

Biting Policy and Procedures



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Biting Policy and Procedure

This policy represents the agreed principles for behaviour and discipline throughout Jan Pre-School and Nursery. It aims to help children grow in a safe and secure environment and become positive, responsible, and increasingly independent members of our nursery. At our setting, we reward good behaviour, as we believe this will develop an ethos of kindness and cooperation. This policy promotes good behaviour rather than merely deter antisocial behaviour. We work alongside outside agencies with individual children and their families to support children's behaviour.

Statement

Biting is a common behaviour among children and can be a concern for parents and staff. Biting can often be painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten, and also frightening for the child who bites. Biting happens for different reasons with different children and under other circumstances. This is part of some children's development and can be triggered when they do not yet have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need. At Jan Preschool and Nursery, we always follow our positive behaviour policy to promote positive behaviour.

Aims

We aim to act quickly and efficiently when dealing with any case of biting. Jan Pre-School and Nursery has the following strategies to prevent biting: sensory activities, biting rings, adequate resources, and staff who recognise when children need more stimulation or quiet times. We will treat each incident with care and patience, offering comfort to intense emotions, helping children manage their feelings, and talking about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.

Procedure

In the event of a biting incident: -

1. The child who has been bitten will be the priority and must be comforted and reassured.
2. Once the child is calm, staff must check for visual injury. If a bruise is present, apply a cold compress to reduce swelling. A senior staff member must inform the child's parents of the incident at pick-up time.
3. If the skin is broken, it must be cleaned with soap and warm water, following the NHS guidelines, and then a cold compress must be applied. A senior staff member must contact the parent/carer immediately. This phone call should be sensitive, reassure the parent/carer, and explain the procedure that has been followed. You must advise the parents/carers to contact the child's GP. If the skin has been severely broken, staff should immediately take the child to the Accident and Emergency.
4. The staff member who witnessed the incident must complete an Incident Form for all children involved.

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5. The Nursery Manager must be informed of all biting incidents.
6. The child who has bitten should have their behaviour managed by their key person, and the consequence of this behaviour should be explained in a way appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.
 - a. The child responsible for the bite will be told that biting is unkind (the behaviour and not the child) and will be shown how it makes the staff and the child (who has been bitten) feel sad. The child will be asked to apologise if developmentally appropriate or to enhance their empathy skills by offering the hurt child a favourite book or comforter.
 - b. If a child continues to bite, observations will be made to distinguish a cause, e.g. tiredness or frustration. Meetings will be held with the child's parents to develop strategies to prevent further biting. Parents will be reassured that it is part of a child's development and not made to feel it is their fault.

Suppose a child repeatedly bites and/or has a specific special educational need or disability that contributes to increased biting, such as in some cases of autism, where they lack communication skills. In that case, the nursery will conduct a risk assessment.

Arrangements to Support this Policy

Key messages

- Staff should acknowledge that biting incidents can cause parents a great deal of distress and worry, and staff must always be sensitive and supportive.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers is a key factor in any successful behaviour management strategy. Staff should involve parents/carers every step of the way and explain that this should be implemented in the home and the nursery.
 - Staff should be aware that a range of triggers can cause children to bite and should work as a team to identify and reduce these potential triggers for biting
- Exploration: Babies and young children use their senses to explore the world around them. Young children do not always know the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting someone.
 - Teething: Swollen gums can be painful and cause discomfort; biting or chewing on something can relieve this.
- Cause and effect: At around one year old, children become interested in the consequences of their actions. For example, they may bang a spoon on a table and discover that it produces a noise. This behaviour may be repeated to reinforce their learning and development. This could also apply to biting, as the child explores the reaction to biting someone.



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- **Attention:** When children feel they are not receiving enough attention, biting is a quick way to become the centre of attention.
- **Independence:** Toddlers are trying very hard to be independent, using phrases such as “me do it” and “mine.” If a child wants a toy or another child to do something, this could lead to a biting incident.
- **Frustration:** Children can be frustrated by several things, such as long waiting times before or after transitions, wanting to do something independently but not quite being able to manage the task, and not having the vocabulary to express themselves clearly. This can lead to biting as a way of dealing with this frustration.
- **Environment:** An environment that does not provide a challenge, or allows children to become uninterested, can lead to displays of negative behaviour, such as biting.
- **Not having their needs met:** Children who are tired, hungry or uncomfortable may bite others to express their emotions. All these triggers should be considered – it could be one of these factors or a combination. Potential strategies to support the management of biting incidents of a child who is biting; this does not necessarily need to be one-on-one. It could be during particular times of the day or by simply reducing the number of large group activities provided.
- Staff should ensure a child who is biting receives significant encouragement when displaying positive behaviour, and avoids receiving excessive attention following an incident.
- Staff should evaluate the routine and judge whether it meets the child's needs. A good-quality routine should provide experiences and activities both indoors and outdoors with no waiting times. Group activities should benefit the children and not be a holding exercise.
- Staff should plan activities that help release frustration, such as physical outdoor play and malleable experiences like play-dough, gloop, etc.
- Staff should provide cosy areas for children to relax in and activities that release tension, such as splashing in water, digging in sand, and using sensory equipment.

Confidentiality:

We maintain strict confidentiality regarding all behavioural incidents. Parents are only told about their own child. No names or personal details of other children are shared. All records are stored securely.

Monitoring and reviews:

- Regularly review incident logs to identify patterns.
- Review and adjust strategies as needed.
- If biting persists, collaborate with parents, SENCO, and the local authority for additional support.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if required, due to updated guidance.