



Cambridge Steiner School

Biting Policy

Policy Adopted June 2022

Next review: June 2023

**Full endorsement is given to this policy by: Name: Joel
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Trustee Signed: Date: April 14th 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Chalfen".

At CSS we promote a positive approach towards children's behaviour both in our Behaviour Policy and Step training in order to understand the reasons why children bite and minimize the incidence of biting occurring. Unfortunately, biting can be a common occurrence as many children pass through this particular stage of development between the ages of 0-5 and most commonly at around ages 2-3.

Possible Reasons why children may bite are:-

- To express emotions like anger, frustration and fear, when vocabulary or certain skills have not been developed yet
- To gain attention
- In self-defense if they feel threatened
- As an extension of natural curiosity – what happens if I do this to someone?
- As a way of satisfying a need for oral stimulation and to self-regulate, relieve anxiety or cope with stressful situations.

Reducing the risk

If a child is biting frequently we use My Concern (an online safeguarding and incident reporting program) to note down and collate any patterns or particular circumstances that trigger the child biting. For example, does it always occur when the child is tired, or in a crowded space, or when it is very noisy etc.

What to do for child (or adult) who has been bitten

- Administer appropriate first aid cleaning the area and applying a cold compress or ice pack depending on the severity of the bite
- Monitor the area bitten

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- Depending on the severity of the bite and in discussion with class staff we will either ring the parents of the bitten child immediately or wait to talk to them at the end of the session
- Explain to the parent the actions that have been taken and that we understand how upsetting it is both for the child/adult and parent
- We do not give the name of the child who has bitten but assure parents that steps are being taken to reduce any further incidents as far as we possibly can
- Depending on the severity of the bite suggest to parent to continue monitoring and seek further medical help – this particularly applies if the skin is broken in order reduce the risk of infection

What to do for the child who has bitten

Strategies will need to vary depending on the child biting and their understanding of the situation some possible strategies are as follows:-

- The biter will be immediately removed from the group with a firm “No biting” from a practitioner. The child will be spoken to at a level they can understand and then redirected to another activity.
- Speak to the biter about how the other child or adult may be feeling
- Ask them to make amends in some way to show they are sorry e.g. fetching or putting away the ice pack or looking after the child who has been bitten in some way.
- Talk to the parents (if possible as the incident occurs) or at the end of the session. There should be no mentioning of the names of the child or adult bitten
- Liaise with parent/families as to any specific reasons why child may be biting
- Arrange a longer meeting with the parent if biting is occurring regularly. This is in order to talk through strategies and consequences for home and school and provide a consistent approach in both places.
- If the situation continues, external support may be needed, for example Play Therapy, Sensory Processing Assessment etc.
- In case the biting incident has a major negative effect on another child or the group overall, the teacher will ask the parents to collect the child as a consequence to the nature of this behaviour.
- Any exclusion can only occur if any other support and adjustments have been managed.

Other possible strategies

- Staff refer to their STEP training
- Discuss as a team or with the SENCo possible solutions
- Use My Concern to note any incidences of biting
- Use chew necklaces
- Staff to wear arm protectors – this may be more useful for children with additional needs and 1:1 adult support where biting may be a sensory response.
- Read book ‘Teeth are not for Biting’
- Make a Social story emphasizing the desired behaviour

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We acknowledge that there are lots of reasons why children may bite, and the speed in which a biting incident can happen, even if you have a range of strategies in place to minimise incidents, it can still be impossible to eliminate it completely.

Refer to Behaviour Policy and First Aid Policy for further more information on these.