Woodburn Nursery Class



Anti-Biting Policy

Biting can be common amongst young children and cause concerns for parents/carers, carers and nursery staff.

Biting can be painful and frightening for the child on the receiving end. It can also be frightening for the child who bites, because of the reaction of others. The child who has been bitten may be very upset and adults disappointed, disapproving or angry about the behaviour of the “offender”. Biting can make the child who bites feel very powerful because of these strong reactions but this can also be frightening as children need to feel secure that their feelings can be controlled.

Biting occurs for different reasons and is influenced by the children involved and the underlying circumstances. The first step in trying to address biting is to look at why it may be happening.

Young children do not always have good control over their emotions and means of communication and do not always express themselves appropriately. They sometimes experience difficulty in asking for things, requesting help or interacting suitably with others; they do not necessarily have the skills to negotiate or understand another child's perspective. A loving pat sometimes turns into a push or, when they are unable to find the words to express their feelings, they resort to hitting, pushing, or biting.

Staff are aware these children need close adult supervision, especially if they are known to bite. However, even the best supervision may not eliminate all incidents of biting in the Nursery or elsewhere. Staff, therefore, follow guidelines to address any incidents of biting which might occur within the Nursery.

In our Nursery setting, staff will

* Stop the action
* Quickly assess the situation to determine the cause of biting
* Attend to the victim: wash the area with soap and water, apply cold compress if swollen, comfort the child
* Speak to the child responsible for biting -" Biting hurts! Teeth are not for biting children. Teeth are for eating food"
* Remind child of Nursery expectations
* Tell the child what he/she can do next time he/she is upset or cross. Give examples of words to use or remind him/her to go to an adult for help
* Move child to another area, sit quietly until calm
* Redirect child to a new activity and stay with him/her until he/she is engaged
* Monitor closely and intervene quickly if needed
* Inform parents/carers of both children what has happened
* Assure parents/carers that appropriate action has been taken and that staff are taking measures to prevent further incidents
* If this is a recurrent problem, work with the parents/carers on a plan of action to be reinforced in the home using Nursery guidance and the following advice:

If attention seems to be the main reason for biting, adults should try to spend time with the child and praise them when they are doing more positive things.

If the child is experiencing a stressful family or care-giving situation, make everyday life as supportive and normal as possible. Predictable meals and bedtimes and extra time with a loving adult can help.

Often, experiences like rolling, squishing, and pounding play dough or relaxing, splashing and playing in water are a great way to relieve tension.