**Biting Policy**

# This policy was adopted by Combe Pre-school on 03/09/2024.

Biting is a common behaviour that some children go through and can be concern for parents, carers and staff. Incidents of biting can be painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten and frightening for the child that bites. Biting can happen for a variety of reasons with different children under different circumstances. This is part of some children’s development which can be triggered when they do not have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need. At Combe Pre-school we follow our Positive Behaviour Policy to promote positive behaviour with all the children.

**Aim**

We aim to act quickly and efficiently when dealing with any case of biting.

Our Pre-school and After-school Club uses the following strategies to prevent biting:

* Sensory activities,
* Provide biting and chewy necklaces and chewy sticks,
* Adequate resources and staff who recognise when children need more stimulation or quiet times.

We will treat each incident with care and patience, offering comfort to children with intense emotions, helping children to manage their feelings and talk about them to help resolve issues and promote understanding.

**Procedure**

In the event of a biting incident:

1. The child who has been bitten will be the priority and should be comforted and given reassurance.
2. Once the child has calmed down, staff will check for any visual injury. If a bite mark is found, this will be washed with a damp piece of kitchen roll or paper towel, and afterwards wiped with an antiseptic wipe. Staff will explain to the child what is happening to help support the child through this process, as it may be painful.
3. Staff will wear disposable gloves when dealing with bodily fluids and to help reduce the risk of infection.
4. Staff will clean the skin around the wound with soap and warm water, and may also use antiseptic wipe, but try not to touch the wound.
5. Staff will try to remove any objects like teeth, hair or dirt from the wound using running water,
6. Staff will gently squeeze the wound so it bleeds slightly (unless it's already bleeding) as this may help reduce the risk of infection.
7. A dry dressing or clean paper towel or kitchen roll will be pressed firmly onto the wound to stop the bleeding if it's bleeding heavily
8. After cleaning the wound, staff will gently pat it dry and cover it with a clean dressing. If the wound is not bleeding, then a cold compress will be applied.
9. In cases where the bite has broken the child’s skin, a senior member of staff must contact the parents or carers of the child immediately via phone. Staff will be sensitive and give reassurance to the parent or carer and offer an explanation of the procedure which has been followed. Staff will advise the parents or carer to contact their child’s GP or 111 for advice. If the skin has been severely broken the child should be taken to Accident and Emergency immediately by staff.
10. If the skin is not broken, staff will wait 45 to 60 minutes to check if there is any bruising or a bite mark that is present. If there is no obvious mark or bruising this can be discussed with the parents or carers at collection time.
11. If after 45 to 60 minutes the bite mark has left the child with a bite mark or bruising, then a senior member of staff will contact the parents of the child to inform them of the incident.
12. The member of staff who witnessed the incident will record the incident in the Accident Record book and will record the Incident in our incident book for each child that is involved.
13. All wounds and bitten areas will be monitored closely by staff throughout the rest of the day, to monitor any changes such as bruising to the affected area. Any changes should be recorded in the Accident Record book and Incident book.
14. Staff will inform the Managers of all biting incidents.
15. The child who has bitten will have their behaviour managed by their key person and the consequence of this behaviour will be explained to the child in a way that is appropriate to the child’s age and stage of development.

* The child who has caused the bite will be told in terms that they understand that biting (the behaviour and not the child) for example staff will calmly say to a two-year-old child ‘Stop, biting hurts’, whereas older children will be told that biting is not kind and will be told that it makes the child and staff sad. The child will be asked to say sorry if developmentally appropriate or develop their empathy skills by giving the child who has been bitten a favourite book or comforter.
* If a child continues to bite, observations will be carried out to try and identify a cause or trigger such as tiredness or frustration. Meetings will be held with the child’s parents to develop strategies to prevent biting behaviour and all meetings will be recorded. Parents will be reassured that it is part of a child’s development and not made to feel that it is their fault.

1. The parents or carers of the child who has bitten another person should be informed at collection time: this will be handled in a sensitive and confidential manner and not discussed openly in front of other parents/carers and children. Parents and carers may ask staff for the name of the child who has bitten or been bit. Staff must explain that they can not disclose this information as confidentiality must be maintained
2. 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 managers will carry out a risk assessment.
3. Whan meetings are held with parents, these are recorded and kept on file. An overall record is kept by the Managers of any biting incidents and meetings.

**Arrangements to Support this Policy**

1. Key messages

* Staff acknowledge that biting incidents can cause children and parents/carers great deal of distress and worry, and staff need to be sensitive and supportive at all times.
* Working in partnership with parents and carers is vital to providing an effective behaviour management strategy and plans. It is important that staff involve parents and carers at every stage and explain that this should be implemented in the home as well as our setting, if appropriate.
* 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 the triggers.

1. Triggers for Biting

* Exploration – some children bite as a way of learning about the world around them and to help understand the taste or texture of different things. Some children my also link experiences of biting to the pleasure of eating foods at mealtimes,
* Teething – Some children chew or bite items to gain relief from teething pains. Most children do not understand the difference between an object and a human.
* Cause and Effect – Some children will bite to discover what happens when they do this, such as chewing on a toy and may repeat this behaviour to support their learning.
* Attention – Some children who feel they do not have enough attention may bite to gain the attention of others, as children feel that negative attention is better than no attention.
* Imitation – pre-school aged children find pleasure in coping others and also gain awareness that this is a way of learning. A child may see as sibling, peer or older child and will copy them.
* Independence – Children can use biting as a way of controlling others to gain independence. Children will say “it’s mine” and “I want it” if they want a toy and may bite another child to get the toy they want or act in self- defence if a child tries to take their toy.
* Frustration – children who may have to wait a long time to play with a toy or not being able to complete a task independently. A child may not have the right words to convey a message or to ask for help, which can lead to anger and result in a biting incident.
* Stress - children who experience a sudden change in their daily routine or are experiencing stressful events at home or in our setting may cause them to bite as a way of expressing their feelings to others.

1. Potential 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 mean one-to-one support. This could be implemented at particular times of the day, or reduce the number of large group activities, so the child can be observed more easily by the staff.
* Staff will give effective positive praise to the child who bites, when they demonstrate kind, helpful and good behaviour towards others.
* Staff will avoid giving the child who bites excessive attention after any biting incidents.
* Staff will plan activities which can help children release feelings of frustration and anger, such as playdough, and outdoor physical play such as digging in the sand or riding tricycles.
* Staff will provide quiet and cosy areas where children can relax whilst doing a quiet activity such as listening to stories, playing with calming toys such as cuddling toys, sensory lights and calming sensory bottles.
* Staff will evaluate daily routines to evaluate its effectiveness and if it meets the needs of the children. Children should have access to both indoor and outdoor areas throughout the day.
* Staff will hold meetings with parents to discuss and decide on appropriate strategies to support their child. These meetings will be dated and recorded.