



BRITISH SCHOOL TENERIFE
EARLY YEARS BITING POLICY

Children biting other children is one of the most common and difficult behaviours to deal with, it can occur without warning and can be frightening for the children involved as well as parents and staff. This should always be dealt with in a sensitive way as it can be a concern for parents.

Biting happens for different reasons, this is part of some children's development and can be triggered when they do not yet have the words to communicate their anger, frustration or need.

At the BST we follow our positive behaviour policy to promote positive behaviour at all times.

Aim

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

We will treat each incident with care and patience.

We aim to provide a wide selection of stimulating resources that children can explore to prevent biting.

Working with parents

- Staff should acknowledge that biting incidents can cause parents a great deal of distress and worry, and staff need to be sensitive and supportive at all times.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers is a key factor of any successful Behaviour Management Strategy.
- Staff should involve parents/carers at every step of the way and explain that the policy should be implemented in the home as well as in the Early Years setting.

Reasons why children might bite

Biting can happen for different reasons with different children under different circumstances. Staff should be aware that there can be a number of reasons which can cause children to bite and should work as a team to identify these and reduce them.

- **Curiosity** – A young child may simply want to touch, smell and taste other people to learn more about the world around them and they do not know the difference between chewing a toy and biting someone.
- **Teething** – swelling gums can be painful and cause discomfort; this can be relieved by biting or chewing on something.
- **Attention** – Children of a young age lack the skills to deal with certain situations such as the need to get an adult's attention. Children like to be centre of attention and if they are in a situation where they feel they are not receiving enough attention, they could bite as biting another child gets a quick and immediate response.
- **Frustration** – There can be a number of reasons why children become frustrated and bite.
 - If children have to wait for long periods of time.
 - Wanting to do something alone but not quite managing the task.
 - Not having the vocabulary to express themselves clearly.

- **Environment** – Children may become frustrated in an environment that does not provide challenge or stimulating.
- **Not having their needs met** – if children’s emotions are not met or if they are tired, hungry or uncomfortable they may express themselves by biting.
- **Threatened child**
Young children who feel that they are in danger may bite in self-defence. If a child tries to take their toy or they are in unfamiliar surroundings then a young child may bite to take control of the situation.
- **Power**
Some children have a need for control. When they see the response they get from biting, their behaviour may be reinforced they may do it again.

3. 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 need to be one to one. It could be during particular times of the day, or by simply reducing the number of large group activities provided.

- Staff should make sure a child who is biting received significant encouragement when displaying positive behaviour, and avoid excessive attention following an incident.
- Staff should evaluate the routines and judge whether it is meeting the needs of the child. A good quality routine should provide experiences and activities both indoors and outdoors that have no waiting times.
- Staff should plan activities which help release frustration such as physical outdoor play and malleable experiences like play dough, gloop etc
- Staff should provide cosy areas for children to relax in and activities which release tension such as splashing in water, digging in sand and using sensory equipment.

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. Check for any visual injury. If there is a bite mark, this should then be washed with warm soapy water.
3. If the skin is broken:
 - Staff should wear gloves.
 - If the wound is bleeding it should be allowed to bleed as covering the wound can increase the risk of infection.
 - Apply ice pack.
 - The Early Years coordinator should be informed and the parents will be contacted and given the opportunity to go to the doctor using the school’s insurance.
4. If the skin is not broken.
 - Wash with soap and water.
 - Apply ice pack.

- Staff should wait 45/60 minutes and then check if there is bruising or a bite mark still present. If there is no obvious mark or bruising this can then be discussed with the parents/carers at collection time.
 - If after 45/60 mins the bite has left the child with a bite mark or bruising then the Early Years coordinator should be informed and a decision will be made if to contact the parents
5. The staff member who witnessed the incident fills in an incident form for the biter and the Accident book for the child who has been bitten.
6. The Early Years coordinator must be informed of all biting incidents.
7. Wherever possible the child who has bitten should have their behaviour managed and the consequence of this behaviour should be explained in a way which 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) is unkind, hurts and will 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 develop their empathy skills by giving the child who has been bitten a favourite book or comforter. e.g. personal object
 - If a child continues to bite, observations will be carried out to try to distinguish a cause, e.g. tiredness or frustration. 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.
8. The parents/carers of the child who has bitten another person should be informed at collection time; this must be handled in a sensitive and confidential manner and not discussed openly in front of other parents/carers and children. Parents/carers may ask you the name of the child who has bitten or been bit. Staff must explain that they cannot disclose this information as confidentiality must be maintained. Also, the parent of the child who has been bitten must be told and asked to sign the accident book.

Jenni Garnett

To be Reviewed January 2020