



Biting – Promoting Positive Behaviour

Policy Statement

At Clare House Nursery, we recognise that biting is a common behaviour in the early years and is often a form of communication rather than intentional aggression. Young children may bite because they are still developing the skills to communicate their needs, regulate their emotions or cope with overwhelming situations. Biting can be painful and upsetting for everyone involved; however, we respond calmly, consistently and compassionately, supporting both the child who has been bitten and the child who has bitten.

We understand that the parts of the brain responsible for emotional regulation, impulse control and communication are still developing. Our nurturing approach focuses on understanding the reason behind the behaviour, teaching children alternative ways to express themselves and working in partnership with families to reduce future incidents.

At Clare House Nursery, we follow our **Supporting Children's Emotional Wellbeing, Positive Behaviour and Self-Regulation Policy** to promote positive behaviour at all times.

Aim

We aim to respond quickly, sensitively and consistently to every biting incident while supporting the emotional wellbeing of every child involved. We strive to understand the underlying cause of the behaviour, reduce future incidents through positive strategies and work closely with families to ensure a consistent approach.

To help prevent biting we provide:

- Sensory activities.
- Biting rings and chew resources where appropriate.
- Adequate resources and stimulating experiences.
- Responsive practitioners who recognise when children need additional support, stimulation or quiet time.
- Opportunities for physical play and movement.
- Emotional literacy resources, including **The Colour Monster**, stories, visual prompts and role play, helping children recognise, understand and express their feelings appropriately.

We treat each incident with care, patience and empathy, helping children to regulate their emotions, understand their feelings and develop positive ways to communicate their needs

Procedure

In the event of a biting incident:

- Two members of staff will respond where possible; one practitioner will comfort and support the child who has been bitten while the other calmly supports the child who has bitten.
- The child who has been bitten will be comforted and reassured.

- Once calm, staff will assess any injury and provide appropriate first aid in line with our **First Aid** and **Infection Prevention and Control** procedures.
- Staff will explain what they are doing in a calm, age-appropriate manner and reassure the child throughout.

If the skin is broken

- If the wound is bleeding it should be allowed to bleed naturally before being cleaned, in line with current first aid guidance.
- Staff will wear appropriate PPE when dealing with bodily fluids.
- An Incident Form will be completed for all children involved.
- Parents/carers of the child who has been bitten will be contacted immediately. Staff will explain the incident sensitively, reassure parents of the actions taken and advise them to seek medical advice if appropriate.

If the skin is not broken

- An Incident Form will be completed for all children involved.
- The Nursery Manager will decide whether parents should be contacted immediately or informed at collection, depending on the circumstances.

Supporting the Child Who Has Bitten

Wherever possible, the child's Key Person will support them following the incident.

Practitioners will first help the child to become emotionally regulated before exploring what happened. Once calm, staff will help the child understand the impact of their actions in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children will never be shamed or labelled because of their behaviour.

Where appropriate, practitioners will use **The Colour Monster**, visual prompts, stories and other emotional literacy resources to help children recognise, name and understand their feelings and learn safer ways to communicate their needs.

If a child continues to bite:

- Observations will be completed to identify possible triggers such as tiredness, frustration, communication difficulties, sensory needs, environmental factors or developmental differences.
- Meetings will be held with parents/carers to agree consistent strategies.
- Parents will be reassured that biting is a recognised stage of development for some children and that our focus is on understanding and supporting the child rather than placing blame.
- Where appropriate, practitioners will work with families to develop an Individual Support Plan. With parental consent, an **Early Help Assessment (EHA)** or referral to relevant professionals may be considered.

Parents/carers of the child who has bitten will normally be informed either by telephone or at collection depending on the circumstances. Discussions will always be handled sensitively and confidentially.

If parents ask for the identity of another child involved, staff will explain that confidentiality must be maintained and that information cannot be shared.

Where a child repeatedly bites, or where biting may be linked to a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), an individual risk assessment and support plan will be developed in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, outside professionals. Strategies will be reviewed regularly to ensure they continue to meet the child's individual needs.

Key Messages

- Staff recognise that biting incidents can be upsetting and distressing for all families involved and will respond with sensitivity, empathy and professionalism.
- Working in partnership with parents/carers is essential to successfully supporting children who bite.
- Staff understand that biting is a behaviour with many possible causes and will work together to identify triggers and reduce them.
- Every child will be treated with dignity and respect. Our focus is on understanding the reason behind the behaviour and supporting children to develop safer ways to express themselves.

Potential Triggers for Biting

(Add this additional bullet to your existing list.)

- **Children may bite when they are experiencing strong emotions that they are unable to communicate. Practitioners will support emotional development through co-regulation, emotional coaching and resources such as *The Colour Monster* to help children recognise, understand and express their feelings appropriately.**

(Keep all of your existing trigger list underneath.)

Potential Strategies to Support the Management of Biting

Keep your existing list and **add**:

- Use emotional literacy resources, including **The Colour Monster**, emotion cards, stories, visual prompts and role play to help children recognise, name and communicate their feelings.
- Support children through co-regulation before expecting self-regulation, helping them to feel calm, safe and ready to learn.
- Celebrate and praise positive interactions, kind behaviour and successful communication throughout the day.
- Review the environment regularly to ensure it remains calm, engaging and responsive to children's individual needs.

Our Commitment

At Clare House Nursery, we understand that biting can be upsetting for everyone involved. Our priority is always to respond calmly, compassionately and consistently while maintaining the dignity of every child. Through secure relationships, positive role modelling, emotional literacy, co-regulation and close partnership with families, we help children develop the confidence, resilience and communication skills they need to build positive relationships and express their needs safely.

