it usually occurs more often amongst children under the age of five and in group situations such as a nursery or playgroup.

Evidence suggests that up to a quarter of all very young children will bite others at some stage. At St Helens College Nursery, we understand that this is a difficult situation for all parents whether it is your child that has been bitten, or your child has been responsible for biting others.

This policy has been created to help prepare staff, parents, and carers for the possibility of experiencing a biting incident and to give some understanding to what can be an upsetting experience for all concerned.

Children may bite for the following reasons:

Exploration

Babies and toddlers may bite when they are exploring something new and may not understand the difference of chewing a toy to chewing a person. They learn through touching, smelling, listening to, and tasting objects.

Teething

Babies and toddlers who are teething may bite as they may be suffering from sore gums and the discomfort may only be relieved by chewing on an object or person.

Cause and Effect

From 12 months old, babies begin to understand cause and effect and will soon learn that if they bite someone, they will get a reaction.

Attention

Children may bite to gain attention. Biting can be a quick way to gain attention and may not be concerned that the attention is negative.

Imitation

Children often enjoy imitating their peers and if they see them bite, may decide to try it out too.

Independence

Children can sometimes bite to gain control for example, if they want a toy or for someone to move out of their way. They bite to gain the desired result.

Frustration

Children may bite through frustration when they are not able to express their feelings due to lack of vocabulary.

What is our procedure following a biting incident?

First, nursery staff will work with each parent/carer and the children to discover why a child is biting. This may be an isolated incident, but we will always record the incident to be able to identify any trigger or behavioural trends.

A child who has bitten will never be identified to the parents of a child who has been bitten.

- Staff will separate the children and comfort the child who has been bitten. Another member of staff will be called to administer first aid if required.
- Each incident will be looked at individually to decide if a parent should be contacted prior to them collecting their child. For example, if the skin has been broken or the child has a condition which may involve them needing to be seen by a GP.
- The staff member will explain age appropriately to the child who has bitten, that biting is unacceptable for example, “we do not bite, biting hurts and is unkind” and explain that the child is feeling sad.
- The staff member who is dealing with the incident will complete the necessary incident forms for both children and have them co-signed by either the Manager or Deputy Manager.
- Staff will shadow and observe the child looking for ‘triggers or a pattern in the behaviour.
- We encourage parents/carers to work with the nursery staff by supporting any behaviour management techniques at home as well as in nursery.
- In certain cases, we may seek professional advice from local behavioural experts. This will be with the permission from parents/carers.

Summary

Please remember that staff cannot give you any information about any other children in the nursery and will not disclose who has bitten your child or whom your child has bitten.

Very young children do not bite maliciously, they bite because they do not know how else to react. Whilst most parents/carers understand this, there are cases in which parents/carers of the bitten child are naturally angry and upset. Revealing identities in these emotional circumstances would be unfair, unprofessional and serve no real purpose.

We work very hard in not only dealing with bites when they happen, but also in finding methods of prevention, but overall, it is important that all parties work together. Each case will be dealt with individually as will the resolution.

We would kindly ask all people involved to respect the sensitivity and confidentiality of any biting incident and adhere to the nursery’s internet use policy; the intent of this policy is to protect the rights of the nursery, staff, and families.

More information is made available to parents in the reception area.

Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all staff, parents, and children of the Childcare Facility.

Associated Policies

- Safeguarding & Child protection
- Equality & Inclusion
- Communication
- Health & Safety
- Parental Participation
- Managing Children's Behaviour
- Intimate Care
- Special Educational Needs
- Record Keeping
- Transition
- Data Protection & Sharing of Information
- Key Person & Settling In
- Working in Partnership with Other Agencies
- Admissions & Registration
- Supervision

Access to the Policy

This policy will be issued to all Childcare Practitioners and made available to the users of the Childcare Facility. A copy of all policies & procedures will be kept in the Managers office and in the reception area for parents/carers to access.

Post-Holder to Contact

Director of Student Services.