



## Little Cherries

### Biting Policy and Procedure

In the setting we acknowledge that biting is a common behaviour among young children and it evokes a strong emotion in adults, both parents and educators. Biting is often very painful and frightening for the child who is bitten. It can also be very frightening for the child who bites. We recognise that in time the majority of children will learn not to bite. We are very clear, firm and calm when a child does bite and offer praise and warmth when they don't.

If an incident of biting does occur, the parents of both children will be informed of the event. This will also be recorded in the accident book and behaviour record. If your child has bitten another child, you should not bite them as a punishment. It sends a very confusing message to your child.

We ask that you make us aware of any incidents of biting that have occurred outside of the setting as this will enable staff to be more prepared and vigilant.

#### Reasons why children might bite

Biting happens for different reasons with different children under different circumstances. The first step in learning to control it is to look at why it may be happening. Not all children bite out of anger or to hurt another child – young toddlers can't really understand how much pain they're causing. Teething aside, children may bite for a number of reasons including:

- Curiosity – toddlers may bite to see what their friend's arm may taste like or to see the reaction. It's impulsive and they don't mean to hurt. Often, a baby chomps on someone when they're teething. Sometimes toddlers bite when they're over-excited.
- Emotions – This can be frustration, stress, feelings of lack of power or as a way of showing love. "Toddlers have really intense feelings but don't know how to show them," says Dirk Flower, chartered psychologist. "Biting can be a way of expressing their feelings."
- Defending - Young children learn to bite as a defence, especially if they can't talk and will bite other children whenever they feel anxious or threatened. Sometimes changes or upsets at home can bring on this type of biting.
- Seeking attention or control - Some children know biting is a way of getting others to do what they want or to gain attention. They don't always do this consciously. It may happen when a group of children are jostling to be leader or gain power. Biting is a good way of getting others to take notice, even if the attention gained is negative.

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- Copying – children who see another child or adult biting may think that this is a good idea.

### **When a child bites**

We show disapproval and very firmly and calmly use phrases like “No we do not bite! It hurts and it’s not nice!” We use gesture and facial expression to reinforce the message.

We will remain calm and firmly remove the child who bites away from the person (whether child or adult) whom they are biting. We might decide to walk away from the child for a short period to emphasise our disapproval. Depending on the child’s stage of development, we will implement a period of “time out” in accordance with our behaviour policy.

If the child who has bitten is not calm we will remove them until they have started to calm down, ensuring that they do not try to bite the victim again.

We make it clear that it is the biting behaviour that we disapprove of - not the child and to reinforce this, positive behaviour will be encouraged and praised.

If a child persists with biting the setting will make a plan to monitor and support the child. Through monitoring and recording incidents we may identify particular triggers for the behaviour. Understanding why a child bites is key to beating the problem and use of this information will inform possible intervention strategies.

Within this plan we will regularly meet with the parent/carer of the biter to discuss underlying reasons and common strategies to ensure consistency between the home and nursery. Where necessary, permission will be sought from the parent/carer of the child to refer concerns and involve outside agencies and professionals.

### **If a child is a victim of biting**

- The child will be comforted and reassured
- The bite wound will then be washed with warm soapy water and cleaned with an antiseptic wipe
- If the wound is bleeding, it will be allowed bleed and not covered to reduce the risk of further infection
- If the bite has broken or bruised the skin, parents will then be contacted by telephone so that they are aware that their child has been bitten
- If the bite has broken the child’s skin, under the Health Protection Agency guidelines parents will need to seek medical attention. This could be through your GP or an Accident and Emergency department.
- When the child is collected there will be an incident form completed with all the information about the biting incident and any treatment given.

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We will not disclose to parents the name of the child who has bitten. It is unnecessary to know their identity, however if a parent finds out who has bitten their child we strongly recommend that they do not complain directly to the other parents and to discuss their concerns with a member of staff.

Try to remember that all young children are potential biters.

This policy will be reviewed annually or as needed.

This policy is linked to Little Cherries Behaviour Policy, SEN and Equality and Diversity Policy.

This policy was adopted by Little Cherries Preschool *(name of provider)*

On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019 *(date)*

Date to be reviewed September 2020 *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory Jennie Peacock

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) Chair

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