

## Biting Policy

<b>Policy Owner: Director of Communities/SLT</b>	<b>Policy Developer: Head of Family &amp; Children's Services/AA</b>
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The current version of any policy, procedure or guideline is the version held in the Knowledge Library on Workplace. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they are following the current version.

At YMCA Thames Gateway we follow a positive behaviour policy and within this we understand biting is part of a child's development and it can be an indication of a child's frustration, anger or need. As part of our therapeutically informed approach we ask all staff to try and understand the cause of the behaviour and to work with this rather than to focus on the behaviour itself.

We understand that children may use certain behaviours such as biting to communicate their feelings and needs. Biting is a common behaviour that some young children use to help them make sense of the world around them, and to manage interactions with others. It can also be used to fulfil an oral stimulation need, such as during periods of teething or developmental exploration. Sometimes biting can be due to a Special Educational Need and/or Disability.

## **Our procedures**

While we would never want to punish a child for biting, biting can have a big impact on other children and staff. To ensure the happiness of all our staff and children we can ensure the following strategies at all of our settings.

We use the following strategies to help prevent biting including individual, one to one and small group times so that each child is receiving positive attention. Creating areas for children who are feeling overwhelmed to go to, including stories to talk about emotions. We also support social and emotional development by providing activities and stories that help children to recognise feelings and empathise with characters and events.

For children who have oral stimulation needs, resources will be provided to fulfil this requirement including sensory activities such as biting rings. Staff will be vigilant to identify when children need more stimulation or quiet times. Adequate resources will be provided and, when possible, more than one toy to minimise conflicts.

At all our childcare settings every child is treated as an individual and we work with families to support children's individual needs. It is with this in mind it will be necessary to implement different strategies depending on the needs of the child carrying out the biting.

However, in the event of a child being bitten we use the following procedures.

The most relevant staff member(s) will:

- Comfort any child who has been bitten and check for any visual injury.
- Administer any first aid where necessary. Complete an accident form and inform the parents via telephone if deemed appropriate. Continue to observe the bitten area for signs of infection. For confidentiality purposes and possible

conflict, we do not disclose the name of the child who has caused the bite to the parents

- Tell the child who has caused the bite in terms that they understand that biting (the behaviour and not the child) is unkind and show the child that it makes staff and the child who has been bitten sad. The child will be asked to say sorry if developmentally appropriate or helped to develop their empathy skills by giving the child who has been bitten a favourite book or comforter. Complete an incident page on iConnect to share with the parents.
- Ask the child what they can do to make the 'child that has been bitten' feel better. (this could be fetching them a toy to share with the parents at the end of the child's session)
- If a child continues to bite, carry out observations to try to distinguish a cause, e.g. tiredness or frustration
- Arrange for a meeting 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
- In the event of a bite breaking the skin and to reduce the risk of infection from bacteria, give prompt treatment to both the child who has bitten and the child who has been bitten.

If a child or member of staff sustains a bite wound where the skin has been severely broken arrange for urgent medical attention after initial first aid has been carried out. Complete an accident form using the Inform system.

In cases where a child may repeatedly bite and/or if they have a particular special educational need or disability that lends itself to increased biting, e.g. in some cases of autism where a child doesn't have the communication skills, the setting manager will carry out a risk assessment and may recommend immunisation with hepatitis B vaccine for all staff and children. This must be discussed at senior management level first (e.g. Director). As an organisation we will always promote immunisations to help protect our children and families. Consideration will always be given regarding parent's beliefs and wishes and to seek advice from Public Health within the local authority area.

This policy was adopted by	YMCA Thames Gateway
On	<i>14/01/2023</i>
Signed on behalf of the provider	
Name of signatory	Amanda Allen
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Head of family and Children's Services

Policy review date	13/01/2024 – on or before
Name of reviewer	
Signature of reviewer	
Role of reviewer	