

## Biting Policy

### Policy Statement

Evidence suggests that biting is a common behaviour that many children engage in, often when they lack the means to communicate their needs or emotions. Biting is a normal stage of development for many children, though it can be challenging for children, parents, and staff. This policy outlines how Katey's Nursery & Pre-school supports children experiencing biting incidents, those subjected to biting and provides guidance to staff and parents on effective strategies to reduce such incidents.

### The management team must ensure that the staff team are:

- Aware of the biting triggers and are actively working to reduce these.
- Implementing the agreed behaviour management strategy consistently and effectively.
- Supporting the children and parents/carers involved in any biting incidents.

### Biting Incident Procedure

The child who has been bitten will be comforted and checked for any visible injury. First aid will be administered if necessary, and an Incident Form will be completed on an online parent app and shared with the parents of the child who has been bitten.

To protect privacy and prevent conflict, we will not share the name of the child who has bitten. If a parent finds out who has bitten their child, we strongly recommend they do not bring it up with the other parents directly.

If the bite has broken the skin, then a senior member of staff must advise the parents/carers to seek medical attention as soon as reasonably practicable. If there is no obvious mark or bruising, this can then be discussed with the parents/carers at collection time, or via telephone earlier if deemed appropriate.

If after first aid treatment, a visible mark/bruising is still evident, the parents/carers must be called by a key person wherever practicably possible (or a senior member of staff in the absence of the key person).

The parents/carers of the child who was responsible for the bite must be informed on the day of the incident.

### Strategies to Manage and Prevent Biting Incidents:

**Triggers:** Staff should reflect following each biting incident to identify the trigger.

Factors to consider include:

- Teething: Biting may feel good on sore gums.

- Hunger: The child might simply be hungry.
- Curiosity: They may be exploring the sensation of biting or seeking a reaction.
- Attention Seeking: Biting can be a way to get attention, even if it's negative.
- Emotions: Frustration, stress, or a lack of control over emotions may lead to biting.
- Copying: Children may imitate other children who bite.
- Defending: Some children bite when they feel anxious or threatened, for example when fighting over a toy.
- Changes in the child's interactions or routine: For example, the absence of their key person that they have a strong bond with, a new staff member present in the classroom or environmental changes can cause stress.
- Overstimulation or under-stimulation.

These observations can be recorded on the ABC chart (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences) (Appendix 1), in the case of persistent biting incidents.

**Communication:** If appropriate, the impact of biting should be explained to the child. Focus on the child's feelings without labelling them, e.g., 'I see you're angry, but biting hurts your friends'.

**Supervision:** Staff may need to increase the supervision of a child who is biting. This does not necessarily need to be one to one. It could be during particular times of the day, or by simply reducing the number of large group activities provided. Staff must always be assessing the reason for biting and take remedial action that supports the child, not just manage the child's behaviour.

**Routine Evaluation:** The Room Leader and key person will assess whether the daily routine is contributing to the child's distress and adjust accordingly.

**Quiet Spaces and Activities:** Provide quiet areas and activities, such as physical outdoor play or sensory experiences.

**Offer Alternatives:** Provide teething toys or snacks if biting is related to oral needs or hunger.

**Short, Clear Instructions:** Use concise language like, 'Biting hurts. We don't bite'.

**Redirection:** Encourage the child to engage in other, more positive activities. If the child understands they hurt someone, allow them to apologise but do not force it. Otherwise, redirect them to another activity.

**Emotional literacy:** To support children in understanding and managing their emotions, staff will regularly talk with children about their feelings, helping them to express their feelings in a variety of ways (e.g. through words, movement, dance, art, etc.). They will use children's books such as 'Teeth Are Not for Biting' or 'People don't bite people' to teach children about appropriate behaviour and the impact of biting on others. A variety of props and resources related to our body and emotions, including puppets, dolls, and visual aids, will be used during everyday activities to help children recognise and articulate their feelings. These resources will be

integrated into daily experiences and discussions to reinforce positive behaviour and emotional understanding.

**Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 ABC chart (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequences)
- Appendix 2 Biting Information leaflet

Policy Date	01/10/2024	Approved by	Sinead Johnson, CEO	Review date	01/10/2025
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