

# Overdale Infant School



## Biting Policy

Approved by:

M Davis

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# Contents

1. Rationale .....	2
2. Roles and Responsibilities .....	2
3. Arrangements to Support this Policy .....	3
4. Procedures to be followed in the event of a biting incident .....	4

## 1. Rationale

All children deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Evidence suggests up to a quarter of all children will bite others at some stage, we acknowledge that this can be a challenging time for parents/carers, children and staff.

This policy covers:

- How staff can identify triggers which lead to a child biting
- How a bite wound should be treated
- How staff can design and implement consistent strategies to reduce/eliminate biting incidents
- How the school works in partnership with parents/carers of a child who bites or has been bitten
- Effective management systems to support individual children with long term or complex medical needs
- The procedure for responding to medical emergencies, cases of notifiable diseases, communicable diseases, and outlines any applicable exclusion periods

At Overdale Infant School we work to achieve the seven areas of learning for our Early Years Foundation Stage children and to achieve the outcomes of the National Curriculum for all Key Stage 1 children. We also acknowledge that all forms of behaviour is communication.

This policy references:

Public Health Document Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings. Further details can be found using the link below.

[Guidance on infection control in schools poster.pdf \(hscni.net\)](#)

Our Schools behaviour policy:

[https://www.overdale-inf.leicester.sch.uk/\\_site/data/files/users/4/files/E399FC4E116AB507DDAE2BCD0ACFC95A.pdf](https://www.overdale-inf.leicester.sch.uk/_site/data/files/users/4/files/E399FC4E116AB507DDAE2BCD0ACFC95A.pdf)

## 2. Roles and Responsibilities

The class teacher or key person will work in collaboration with the child, parents/carers and members of the Senior Leadership Team to ensure each child is following our behaviour expectations. Where necessary reasonable adjustments will be made for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Senior Leaders must ensure staff:

- Are implementing the behaviour management strategies consistently and effectively.
- Are aware of any biting triggers and are actively working to reduce these.
- Are supporting the children and parent/carer involved in any biting incidents which may take place.

### 2.1 Notifying Parents/Carers following a biting incident.

Should a biting incident take place where the bite breaks the skin a member of SLT must contact the parent/carer of the child immediately. This phone call should be sensitive and give reassurance to the parent/carer and explain the procedure which has been followed. Staff should advise the parents/carers to contact the child's GP.

Where a bite has not broken the skin staff should initially administer first aid and wait for the bite mark to settle before calling parents so an accurate description can be given. This may only take around 10 to 15 minutes. The phone call should be made by the class teacher or a member of SLT and again should be sensitive and give reassurance to the parent/carer and explain the procedure which has been followed.

The parents/carers of the child who has bitten another person must be informed via a phone call. This should also be handled sensitively and confidentially.

Parents/carers may ask the name of the child who has bitten or been bit. Staff must not disclose this information as confidentiality must be maintained.

## **2.2 Recording a biting incident**

Following a biting incident, the staff member must report what has happened to an SLT member. The staff member must also record the incident on our electronic safeguarding system CPOMs. All details of when, where and which children were involved should be included, along with any injuries sustained.

# **3. Arrangements to Support This Policy**

Key Messages:

- Staff should acknowledge that biting incidents can cause parents a great deal of distress and worry. Staff need to be sensitive and supportive at all times.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers is a key factor of any successful Behaviour Management Strategy. Staff should involve parents/carers every step of the way.
- Staff should be aware that there is a range of triggers which can cause children to bite and should work as a team to identify these and reduce them.
- Staff provide adequate resources such as sensory activities and biting aids to prevent biting.
- Staff are alert to children's needs and recognise when a child needs more stimulation or quiet time.

## **3.1 Potential triggers for biting**

- Exploration – Young children explore the world around them using their senses, young children do not always know the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting someone.
- Teething – swelling gums and wobbly teeth can be painful and cause discomfort; this can be relieved by biting or chewing on something.
- Cause and effect – Children become interested in what happens when they do something. This behaviour may be repeated again and again to support their learning and development. This could be the case with biting as the child explores the reaction to biting someone. This can be more pertinent for children who are at a lower development stage than their peers.
- Attention – when children are in a situation where they feel they are not receiving enough attention. Biting is a quick way of becoming the centre of attention.
- Independence – Young children are trying very hard to be independent using phrases such as “me do it” and “mine”. If a child wants a toy or wants another child to do something this could lead to a biting incident.
- Frustration – children can be frustrated by a number of things, such as long waiting times before or after transition times. Wanting to do something independently, but not quite being able to manage the task. Also, 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 the right elements for a child's needs can cause frustration and distress.
- Not having their needs met – children who are tired, hungry, or uncomfortable may bite others as a way of expressing their emotions.

All these triggers should be considered when an incident occurs and staff should be aware it could be due to one of these factors or a combination of them.

### **3.3. Strategies to support the management of biting incidents**

- Staff may need to increase the supervision of a child who is biting; this does not necessarily need to be one to one. It could be during particular times of the day, or by simply reducing the number of large group activities provided.
- Staff should make sure a child who is biting receives significant encouragement when displaying positive behaviour, and avoid excessive attention following an incident.
- Staff should evaluate the routine, and judge whether it is meeting the needs of the child. A good quality routine should provide experiences and activities both indoors and outdoors that have no waiting times.
- Staff should plan activities which help release frustration such as physical outdoor play, and malleable experiences like play dough, gloop, etc.
- Staff should provide areas for children to relax in and activities which release tension such as splashing in water, digging in sand, and using sensory equipment.

## **4. Procedures to be followed in the event of a biting incident.**

- The child who has been bitten should be the priority and should be comforted and given reassurance.
- Once the child is calm the bite mark should then be washed and wiped and a cold compress applied. Staff should explain to the child what is happening and support the child as this process may be painful
- If the wound is bleeding it should be allowed to bleed, as covering the wound can increase the risk of infection.
- Staff should wear the appropriate personal protective clothing when dealing with bodily fluids.
- The parents/carers of the child who has been bitten **MUST** be informed (see Roles and Responsibilities)
- If the bite has broken the skin then you will need to advise the parent to contact the child's GP.
- Wherever possible the child who has bitten should have their behaviour managed by their teacher and the consequence of this behaviour should be explained in a way which is appropriate to the child's age and stage of development. This should be in line with the behaviour policy.
- The staff member who witnessed the incident should report it to a member of SLT and record the incident in detail on CPOMs.
- Following recurring biting incidents, the Senior Leadership Team members will consult with parents and external agencies to ensure full support is in place and discuss strategies to minimise further incidents.
- The school's exclusion policy will be followed in line with serious physical incidents.

Policy agreed by Governing Body on ...16<sup>th</sup> November 2022

Signed.....*M. Davis*.....

Title of Signatory...Mr Matt Davis – Chair of Governors.....

Date of next Review...November 2024..... (2 years)