

At Wiggles and Giggles we follow a positive behaviour policy to promote positive behaviour at all times. However, we understand that children may use certain behaviours such as biting as part of their development. Biting is a common behaviour that some young children go through and can be triggered when they do not have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need.

Parents/carers who face a biting situation whether as the parent/carer of the biter or the bitten, have many questions and concerns. Children bite for many reasons. We aim to handle any biting incident with respect for all involved.

Generally biting occurs at the toddler age. Whilst biting is more common at nursery than at home, a biting incident is not a negative reflection on the biter, the staff or the nursery.

Children at Wiggles and Giggles are encouraged to share, wait their turn, to take turns and to play together. These experiences can be difficult for adults, but we have the language and skills to help us in these situations where as young children do not have the coping mechanisms, or the self-regulation skills which adults and older children have that help us to diffuse and express our emotions in socially acceptable ways.

Once a child is known to be going through a biting phase we will make sure all necessary staff are aware, and work together as a team to try and prevent further incidents.

A child who is going through this phase may need a strategy put in place by his key person to support their development. Strategies may be to shadow on a 1-1 basis and monitor triggers in the child's behaviour, adapt routines to help calm busy times, change the room layout so that children have the space and resources they need, provision of sensory activities, biting rings etc.

Although biting can occur at any time of the day it may be more likely to happen during busier times e.g. tidy up time, lunchtime etc. also when children are in close proximity to each other such as story or singing time. Staff are mindful of these times and use strategies such as encouraging the child to help them tidy up with the staff member or helping them set up for the meal time to help keep the child stimulated.

Environmental factors may influence a biting incident: although biting can occur anywhere it may be more likely to happen in a hidden corner e.g. playhouse, under a slide/ tunnel. Staff are mindful of these times and monitor these situations.

Within the setting, staff are consistent in providing stimulating environments with adequate resources and recognise when children need more stimulation or quiet times, this has proven to help reduce the number of biting incidents that occur.

Children may bite for a variety of reasons, rarely with the intent to hurt another child. Some of the reasons children bite could be:

- Teething
- Frustration due to lack of speech
- Retaliation
- Boredom
- Attention seeking
- Tiredness
- Over excitement
- Cause and effect
- Sensory exploration

What happens when a biting incident occurs?

1. We comfort the child who was bitten and administer first aid if required. If the bite has severely broken the skin we will call the parents/carer. We continue to observe the bitten area throughout the day for signs of infection. We make an effort to comfort the child who has been hurt near the child who bit.
2. We talk to the child who has bitten, in a way they are able to understand, that biting (in reference to the behaviour not the child), it is unkind and we show the child that it has made the staff and the child who has been bitten sad. We try to help them understand that there are other ways to express themselves and deal with emotions. We talk about what we use our mouths for. To help develop their empathy skills we help them to find something nice to do for the friend that they have bitten and encourage the child to say sorry, if they are able or give a hug.
3. An 'Accident form; must be completed for the child who has been bitten and an 'Incident form' for the child who has bitten. Both forms will be signed by the parent/carer of the child when they are collected from the setting.
4. For confidentiality purposes and possible conflict we do not disclose the name of the child who has caused the bite to the parents. Children do not bite maliciously, they bite because they don't know how else to react/respond. Whilst most parents/carers understand this, there are cases in which parents/carers are not understanding about the incident. Parents/carers of a child who bites feel terrible about the situation. Giving their names to an unhappy parent/carer would be unfair and serve no purpose
5. When a child bites, the key person or an equally familiar member of staff will inform the parents/carers when they collect. The purpose of informing the parent/carer is to see if the parents are experiencing the same behaviour at home. This also provides the parent/carer with the opportunity to ask any questions.
6. Incident records are reviewed by the management team and if one child is showing a pattern of consistent biting then the parents/carers and behaviour co-ordinator will be informed.
7. When biting has become a pattern of behaviour, we will shadow and observe the individual child looking for 'triggers'.
8. In extreme cases we may seek advice from outside agencies.