



## St. Mary's Playgroup

### Biting Policy & Procedure

First and foremost, we recognise the controversy surrounding the issue of biting.

At St Mary's Playgroup biting is not tolerated but is recognised as a developmental phase that some children pass through.

If upon starting at this setting you are aware of your child's tendencies to bite other children, this must be disclosed to us, as it will enable positive behaviour strategies to be put into place.

There are many reasons why a child begins to bite other children, such as teething, mouth exploration, frustration, or the feeling of being stressed due to not being able to express themselves adequately.

While this is not acceptable from an adult point of view because of the hurt it can cause to another child, it must be acknowledged that the 'biters' are also victims of their frustration and measures can be put in place to help that child deal with these.

#### Procedure to follow in the event of a child being bitten:

- The bitten child will be comforted and checked for any visual injury. First aid will be administered where necessary.
- An accident form will be completed and the parents may be informed via telephone if it is deemed appropriate (in the event of a bite breaking the skin, the parents will be called and informed).
- If the bite is severe, medical attention may be required.
- The bitten area will be continued to be observed for signs of infection.
- For confidentiality purposes and possible conflict the name of the child who has bitten will not be disclosed to the parents.
- The child who has caused the bite will be told in terms that they understand that biting (the behaviour and not the child) is unkind, and be shown that it makes staff and the child who has been bitten sad. The child will be asked to say sorry if developmentally appropriate or show they are sorry, e.g. through hugging.
- An incident form will be completed and shared with the parents at the end of the child's session.

If a child continues to bite, observations will be carried out to try to distinguish a cause. Meetings will be held with the child's parents to develop strategies to prevent the biting behaviour. Parents will be reassured that it is part of a child's development and not made to feel that it is their fault.

Where a child may repeatedly bite and/or if they have a particular special educational need or disability that lends itself to increased biting, e.g. in some cases of autism where a child doesn't have the communication skills, the setting will carry out a risk assessment.

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