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**Homerton Early Years Centre**

**Biting Policy**

At Homerton we promote a positive approach towards children’s behaviour both in our Behaviour Policy and Step training in order to understand the reasons why children bite and minimize the incidence of biting occuring. Unfortunately, biting can be a common occurrence as many children pass through this particular stage of development between the ages of 0-5 and most commonly at around aged 2-3.

Possible Reasons why children may bite are:-

* To express emotions like anger, frustration and fear, when vocabulary hasn't been developed yet
* To gain attention
* In self-defence if they feel threatened
* As an extension of natural curiosity – what happens if I do this to someone?
* As a way of satisfying a need for oral stimulation to self-regulate, relieve anxiety or cope with stressful situations.

Reducing the risk

If a child is biting frequently we use the ABCC Behaviour Record form to see if there are any particular circumstances that trigger the child biting for example does it always occur when the child is tired, or in a crowded space, or when it is very noisy etc

What to do for child (or adult) who has been bitten

* Administer appropriate first aid cleaning the area and applying a cold compress or ice pack depending on the severity of the bite
* Monitor the area bitten
* Depending on the severity of the bite and in discussion with class staff we will either ring the parents of the bitten child immediately or wait to talk to them at the end of the session
* Explain to the parent the actions that have been taken and that we understand how upsetting it is both for the child/adult and parent
* We do not give the name of the child who has bittenbut assure parents that steps are being taken to reduce any further incidents as far as we possibly can
* Depending on the severity of the bite suggest to parent to continue monitoring and seek further medical help – this particularly applies if the skin is broken in order reduce the risk of infection

What to do for the child who has bitten

Strategies will need to vary depending on the child biting and their understanding of the situation some possible strategies are as follows:-

* Follow our calming time procedure using a sand timer, in order to give the child a chance to calm and then reflect on their behaviour (if appropriate for child’s age and stage of development).
* Speak to child who has bitten about how the other child or adult is feeling
* Ask them to make amends in some way to show they are sorry eg fetching or putting away the ice pack or looking after the child who has been bitten in some way.
* Talk to the parents at the end of the session – not mentioning the name of the child or adult bitten
* Try to understand with parent if there are any specific reasons why child may be biting
* Arrange a longer meeting with the parent if biting is occurring regularly. This is in order to talk through strategies and consequences for home and school and provide a consistent approach in both places.

Other possible strategies

* Staff refer to their STEP training
* Discuss as a team or with the SENCo possible solutions
* Use ABCC Behaviour Record
* Use chew necklaces
* Staff to wear arm protectors – this may be more useful for children with additional needs and 1:1 adult support where biting may be a sensory response.
* Read book ‘Teeth are not for Biting’
* Make a Social story emphasizing the desired behaviour

We acknowledge that there are lots of reasons why children may bite, and the speed in which a biting incident can happen, even if you have a range of strategies in place to minimise incidents, it can still be impossible to eliminate it completely.

Refer to Behaviour Policy and First Aid Policy for further more information on these.