



09 Early years practice procedures

09.17 Biting Policy

Policy statement

Little Doves CP wants to ensure that every child is safe whilst in the pre-school. An environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others and non-aggressive problem solving between the children is encouraged. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills.

For safety and health concerns, biting is taken seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating and stressful for children, parents/carers and staff. It is also not something to blame on children, parents/carers or staff and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behaviour that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this ages' mindset, so the "cause-effect" relationship is not internalized. The staff plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when everyone cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

Little Doves procedure for handling a biting incident is the following:

- The biter is immediately removed from the group with a firm NO. The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, an ice pack is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising. The child who has bitten is not allowed to return to play and is talked to on a level that they can understand and is encouraged to say "sorry" (depending on a child's level of understanding) and reminded that Little Doves has "kind mouths". If necessary, all the children are reminded at "Focus time" to have "kind mouths" and that no one is allowed to bite as it is very unkind and hurts.
- A written incident report is completed by the staff witness and an accident report is completed for the injured child. The accident report is given to the appropriate parents/carers of the children involved when they are picked up that day. The name of a biting child is not released because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult. The incident report is kept on file for future response if required.
- Each biting incident is carefully considered for a pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behaviour. All staff are made aware of the incident and the child may be added to the daily risk assessment if required.
- The staff work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.

- The staff try to adapt the environment and work with parents/carers to reduce any child stress.
- Special efforts are made to protect potential victims.

Every effort to stop the behaviour quickly is made and to balance our commitment to the family of the biting child to that of other families.

17/11/2024 V6