

# **WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY AND SUNBEAMS CLUB**



## **Biting Policy**



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# WOODLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL, HEDGEHOGS NURSERY & SUNBEAMS CLUB

## Biting Policy

At Woodlands Primary School, Hedgehogs Nursery and Sunbeams Club (the school), we recognise that biting is a common behaviour among very young children, particularly those under the age of five. It often occurs in group settings such as nurseries, preschools, toddler groups, or other social environments.

Biting can be part of a child's normal developmental journey, especially when they lack the language skills to express emotions like anger, frustration or need. Research indicates that up to a quarter of all very young children may bite others at some stage.

We fully understand that biting can be upsetting for all involved, whether your child has been bitten or is the one biting. Our approach is always to manage these incidents with sensitivity, professionalism, and care.

## Understanding Why Biting Happens

Biting is not a reflection of poor behaviour, inadequate care, or failure of parents, staff or the setting. At Woodlands, we have clear behavioural expectations: children are encouraged to share, take turns, be respectful, and play cooperatively. However, young children often lack the coping mechanisms and emotional regulation skills needed to manage challenging situations.

### Common reasons for biting include:

- **Teething or gum pain:** Swollen gums can cause discomfort, which some children relieve by biting or chewing.
- **Physical exploration:** Babies and toddlers explore the world through their senses and may not distinguish between biting a toy and biting a person.
- **Seeking attention:** Biting can be a way for a child to quickly become the centre of attention.
- **Frustration or emotional expression:** Children often become frustrated when they can't express themselves clearly. Biting may be their way of coping.

## Our Procedure Following a Biting Incident

We treat every biting incident seriously. Our aim is to understand the cause, comfort the child who was bitten, and support both children involved in a calm and constructive way.

### 1. Immediate Actions

The focus is child safety and support:

- The child who has been bitten will be comforted, reassured, and given appropriate first aid.
- The bite area will be thoroughly cleaned using an antiseptic wipe. If the skin is broken, appropriate first aid will be administered, cleaning the area with a medical wipe and applying a plaster/dressing if needed by a paediatric registered first aider.

## 2. Initial assessment and notification

- The Nursery Room lead (or Deputy Room Lead) will determine whether parents/carers should be contacted immediately or informed at collection.
- If the bite has broken or bruised the skin, parents/carers will be contacted promptly and may be advised to seek medical attention from a GP or A&E if necessary.
- The child who has bitten will also be checked to ensure they are not injured.
- Staff will speak to the child who bit (in an age-appropriate way) to help them understand other ways to express feelings. They may be encouraged to show kindness to the other child (e.g., saying sorry).
- Staff will make it clear that biting is unkind, while emphasising that it is the behaviour - not the child - that is unacceptable.
- An accident form will be completed for the child who was bitten and shared with their parent/carer.
- A biting incident record will be completed on the child's e-record for both the child who bit, and the child who was bitten.

## 3. Monitoring and support

**The Nursery Room Lead and the Deputy Room Lead (SEND)** will assess and discuss whether the biting is part of a pattern. Should it look like it is, they will have a meeting with parents to discuss this and involve the school SENCo if appropriate.

## 4. Parental Communication

All adults remain in the room with the children.

- A member of the Admin Team will contact the parent/carer of the child who was bitten to:
  - Inform them of the incident.
  - Provide an update on the child's emotional state.
  - Ask if they wish to visit or collect their child.
  - Advise if medical attention is recommended.
- A detailed handover will be provided at collection, including an overview of the incident and any next steps.
- If the child is taken for medical attention, a PRIME form must be completed.
- All biting incidents will be recorded on children's e-records.

## Categorisation of Bites

To guide our response, all bite incidents will be categorised based on severity:

### 1. Bites that do not leave a mark

#### **Description:**

Skin is unbroken, with no visible redness, bruising, or mark.

#### **Response:**

- Reassure the child.
- Monitor for delayed swelling or bruising.
- Record the incident.
- Inform parents/carers if applicable.
- Review potential triggers and adjust strategies if needed.

## **2. Bites that leave a visible or significant mark**

### **Description:**

Bruising or indentation on the skin; no broken skin.

### **Response:**

- Apply first aid (e.g., cold compress).
- Notify both sets of parents/carers.
- Record the incident.
- Review circumstances and consider safeguarding implications.
- Monitor for repeat behaviours.

## **3. Bites that break the skin**

### **Description:**

Skin is broken, bleeding, or at risk of infection.

### **Response:**

- Clean the wound and apply a sterile dressing.
- Seek medical advice if necessary (e.g., risk of tetanus or infection).
- Urgently notify parents/carers.
- Complete a full incident report.
- Inform the safeguarding lead and consider referral if appropriate.
- Assess triggers and adjust risk assessments/behaviour plans.

Note: If the skin has been broken and blood has been drawn, the child who bit may also need to seek medical advice.

## **Ongoing Concerns and Support**

If parents/carers have ongoing concerns, after speaking with the Nursery Room Lead, they should speak with the EYFS lead. All behaviour support plans, should they be required, will be developed in partnership with families, and consistent strategies will be encouraged both at home and at school.

## **Confidentiality and Sensitivity**

Please note that staff cannot share information about any other children involved in an incident. We will not disclose the identity of a child who has bitten or been bitten. Biting is not done with malice; it is usually a developmental issue linked to communication and emotional regulation.

## **Summary**

Woodlands is committed to working in partnership with families to support all children's behavioural and emotional development. Our staff are well-trained in behaviour management and SEND and can access specialist advice where needed.

Biting is a common but distressing part of early childhood. While we cannot always prevent it, we do everything possible to minimise the likelihood, understand the causes, and support all children involved with care and professionalism.