



# Early Years Biting Policy

## 1. Statement

At The British School of Tenerife, we recognise that biting is a common behaviour in Early Years development. It can occur unexpectedly and may be distressing for children, parents, and staff.

We understand that biting is often linked to a child's stage of development and may reflect communication difficulties, emotional regulation needs, or sensory exploration.

All incidents of biting are managed calmly, consistently and sensitively, in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding procedures.

The wellbeing of all children involved is always prioritised.

## 2. Aims

We aim to:

- Respond promptly, calmly and consistently to all biting incidents
- Ensure the safety and emotional wellbeing of all children involved
- Support children to develop appropriate communication and self-regulation skills
- Work in close partnership with parents and carers
- Identify triggers and reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents
- Maintain a nurturing and positive learning environment

## 3. Understanding Why Biting Occurs

Staff recognise that biting may occur for a range of developmental reasons, including:

- Curiosity and sensory exploration
- Teething discomfort
- Communication and language delay
- Frustration or inability to express emotions
- Seeking attention
- Overstimulation or environmental factors
- Emotional distress (e.g. tiredness, hunger, anxiety)
- Difficulty sharing or understanding boundaries
- Defensive behaviour or personal space awareness

Staff observe and record patterns to identify possible triggers and inform support strategies.

## 4. Prevention and Support Strategies

To reduce the likelihood of biting incidents, staff will:

- Provide close supervision during high-risk times and activities
- Use positive reinforcement to promote gentle and kind behaviour
- Ensure routines are consistent, calm and predictable
- Offer opportunities for physical and sensory play to support regulation
- Provide calm spaces where children can regulate emotions
- Support communication development through modelling and language support
- Avoid reinforcing negative behaviour with excessive attention
- Work as a team to identify triggers and adapt provision where needed

## 5. Procedure Following a Biting Incident

### Immediate Response

1. The injured child will be supported immediately and comforted
2. The area will be checked for injury and the child reassured
3. Staff will remain calm and ensure the situation is managed safely

### If Skin is Broken

- Staff must wear disposable gloves
- The wound will be cleaned with warm water only
- The area may be left uncovered initially to reduce infection risk
- An ice pack will be applied if required
- The Early Years Lead will be informed immediately
- Parents will be contacted and advised of next steps

### If Skin is Not Broken

- The area will be washed with warm water
- An ice pack will be applied if needed
- The child will be monitored for 45–60 minutes for any changes
- Parents will be informed at collection unless symptoms develop earlier

## 6. Recording and Reporting

- An Accident Form will be completed for the child who was bitten
- An Incident Form will be completed for the child who bit
- All incidents must be reported to the Early Years Lead
- Records must be completed on the same day
- Parents will be informed in a sensitive and confidential manner
- The identity of other children will never be disclosed

## 7. Supporting the Child Who Has Bitten

Staff will:

- Respond calmly and avoid punitive language
- Explain that biting hurts and is not acceptable behaviour
- Focus on the behaviour, not the child
- Encourage early empathy and repair where developmentally appropriate
- Support the child to use alternative strategies (e.g. words, gestures, adult support)
- Observe and record patterns or triggers

- Work in partnership with parents to develop consistent strategies
- Escalate concerns if biting becomes frequent or persistent

## 8. Working in Partnership with Parents

We recognise that biting incidents can be upsetting for families. Staff will:

- Communicate clearly, calmly and confidentially
- Reassure parents that biting is a developmentally appropriate stage for some children
- Share strategies being used in school
- Encourage consistency between home and school
- Arrange meetings where appropriate to support ongoing concerns

## 9. Confidentiality

All biting incidents are handled confidentially.

- Children are never named when communicating with parents of other children
- Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis
- All records are stored securely in line with safeguarding procedures

## 10. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if required due to:

- Safeguarding updates
- Behaviour framework changes
- Operational review or incident learning

### Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed every, or more frequently if required by changes in legislation, guidance, or school operational needs.

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|--------------------|---------------|---------|-------|
| Written by:        | Jenni Garnett |         |       |
| Agreed Date:       | October 2025  |         |       |
| Board of Governors |               |         |       |
|                    | Print Name:   | Signed: | Date: |
| Academic Director: |               |         |       |
|                    | Print Name:   | Signed: | Date: |
| Review Date:       | October 2027  |         |       |

