**Bambi’s Land Montessori and ASD Playschool**

**(Extract from Policies and Procedures)**

**Biting:**

* Biting happens in almost all childcare settings where young children are together and dealing with biting can be challenging. Biting is a developmental stage which children may go through. All biting incidents are upsetting for children and will be dealt with in a calm and clear manner. The staff will use clear language and be consistent in their approach. We aim to support children in developing self-control; however, the safety of each child is our primary concern.

**Why do children bite?**

* Children experience many emotions (positive and negative) that are difficult to express, and at times control.
* Biting sometimes occurs for no apparent reason.

**Biting Prevention:**

* The correct child: adult ratios will be in place within the setting at all times.
* The layout of the room will be appropriate to the age and stage of development of the child and staff can see all children at all times from all areas of the room.
* Age and stage appropriate materials are present within the room for children to access at all times.
* Staff are vigilant to the relationships between children and are aware of possible conflicts.
* Staff are aware of the temperaments of the children.
* Staff should encourage children to use language to express feelings/emotions.

Where a child does bite, staff should follow these guidelines and try to distinguish a pattern:

* Are there particular times of the day which the child bites?
* Do toys seem to be causing biting incidents?
* Does the child focus on one particular child?
* Can something be offered to soothe the child’s biting? For example, toys/food with textures or coldness.

**Procedures to follow when biting occurs:**

Usually the skin isn't broken, and the wound isn't serious. However, the appropriate first aid should be administered.

**If the skin is not broken:**

* Wash the area with mild soap and water (do not rub) and pat dry.

**If the skin is broken:**

* The human mouth is full of bacteria, and there may be a risk of infection. Serious bites to the face, hands, or genitals can be especially dangerous.
* Wash the area — but don't scrub —with mild soap and running water for three to five minutes, then cover it with a clean dressing.
* If the wound is bleeding, apply pressure with a clean, dressing and elevate the area if possible.
* If the skin is broken, the child will need to be seen by a doctor, who will clean and examine the wound. Unless the bite is very serious or on a child's face, the doctor will probably prefer not to give a \child stitches. Stitching the bite closed can increase the risk of infection. The doctor may prescribe a short course of antibiotics to prevent infection, depending on the location and severity of the bite.
* The child is comforted and reassured of their safety.
* The Staff will explain to the child who has bitten using a firm but gentle approach that biting is not allowed.
* The person in charge will be informed and details should be recorded in the Accident and Incident Report Form.
* The situation is dealt with professionally, and confidentiality is adhered to. Both parents/guardians are informed separately, and the accident and incident report are signed.
* The staff should explain the methods which will be adhered to, so it does not occur again and highlight the importance of partnership with parents/guardians.
* If the child bites again, the child should be observed for a period of time to try and develop a pattern of behaviour.
* In the event of a child repeatedly biting, the Manager will speak to the parent(s)/ guardian. If all avenues have been exhausted, the person in charge may suggest seeking help/support outside the setting.

Please note that every effort will be made to support the biting child and we will work closely with the parents/guardians to find appropriate strategies. We will also support and train staff in this regard.

In rare circumstances our efforts to manage behaviour may not be successful. Sometimes as a last resort for risk management reasons and with the welfare of all children in mind a child’s place may need to be terminated or suspended until a solution is found. Our approach is always to find ways of retaining children in the Service rather than terminating places.