



Pre School Twos Biting Policy

Biting Policy

At St Paul's we acknowledge that biting is a common behaviour among young children and it evokes a strong emotion in adults, both parents and educators. Biting is often very painful and frightening for the child who is bitten. It can also be very frightening for the child who bites. We recognise that the majority of children will learn not to bite in time and are very clear, firm and calm when a child does bite and offer praise and warmth when they don't.

If an incident of biting does occur, the parents of both children will be informed of the event. This will also be recorded in the accident book and behaviour record. If your child has bitten another child, you should not bite them as a punishment. It sends a very confused message to your child.

We ask that parents/carers make us aware of any incidents of biting that have occurred outside of the setting as this will enable staff to be more prepared and vigilant.

Reasons why children might bite

Biting happens for different reasons with different children under different circumstances. The first step in learning to control it is to look at why it may be happening. Not all children bite out of anger or to hurt another child – young toddlers can't really understand how much pain they're causing. Teething aside, children may bite for a number of reasons including:

- Curiosity – toddlers may bite to see what their friends arm may taste like or to see the reaction. It's impulsive and they don't mean to hurt. Often, a baby chomps on someone when they're teething. Sometimes toddlers nip when they're over-excited.
- Emotions – This can be frustration, stress, feelings of lack of power or as a way of showing love. "Toddlers have really intense feelings but don't know how to show them," says Dirk Flower, chartered psychologist. "Biting can be a way of expressing their feelings."
- Defending - Young children learn to bite as a defence, especially if they can't talk and will bite other children whenever they feel anxious or threatened. Sometimes changes or upsets at home can bring on this type of biting.
- Seeking attention or control - Some children know biting is a way of getting others to do what they want or to gain attention. They don't always do this consciously. It may happen when a group of children are jostling to be leader or gain power. Biting is a good way of getting others to take notice, even if the attention gained is negative.
- Copying – children who see another child or adult biting may think that this is a good idea.

When a child bites

Staff will follow school procedures: -

Show disapproval and very firmly and calmly say something like "No we do not bite! It hurts and it's not nice!" Use gesture and facial expression to reinforce the message.

Remain calm and firmly remove the child who bites away from the person (whether child or adult) whom he/she is biting. Staff may walk away from the child for a short period to emphasise their disapproval. Depending on the child's stage of development, a period of "time out" may be implemented in accordance with the school behaviour policy.

If the child who has bitten is not calm they will be removed from the situation giving them the space and time to calm down and ensuring that they do not try to bite the victim again.

Staff will make it clear that it is the biting behaviour that meets with disapproval - not the child and to reinforce this, positive behaviour will be encouraged and praised.

If a child persists with biting, staff will make a plan to monitor and support the child. Through monitoring and recording incidents it may be possible to identify particular triggers for the behaviour. Understanding why a child bites is key to solving the problem so using this information will inform possible intervention strategies.

Within this plan staff will regularly meet with the parent/carer of the biter to discuss underlying reasons and common strategies to ensure consistency between the home and Pre-School Twos. Where necessary, permission will be sought from the parent/carer of the child to refer concerns and involve outside agencies and professionals.

If a child is a victim of biting

Staff are trained to deal with this situation and will immediatly follow first aid procedures to relieve pain and injury. Biting is always taken seriously and staff do their best to ensure that it is stopped as soon as possible.

Staff will not disclose to parents the name of the child who has bitten. It is unnecessary to know their identity, however if a parent finds out who has bitten their child school strongly recommends that they do not complain directly to the other parents.

Try to remember that all young children are potential biters.

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed.

Related policies: Behaviour Policy
Special Educational Needs Policy
Inclusion Policy
Parent Partnership Agreement