

WINSTON HOUSE PREPARATORY KINDERGARTEN

BITING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Biting Policy and Procedures

Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare

Methods to use in case of biting, bullying, tantrums, fighting and conflict.

Possible reasons for biting:

- Teething
- Retaliation
- A dispute caused by two children wanting the same toy
- Frustration due to a lack of speech
- Boredom
- Attention seeking
- Tiredness
- Over excitement

Timing of biting incidents

Although biting can occur at any time of the day, it may be more likely to happen during busier times when staff are pre-occupied, for example, tidy up time or children's lunch time. Also, when the children are in close proximity to each other such as story time or singing time.

Environmental factors that may influence biting incidents:

Although biting can occur anywhere, it may be more likely to happen in a hidden corner, for example, the play house, the book corner, under the slide/climbing frame or in a play tunnel.

Procedure for dealing with a bitten child:

- Give lots of cuddles, TLC and reassurance while assessing the bite marks
- Apply a cold compress on the bitten area.
- Comfort the child until they are ready to play again.
- Complete the accident form with details of the date, time, what happened, how it was dealt with and if any marks are visible or the skin has been broken. If the bite is particularly bad/on the face, phone the child's parent to warn them, reassess the bite mark in an hour and write a follow up report. Maintain confidentiality.
- Speak to the parents/carers at the end of the session and ask them to read and sign the accident form. A copy is given to the parent.
- Parents can sometimes be upset that their child has been bitten, especially if occurs more than once, reassure them that the staff will work together to be extra supportive towards their child.

Procedure for dealing with a child who has bitten:

- Calmly take the child away from the situation.
- Explain that biting is not nice and that it hurts, point out that the bitten child is upset.
- Encourage the child to apologise to the bitten child, to say "sorry" or give a hug.
- Complete the management of behaviour incident form with the same details as the accident form, maintaining confidentiality.
- Speak to the parent at the end of the session and ask them to read and sign the management of behaviour incident form. A copy is given to the parent.
- Reassure the parent that biting is just a phase and that the child will grow out of it, work with the parent, offering suggestions on prevention.

Prevention of biting:

- Be aware of the reasons for biting; be constantly vigilant and aware of the children's needs to prevent boredom or disputes over toys.
- Offer teething rings to older toddlers who may be teething.
- Once a child is known to be going through a biting phase make sure all the staff are aware of the child, work as a team to prevent further incidents and if a particular child is always on the receiving end, be extra vigilant.
- The child may need to be shadowed on a one to one basis and/or kept away from the child who is being persistently bitten.
- Other children may start to copy a child who is biting, but with awareness from the staff this should only be a passing phase.

Hurtful Behaviour: (Tantrums, Fighting and Conflict)

Tantrums:

A child screams and hitting can be alarming, but tantrums can be common in many children up to the age of five, remind yourself this is normal development and stay calm! Tantrums arise when emotions can be too much for a child to hold. Tantrums can happen when the child is used to a relaxed approach at home, joins a setting with well-defined boundaries. Children are learning to deal with their emotions and need time and support.

Ideas to try:

- Consider the useful questions to ask – where and when did it happen, what happened beforehand, what happened afterwards, why do you think it happened and how do you think the child feels.
- Try distracting a child if you know a tantrum is brewing
- Utilise the outdoor area fully
- Remind yourself that limits are important and its okay to stick to them
- Children find it hard to wait too long, so make sure routines run smoothly – could they be hungry, tired or becoming ill
- Offer cuddles, cosy story time or gentle songs to ward off a tantrum

If a tantrum occurs:

- Make sure the child is safe and keep other children out of the line of fire
- It may help to avoid eye contact
- Reassure visitors that this is normal and the child needs to show his feelings
- Do not try to reason or have a conversation with a child in the throes of a tantrum
- You may depending on the child be able to hold him or her, rock him or reassure him

Conflicts and Fighting:

Learning how to deal with conflict is a necessary skill for children to acquire. Children that can self regulate becoming able to tolerate a feeling of distress (Perry 2001), can wait until the need is met e.g. feeling hungry, but being able to wait for dinner or being creative and beginning to problem solve. Providing structured, predictable routines with warnings for changes in a routine and then appreciating children when they manage to do it e.g. well done for waiting for your turn so patiently.

To help with conflict:

The most common reason is over toys or resources. Be on hand and use commentary along the lines of “you really wanted a toy, and when she grabbed it, you were so mad, you wanted to hit her back. “I can’t let you hit” Jack!, but I can help you choose something else you would like to play”. As children learn to tolerate some frustration and anxiety, there will be less reaction and they will be ready to share, take turns, and you (adult) will need to be ready to step in and model for children how to wait for a turn e.g. let’s wait here by Teddy until he finishes, then we can have a go. The key is to be a child’s ally in this situation instead of saying “stand there and wait your turn”. If there is a lot of hitting and kicking, provide this through games and activities such as throwing wet sponges against the wall, banging with saucepans and wooden spoons, kicking balls, sing songs or play movement games to practise stopping, starting and kicking and encourage children to work in pairs, on their own or as part of a group.

Where conflict is more serious e.g. where children are being more verbally abusive, help them see things from a different perspective through the use of a story, persona dolls, feeling puppets, this will also give them some emotional distance making it safer for them beginning to understand their own and others feelings.

As long as children are not hurting each other, it can be useful to wait before stepping in, let them find their own solution however small. Praise them if they manage this and tell the group so other children have the opportunity to learn.

Children who harm others

The setting recognises that the harm caused to children by the harmful and bullying behaviour of other children can be significant.

Children who harm others should be held responsible for their harmful behaviour and the setting staff alerted to the fact that they are likely to pose a risk to other children in the setting, home and community.

Where this harm involves sexual abuse, serious physical or serious emotional abuse, the safeguarding procedures set out in this policy will be applied.

The Setting recognises that children who harm others are likely to have considerable needs themselves and may have experienced or be experiencing significant harm to them.

Referrals

Where a child has caused significant harm to another child, through sexual abuse or serious physical or emotional abuse, the setting will make separate referrals to children’s social care of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s).

Our setting will be mindful of the sections in the London Child Protection Procedures concerning “Harming Others” and “Sexually Active Children” and work closely with social care, the police and other agencies following the investigation of a referral.