

Oyster Bay Nursery

Biting Policy

Date written: October 2026

Date of last update: October 2026

Date agreed and ratified by October 2026

Date of next full review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and/or following any lessons learnt and/or updates to national or local guidance and procedures.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Debra Hines
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s)	Grace Sidders Rachel Finch
Nominated Individual	Debra Hines
Nursery Manager	Grace Sidders

1. Policy Statement

At Oyster Bay Nursery, we recognise that biting can occur during early childhood and may be part of a child's development, particularly during the baby and toddler years. Although biting can be upsetting for children, parents and staff, it is important to respond calmly, consistently and sensitively.

Biting may occur for a variety of reasons, including teething, tiredness, frustration, jealousy, seeking attention, sensory exploration or difficulty communicating needs and emotions. Young children may not yet have the language or self-regulation skills needed to express themselves appropriately.

We do not label children as "biters" or treat biting as deliberate bad behaviour. Instead, we aim to understand why it is happening, protect all children from harm and support children to develop positive ways of expressing themselves.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Keep children safe and respond promptly to biting incidents.
- Comfort and care for any child who has been bitten.
- Help children understand that biting hurts and is not an acceptable way to communicate.
- Identify possible triggers and patterns of biting.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers.
- Provide consistent responses from all staff.
- Seek additional advice and support where biting continues or causes concern.
- Maintain appropriate records while respecting every child's confidentiality.

3. Understanding Biting Behaviour

Biting can happen for different reasons, depending on a child's age, development and circumstances. Possible triggers include:

- Teething or discomfort.
- Tiredness, hunger or overstimulation.
- Frustration when unable to communicate.
- Difficulty sharing toys, resources or adult attention.
- Excitement or strong emotions.

- Sensory exploration or curiosity.
- Wanting space or struggling to manage interactions with other children.

Staff will observe the circumstances surrounding each incident and consider what the child may be communicating. We recognise that every child is different and that biting should not automatically be attributed to one cause.

Although biting is relatively common in young children, it must always be addressed promptly and sensitively. Staff will never assume that a child will simply grow out of the behaviour without appropriate support.

4. Immediate Response to a Biting Incident

When a biting incident occurs, staff will remain calm and take the following steps.

4.1 Care for the child who has been bitten

- Attend to the child immediately and provide reassurance, comfort and appropriate first aid.
- Assess the bite and follow the nursery's First Aid and Accident and Incident procedures.
- If the skin has been broken, seek prompt advice from an appropriate healthcare professional, such as NHS 111 or the child's GP. Urgent medical attention will be sought if required.
- Contact emergency services if the injury is serious or requires immediate emergency assistance.
- Record the incident on the Ovivio App, including the injury, action taken and any first aid or medical advice.
- Inform the child's parents or carers promptly and explain what happened and how the child has been supported.

4.2 Support the child who has bitten

- Intervene immediately and calmly stop the behaviour.
- Use simple, age-appropriate language, such as: "No biting. Biting hurts."
- Maintain a calm tone and help the child understand the effect of their actions.
- Consider what may have triggered the incident and whether the child needs help expressing a feeling, communicating a need or managing the situation.
- Redirect the child towards an appropriate activity or way of communicating.
- Avoid shaming, labelling, shouting at or physically punishing the child.

- Never bite a child back or use any other response intended to frighten or humiliate them.

4.3 Support both children afterwards

Staff will ensure the children have appropriate space from one another immediately after the incident and are supervised safely. Once both children are calm, staff will support them to return to play when appropriate.

Any later support to rebuild a positive relationship will be guided by the children's age, understanding and willingness to participate. Children will never be forced to apologise, make physical contact or take part in a reconciliation activity.

5. Preventing Further Incidents

Staff will take reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood of biting by:

- Observing children closely, particularly where previous incidents or known triggers have been identified.
- Maintaining appropriate supervision during play, transitions and busy periods.
- Looking for patterns relating to particular times, activities, environments or interactions.
- Providing suitable teething resources where appropriate and safe.
- Offering comfort, rest, food or drink when these may be needed.
- Supporting children to use words, gestures, pictures or other communication methods to express their needs.
- Modelling positive ways to manage frustration, excitement and conflict.
- Providing sufficient resources and space to reduce avoidable competition.
- Offering suitable activities and opportunities for movement and sensory exploration.
- Using consistent language and responses across the staff team.

Where appropriate, staff will develop an individual support plan with the parents or carers and relevant nursery staff.

6. Working in Partnership with Parents and Carers

We recognise that biting can be distressing for families, whether their child has been bitten or has bitten another child. We will approach all conversations sensitively and without blame.

When a biting incident occurs:

- Parents or carers of both children will be informed privately and as promptly as reasonably possible.
- Parents or carers will be told about their own child's involvement, the action taken and any relevant follow-up.
- The identity and personal information of the other child will remain confidential.
- Staff will listen to parents' concerns and work collaboratively to identify helpful strategies.
- Where biting is repeated, the nursery will arrange a discussion with the relevant parents or carers to review possible triggers and agree consistent approaches.

Staff will not disclose another child's name, personal circumstances or confidential records when discussing an incident.

7. Repeated Biting and Additional Support

If biting continues, increases in frequency or severity, causes significant injury, or does not improve despite consistent strategies, the Nursery Manager will review the situation with the child's key person and relevant staff.

The nursery may:

- Review incident records and observations to identify patterns.
- Meet with the child's parents or carers.
- Develop or update an individual behaviour support plan.
- Consider changes to the environment, routine, resources or supervision.
- Seek advice from the nursery's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator (SENDCo).
- Work with parents to consider whether advice from a health visitor, GP or other appropriate professional may be helpful.
- Make appropriate referrals or seek specialist advice with parental involvement, where required.

The nursery will consider whether communication needs, sensory differences, developmental needs, emotional wellbeing or other circumstances may be contributing to the behaviour. Support will be individualised and inclusive.

A child will not be excluded or treated unfairly solely because biting has occurred. Any further action will be proportionate, consistent with the nursery's policies and guided by the need to safeguard all children.

8. Recording and Confidentiality

All biting incidents will be recorded on the Ovivio App in accordance with the nursery's recording procedures. Records will include, where relevant:

- Date, time and location.
- A factual description of the incident.
- Any known circumstances or possible triggers.
- The injury observed and care provided.
- Actions taken by staff.
- Parents or carers informed and any advice received.
- Follow-up actions and strategies to reduce recurrence.

Records will be factual, respectful and securely maintained. Access will be restricted to authorised staff who need the information for their role. Information will only be shared where appropriate and lawful, including where necessary to protect a child's welfare.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff will:

- Respond promptly and calmly to biting incidents.
- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children.
- Follow this policy and relevant first aid, safeguarding and incident-recording procedures.
- Observe and report possible triggers.
- Use consistent, age-appropriate strategies.
- Maintain confidentiality and communicate respectfully with families.

The Nursery Manager will:

- Ensure staff understand and follow this policy.
- Review records and identify recurring concerns.
- Support staff in implementing prevention and support plans.
- Communicate with parents or carers where appropriate.
- Ensure additional advice is sought when needed.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the nursery's response.

The SENDCo will:

- Advise staff when additional developmental or communication support may be beneficial.
- Help identify appropriate strategies and, where necessary, support liaison with relevant professionals and families.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- Share relevant information about changes, teething, sleep, communication or other possible triggers.
- Work with the nursery to use consistent supportive strategies.
- Inform the nursery if similar behaviour occurs in other settings, where this may help staff understand the child's needs.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and whenever changes in legislation, guidance or nursery practice make a review necessary. Staff will be informed of any updates.