

	<b>Policy Category:</b> <b>CURRICULUM</b>
	<b>Policy Name:</b> <b>Biting Support Policy</b>

## Purpose

The purpose of this operational policy is to ensure there are guidelines available should biting become an issue at the centre. It is to provide teachers with support in guiding children's developing social competence and understanding of appropriate behaviour, in keeping with **C10**.

## Issue Outline

Biting is a common occurrence among young children, particularly toddlers. However, it is not a developmental stage, and as such an inevitable or acceptable event. Biting may occur between children or a child may bite a staff member.

As young children are developing physically, cognitively and emotionally, biting can happen because they are:

- Teething
- Curious and/or exploring with their mouths
- Over-excited or over-stimulated
- Frustrated, stressed, tired, or hungry
- Bored and/or seeking attention
- Feeling powerless
- Mimicking other children
- Learning self-control

It is important to remember that, as unpleasant as biting is – and it does require an appropriate response - children under the age of three have a limited understanding of how their actions affect others. Te Whāriki suggests that assisting children in developing their oral language capabilities is the most effective way to promote self-management and regulation. Source: Te Whāriki Online; [Children's growing capacity](#)

Self-management and self-regulation are not easy to learn and it is important that children are given the time, space and opportunity to practise. If instances of biting do occur, there should be a consistent approach to help both the child who was bitten, the child who did the biting, and involve parents and whānau of both children.

**Biting is a health and safety risk: All bites that break the skin are serious, as there is a risk that the wound will get infected if untreated.**

- For minor wounds, wash the area with running water for at least five minutes. You can then clean it with an antiseptic solution.
- Don't apply ointments or begin treatment with any kind of medicine.
- Place a sterile bandage over the wound.
- Complete an incident report and inform both children's parents

## **Detail**

Biting represents both a health and safety challenge and requires teaching staff and management to plan for ways to assist both children. Strategies will always need to be child-specific and take the child's age, developmental stage, and learning needs into account.

Each biting incident will require a strong educational approach, where the whole team collaborates to employ teaching strategies that are consistent and appropriate for the child in question. These teaching strategies will need to include parents of the child so they are informed and assist the child's learning by being equally consistent in the home.

Parents' involvement in setting up a plan is desirable but not a pre-requisite for teachers implementing a plan for the benefit of the child, other children and staff. If parents are resistant to collaboration it is important to relay the message that the health and safety of staff and other children is of utmost importance. In particularly difficult situations, the centre may be obliged to consider the enrolment status of a child who bites.

### **Strategies for managing biting incidents should include the following:**

- Parents will always be informed if their child was bitten or has bitten
- The child who was bitten will receive full emotional support and assurance
- Teachers will not share the name of the other child involved
- Parents who are upset that their child has been bitten will be reassured that teaching staff and centre management are working with the family of the child concerned and teaching strategies and a support plan are in place
- Teaching staff will collaborate and engage in observation, to determine possible triggers for a child who bites as this will inform the necessary strategies
- Teaching staff will design a child-specific plan, based on observation, research, child development theories and guidance resources
- Management will support sourcing of guidance resources, research, and developing a management plan
- Child-specific plans will include timeframes and regular reviews, with all participants sharing progress made or not made
- If plans do not prove successful, help from outside agencies or Early Intervention will be sought, with the agreement and involvement of parents and whānau

**Procedure:**

- Attend to the victim, apply first aid
- Remove the child who bit from the situation. If they were biting to get a toy, remove the toy and explain why you are doing so, redirect the child to another area and exert a calming influence, as emotions may be running high
- Explain to the child who bit that biting hurts, show them that the other child is hurt/sad, model empathy and concern
- Ensure that the child who was bitten is comforted and assured. Aside from the physical hurt the child is likely to feel unsafe and scared
- Complete an incident form and inform both children's parents at pick up time; no names given
- Record the incident in the staff communication diary; include the trigger or motivator if known, inform the Supervisor
- As a team, investigate and act on the trigger(s) or motivator(s) for the biting incident and develop a plan for supporting the "biting child's" social and emotional development needs. This must include parents and whānau of the child
- If the child who bit has additional learning needs or difficulties address possible communication issues that could exacerbate the child's frustration or emotions – what are the child's coping and communication capabilities?
- If relevant, look at the physical environment and alter as needed so that children can be monitored effectively – more space could also defuse situations as physical proximity may cause stress to children
- As a team, provide positive role modelling for social interactions and conflict resolution
- All children are supported in their developing communication, social and emotional capabilities, as per Te Whāriki (2017). Some children may have higher needs or challenges and therefore require a higher level of support and intensive intervention.

**Alignment with Other Policies**

This guideline aligns with:

- Promoting Social and Emotional Development Policy
- Parent Involvement, Information and Communication Policy

**Relevant background (including legislation/regulation references)**

- Education (Early Childhood Services) Regulations 2008
- Regulation 46 1(a); take all reasonable steps to promote the good health and safety of children enrolled in the service
- Licencing Criteria HS27; All practical steps are taken to get immediate medical attention for a child who is injured and to notify a parent of what has happened
- Evidence that parents have been informed

## Resources:

- Te Whāriki (2017). Early childhood curriculum. tki online resources:  
<https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/teaching-strategies-and-resources/wellbeing/self-management-and-regulation/>
- He Māpuna te Tamaiti. Supporting social and emotional competence in early learning:  
<https://tewhariki.tki.org.nz/en/teaching-strategies-and-resources/wellbeing/he-mapuna-te-ta-maiti/>
- NAEYC. Understanding and responding to children who bite:  
<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/understanding-and-responding-children-who-bite>

## Alignment with the Centre Philosophy

This policy ensures a safe environment, a crucial part of creating and maintaining the well-being of children in our care.

## Implementation

Clear procedures have been developed and staff trained to follow them.

## Review

Review annually or when there is a significant change in the area of the policy topic.

<b>Authorised by licensed service:</b>	Greendale Kids Preschool Greendale Kids Nursery
<b>Date:</b>	13 March 2025
<b>Review Date:</b>	March 2027
<b>Parents informed:</b>	May 2025