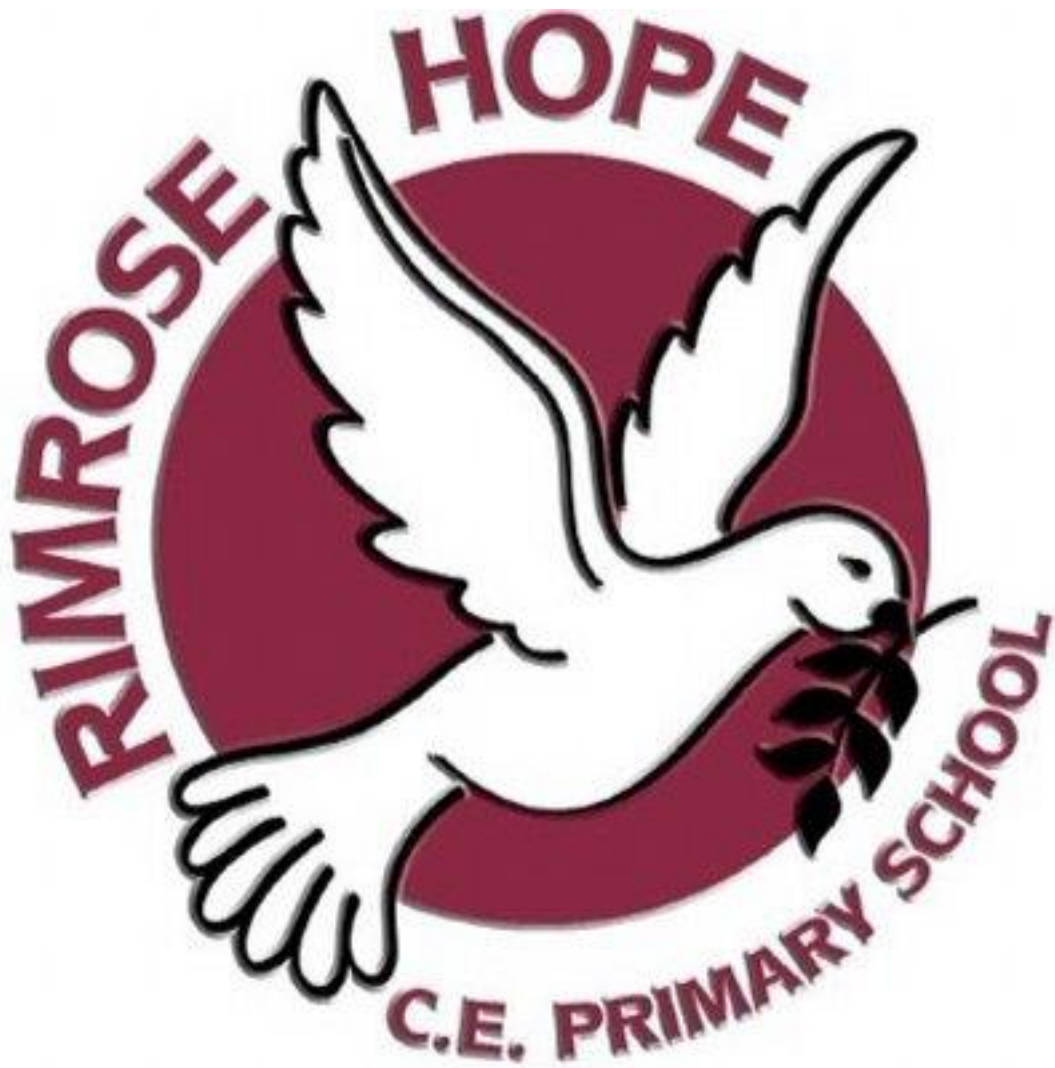




# Biting Policy & Procedures

## Principles

Biting is a common behaviour for some young children and tends to occur more often amongst children under five years old. Biting incidents tend to occur during group situations such as in school, nursery, playgroup, and other social situations. The motivation / need for one child to bite another is all part of their developmental journey, when they do not yet have the vocabulary to communicate emotions such as anger, need or frustration.

As children mature, gain self-control, and develop their problem-solving skills, they tend to grow out of it. Experts suggest that up to a quarter of all children will bite others at some stage. We understand that biting incidents can cause upset for parents / carers, regardless of whether it is your child who has been bitten or your child taking responsibility for biting.

Biting incidents happen for many reasons and we endeavour to handle each situation with sensitivity, care and respect. We aim to deal with each biting incident on a case by case basis, ensuring that parents are kept up to date with what is happening while ensuring the confidentiality of all children involved. We will never divulge the identity of children involved.

We have developed this policy to help support staff and parents / carers for the possibility of a biting incident and hope it gives some perspective on what we know can be an upsetting experience.

## Why does biting occur?

A biting incident is **not** a negative reflection of the biter, staff or setting. Our expectation of behaviour is clear for all our children at Rimrose Hope and we actively encourage sharing, being respectful, having 'kind hands', and turn taking in EYFS. However, developmentally young children lack the coping strategies, self-regulation, and language skills that older children and adults have. Young children therefore can resort to hitting, biting, pushing etc, and while this can be upsetting for us, rest assured that it is developmentally normal.

The most common reasons for biting:

**Expressing emotion:** Like everyone, toddlers experience intense emotions and biting can be a way of expressing that emotion - including love.

**Language development:** When young children are feeling intense emotions - such as frustration, anger, irritability, they can bite as a way of dealing with that

emotion. Young children are still developing their vocabulary and a lack of expressive language can lead to a biting incident.

**Physical experimentation:** young children are learning about the world around them and their role within it. They used their senses to explore this, such as putting things in their mouth.

**Seeking attention:** Sometimes, when a child feels like that are not receiving enough attention, they bite as a way of quickly gaining the attention they desire.

### **What is our procedure following a biting incident?**

First and foremost, we will comfort & reassure the child who has been bitten and endeavour to work with parents / parents to unpick why a child is biting. This may be an isolated case, but we will record all incidents and work together to examine the situation surrounding the incident or if there were any behavioural trends.

Once we are aware of any possible triggers for a biting incident, we will make changes accordingly to remove the cause / minimise the risk of another incident occurring. For example, providing duplicates of beloved toys / resources or in some cases having the child's key worker working closely with the biter to support their behavioural / emotional needs. We may also direct the child who has bitten to activities that help release feelings of frustration such as physical play outside. In exceptional circumstances, and only in cases where we feel it will positively benefit both children, a staff member may take the child into a different part of the nursery setting to help them calm down.

In brief:

- The child who has been bitten will be comforted & first aid will be given i.e., the area thoroughly checked and cleaned.
- If the skin has been broken as a result of the bite, the parents / carers will be contacted so that they are aware.
- Using age-appropriate language, the child who has bitten will be spoken to try to help them understand that there are other ways the express themselves and deal with situations.
- We will ensure that the child who is bitten is aware that the action (not the child) is unkind and upsetting.
- A biting incident form will be completed and given to both sets of parents / carers. The incident will also be logged on CPOM's and if the incidents reoccur, we will make arrangements to closely observe the child and look for possible 'triggers'.
- In some cases, we may seek the advice from our school SENCO, but we will always consult with parents / carers about this.

