



**London Borough of Waltham Forest**

# **Biting Policy**

**Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service**

London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service have written this document to help you write a biting policy for your setting. This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers. To download guidance on other policies and procedures go to <https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/>

Whenever we say parents in this document we mean parents and carers and whenever we say child we mean children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)).

Biting can be fairly common among children and can be a concern for staff. Biting can often be painful and frightening for the child who has been bitten. It can also be frightening for the child who bites, because it upsets the other child and they may be worried about the reaction of adults. Biting happens for different reasons with different children and under different circumstances.

You may want to think about why a child is biting others:

- Could they be biting to ease pain in their mouth?
- Are they trying to get someone's attention? (whether negative or not it is still attention)
- Are they struggling to communicate their thoughts/feelings and using biting to display how they feel?
- Are they frustrated about a situation?
- What happened before the child began biting? Is it a reaction to someone hurting them first? Are they imitating what they have seen others do?
- Consider sensory needs- are they seeking sensory input or have they been over stimulated.

Understanding why a child is biting will help to put strategies in place for the future. Use the who, what, when and where method to identify why a child is biting:

- Who was involved?
- What happened before or after?
- How was the situation handled?
- When did the biting happen?
- Where did it happen?

### **When a child is bitten**

It is important that staff members respond quickly and know the correct procedure to follow.

### **For the child who has been bitten:**

- How do you comfort the child? Do you ask them what happened?
- Do you administer first aid if needed? At what point would you seek medical advice? How do you monitor the spread of infection? How will the area bitten be cleaned?
- Do you write an accident/incident report? Will a body map be used to record the any marks left on the skin? Who will be responsible for informing parents about the incident and when? Will parents need to sign the accident/incident report?

### **For the child who has done the biting:**

- Do you speak to the child about what happened? Do you check that the child has not injured themselves in the process/ are in pain?
- Do you remind the child of the rules? Do you explain that biting hurts?

- Do you redirect the child to other play?
- Do you write an incident report? How will parents be informed of the incident and what will they need to sign to show that they are aware of the incident?

**If biting continues:**

- Do staff meet regularly for advice, support and to discuss a strategy plan?
- Do you let all parents know that there is a problem and tell them what procedures will be followed to deal with it?
- Do you shadow children who show a tendency to bite? Who does this and how is this recorded?
- Do you reinforce appropriate behavior and tell children how to respond instead of biting?
- Do you need to introduce visual symbols for the child?
- If the biting is due to sensory needs, what do you need to help support the child e.g. chew tube/bar
- How do you respond to parents that ask for the child who is biting to be removed from your setting?

**Useful resources and websites**

**Accident and incident procedure guidance**