

# Hanover Street School

## (Nursery)



# Dealing with Incidents

## of Biting

| <b>Relevant Performance Indicators</b>  |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| HGIOELC (2016)                          | 2.1  | <i>Safeguarding and child protection</i>   |
|   | 3.1  | <i>Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion</i>  |
| Health and Social Care Standards (2017) | 1.24 | <i>Any treatment or intervention that I experience is safe and effective.</i>  |
|   | 2.15 | <i>I am enabled to resolve conflict, agree rules and build positive relationships with other people as much as I can.</i>  |
|   | 2.18 | <i>I am supported to manage my relationships with my family, friends or partner in a way that suits my wellbeing.</i>  |
|   | 3.1  | <i>I experience people speaking and listening to me in a way that is courteous and respectful, with my care and support being the main focus of people's attention.</i>                  |
|   | 3.9  | <i>I experience warmth, kindness and compassion in how I am supported and cared for, including physical comfort when appropriate for me and the person supporting and caring for me.</i> |

| <b>Policy Written By</b>                  | <b>In Consultation With</b>    | <b>Date of Review</b> | <b>Date of Next Review</b> | <b>Changes Made</b> | <b>Signature(s)</b>   |
|---|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Gillian Forbes,<br>Depute Head<br>Teacher | Nursery Team &<br>Head Teacher | November<br>2018      | August 2019                |                     | <i>Gillian Forbes</i> |



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## **1. Introduction**

Biting is actually quite common among young children, and children bite for many reasons.

For younger children, sometimes they are teething and the biting feels good. Other children seem to enjoy the strong reaction they get. Sometimes it starts with play, a kiss or a hug, and it just goes too far.

However, most of the time, biting occurs because a child is frustrated and does not know how to communicate this, or, what else to do. Because the child has not yet learned appropriate words or actions to express their frustration, they resort to biting.

## **2. Nurturing Principles (see blue text)**

As a nurturing school, we are guided by, and place a large value and emphasis on the 6 Principles of Nurture to meet the needs of each child. In any incident of biting we will be mindful of these principles for both children who have been bitten, and children who have carried out the actual biting.

### **1. Children's learning is understood developmentally**

We believe that children need to be given the opportunities to learn to play, share and work together in nursery, and all children are at different levels of learning. For some children they may have the knowledge that biting is unsafe, whereas other children still need to learn this. Children also need to learn to empathise, cope and develop resilience with negative situations.

### **2. The classroom offers a safe base**

We believe that children need to feel safe and secure in the nursery. We agree that though biting is something that most children go through, it is unacceptable and will be dealt with sensitively and supported accordingly.

### **3. The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing**

For a child to have strong, positive self-esteem and wellbeing, they need to feel safe, loved and cared for. To allow this to happen, alongside positive attention, empathy and reward there needs to be routines, boundaries and clear expectations. We aim to work together with you as parents/carers to provide consistency in approach with supporting positive learning and behaviour, to support and strengthen children's wellbeing.

### **4. Language is a vital means of communication and**

### **5. All behaviour is communication**

We believe children are allowed to feel and communicate frustration or anger, as all humans do. We respect that our young children need support in understanding and expressing these feelings. We aim to appropriately support the children to express this, giving them language and other strategies for this.

### **6. The importance of transition in children's lives**



We understand that all children cope with change and transition differently. We know that even the smallest of changes can trigger certain emotions and/or behaviour. We aim to observe children's responses to identify/pre-empt any triggers/problematic behaviour, as far as possible.

**(Lucas,S., Insley,K. and Buckland,G. (2006) Nurture Group Principles and Curriculum Guidelines Helping Children to Achieve, The Nurture Group Network.)**

### **3. If your Child is the Biter**

- Don't panic! You may feel embarrassed and frustrated. But remember this is a common phase and will only last a short while.
- When your child bites another, they will be removed from the situation, told in a firm but fair voice, "No" and removed from the situation for a short while. Staff will then talk to your child about their unacceptable behaviour, making it clear that it is the biting we do not like and not the child. They will be supported to develop and show empathy in a developmentally appropriate way. This may include a short restorative conversation, options to make amends (e.g. draw a picture for, or give a cuddle/toy to the injured child.) We will encourage your child to feel confident enough to apologise. Apologies will not be forced however, as this does not give the opportunity to experience true reconciliation and restoration of relationships nor empower the children to take responsibility for their actions.
- Staff will record details such as date, time, who, why, where etc. in our pastoral notes in order to help identify any patterns or triggers.
- Staff will discuss the incident and any further incidents with you, not only to keep you informed, but also to ensure we are working together and dealing with these incidents consistently.
- Staff will continue to monitor your child's frustrations and if felt required, provide proactive support to develop your child's language and expression of feelings to help prevent future incidents.

### **4. If Your Child Has Been Bitten**

- A very common reaction is to feel angry and outraged but, please be assured that we take biting seriously and are proactive to respond and prevent biting episodes.
- Staff will quickly assess the situation, immediately apply a cold compress pack to reduce pain, swelling and bruising and spend lots of time cuddling and reassuring your child.



- Once staff are happy that your child is alright and no further first aid treatment is required, they will complete an accident/biting incident form for you, which details exactly what happened and how they attended to your child. They will also record the same in our pastoral notes.
- Depending on the seriousness of the bite you will either be contacted straight away or staff will wait for you to come to pick up your child at the end of their session in order to discuss the incident with you.
- Staff will continually monitor your child's bite, reapplying cold compresses if necessary, offering comfort and special attention.
- We will closely supervise the children's interaction and play to try and prevent the incident occurring again.
- You will receive your child's accident/biting incident form and this biting policy from staff. Please feel free to ask staff to clarify anything you are unsure of or to arrange time to discuss any concerns you may have.
- Due to confidentiality, staff will not, under any circumstances, divulge who has bitten your child. (Though often, your child will tell you themselves) We feel this would be of no benefit to you or your child.
- In a social environment such as a nursery, biting cannot be prevented. All we can do as a staff is remain vigilant and deal with it promptly and professionally.

## **5. What are the risks if blood is involved?**

If your child has been bitten or is in fact the biter, you may be concerned as to what risks there are if blood has been drawn.

We have been advised and assured that the risks of contracting HIV, Hepatitis or any other Blood Bourne Viruses through biting alone, is minimal.

The child who has been bitten or the child who is biting, would have to have one of the above Blood Bourne Viruses, have an open cut or bleeding wound, in or around their mouth, before there would be a significant risk. There must be a wound and blood present from both children for any such virus to leave and enter the body of another.

If you are still concerned, please talk to a member of staff who will assist you in finding more information from the appropriate agency.

## **6. Recording and Reporting**

See appendix 1 for child's accident/biting form.



Various other reports may need to be completed, as necessary, in line with Aberdeen City Council policy (see below).

Reporting of a pupil to staff, staff to staff or member of public to staff incident should be recorded using the Near Miss Report Form.

- [Health and Safety Incident Near Miss Form](#)
- [Health and Safety Incident Near Miss Guide](#)

## **7. Links to other Policies**

- [Aberdeen City Council: Blood-Borne Viruses In The Workplace](#)
- [Infection Prevention and Control Policy – January 2017](#)
- [Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy – February 2018](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Policy – November 2018](#)



**Appendix 1 – Accident/Biting Incident Form**



**Hanover Street School Nursery  
ACCIDENT/BITING INCIDENT FORM**

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

**Accident Details:**

**Treatment:**

**Please monitor your child as symptoms of  
any injury do not always appear immediately**

The following guidelines are for children  
with **head injuries:**

**IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCURS  
SEEK MEDICAL HELP AT ONCE**

- Severe headache (not pain from the wound)
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Becoming irritable or violent
- Neck stiffness
- Double vision
- Unconsciousness
- Young child crying continuously

The following guidelines are for children  
with **biting injuries:**

**Immediate first aid procedure:**

- If the skin is broken encourage bleeding from wound, do not suck!
- Wash the area thoroughly with soap and water, do not scrub.
- Cover any wound with a waterproof dressing.



**Appendix 2 – First Aid Treatment for Exposure Injury or Bite (from Health Protection Scotland)**

