Biting Policy (to support a child who bites)

1. Introduction

Biting is a natural developmental stage that many children go through. It is usually a temporary phase that is most common between 13 and 24 months of age. Children bite other children for many different reasons: a child might be teething, or overly tired and frustrated; they may be experimenting or trying to get the attention of the carer or peers; some children still have limited verbal skills and are impulsive.

They often don't realise what they are doing is considered wrong. Home from Home will encourage the children, when age appropriate, to **"Use their words"** if they become angry or frustrated. The employees will support and engage with the children to provide close supervision. The safety of the children at our nursery is our primary concern. This biting policy addresses the actions the employees will take if a biting incident occurs. This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Behaviour Management & Positive Behaviour Policy.**

2. Contents

The following sections are included in this policy document:

1. Introduction
2. Contents
3. What we do to support
4. Further methods
5. Review
6. Version Control

Appendix 1 – Star Observation Template
Appendix 2 – ABC Form Template
Appendix 2 - Flow chart of actions

3. What we do to support

The following steps will be taken if biting occurs:
The biting will be interrupted with a firm 'that's biting' with the Makaton stop sign, the child who has been bitten will then receive lots of cuddles and attention, whilst the child who has done the biting will be ignored. Employees must remain calm, and maintain a level of discreteness. Do not draw attention to the child. Have any conversations with employees or parents away from the child, and do not share explicitly with other children.

- **Makaton sign 'stop'** – Hand up, showing child palm as if pressing a big button
- **Comfort child who has been bitten** – "Poor Fred! Ouch, that must have hurt. Can I see your arm/leg to check you're safe?" and give lots of cuddles. Give first aid if necessary.
- **Communicate with child who bit** – "That's biting, biting hurts, ouch!" and model how this may hurt, rubbing the same area. - If the child is old enough, you may talk about: "How would you feel if someone hit/bit/pinched/pushed you?". They may say

something such as “I would be sad” or “It would hurt”, and you might say “Yes, you might feel sad/it would hurt, and you wouldn’t like it”.
If the child does not respond or gives a reason you should model back that actually it would hurt.

- **Redirect child to a new activity** - If the child chooses to return to the area, adults should be aware but should not ‘shadow’ the child or make them feel overwhelmed or negative.
- **First aid** - The site of the bite mark should be treated with a cold compress if necessary. *The child should be referred for medical advice if the bite breaks the skin.*
- **Incident forms** – Complete an incident form and detail the size and location of the bite.
- **ABC form** –If a child has one fill in the ABC form *(more information below in section 4),* which you will find in your accident form folders.
- **Phone both sets of parents** – Maintain confidentiality of all children, and reassure parents. Remind parents that we have dealt with the matter at nursery, so this doesn’t need to be addressed with the child at home.

4. Further methods

- If biting continues to re-occur the child will be observed or ‘shadowed’ without hindering their play or interaction with others. (See Appendix 2 for Biting flowchart)
- The STAR: Situation, Action, Trigger, Response; and or ABC: Antecedent, Behaviour Consequence observation chart will record and help analyse behaviour.
- Staff will work closely with parents to discuss changes in routines or events that may explain the biting and support the child during this period to prevent further incident.
- On-going communication will occur at feedback time at the end of the day, during routine progress meetings and at any other meetings that are arranged following a biting incident.
- The employees as a whole will praise and encourage all children. No child will be labelled due to an incident of biting. Both children will be supported and provided with a warm and loving environment in which they can grow and develop.

5. Review

This document will be reviewed annually or in line with any statutory changes or changes in procedure.

6. Version Control

Version	Date	Status	Comments	By
1	December 2015	Issued		Nicola Law
2	April 2017	Updated		Polly Manners
3	October 2018	Reviewed		Polly Manners
4	December 2019	Reviewed		Emma Corbin-Mckenzie
5	February 2021	Updated		Zoe Fuller

6	January 2022	Reviewed		Cassie Jones
7	October 2023	Reviewed	Added version control	Sophie Eade
8	May 2025	Reviewed		Sophie Eade
9	February 2026	Reviewed	Added Appendix for ABC form	Sophie Eade

Appendix 1

STAR Observation - To support on-going behaviour management

Name of Child:	**Time:**
Date:	**Observed by:**
Situation • What was the child playing with? • Were they on their own or with other adults/children? • Did they choose the experience themselves or was it adult directed?	**Trigger** • What happened just before?
Action • What actually happened?	**Response** • How did the adult(s) respond? • How did the child respond? • How did the other children respond?
Reflection & Possible Next Steps	

STAR (Situation, Trigger, Action, Response and Reflection)
In order to obtain a detailed analysis of what happens each time an unwanted behaviour occurs, it is usually helpful to complete a STAR form. This form help staff to identify any potential triggers and to reflect upon any circumstances that may be causing unwanted behaviour. The aspects to be carefully observed and recorded include:

DAY, DATE and TIME

- Behaviour can vary according to the time of day and even the day of the week, so it is important to record this information. E.g., children's behaviour may deteriorate just before mealtimes

TRIGGER

- Record what was happening just before the problem occurred. Were there any significant conflicts, events, equipment, transitions? Or was the event out of the blue?
- Describe any particular event/ actions which may have triggered or contributed to the problem behaviour
- Note the exact location in which the behaviour took place

ACTION

- What happened?
- Write a clear description of the child's behaviour, and whether this was directly observed by you or reported to you by another person. Similar to writing a safeguarding report, make sure information is factual, not interpreted or here say.

RESPONSE

- What happened next? Write down exactly what was said and who said it.
- If the behaviour management policy wasn't followed, this must be noted so we can learn from this in our reflections. Use this as an opportunity to familiarise yourself and other staff with the behaviour management policy.
- How did the child respond? Did they repeat the behaviour in a short space of time? How did they react when being spoken to about the unwanted behaviour? Did they say anything, make any actions or gestures?
- How did the other child respond? It is important to record how the other child responded, as the child showing unwanted behaviour may be trying to elicit a specific response.

REFLECTION

- After completing the STAR form it is important for all adults involved to reflect on the situation. Was the child over stimulated? What are they trying to communicate? Review the positive behaviour management policy and rehearse scripts if needed.
- After reflecting on the situation, all adults involved should come up with some next steps to have in place. If not already aware, the child's key worker should be made aware and should work with the child to address these next steps.
- Include the parent/carer reaction following the phone-call home – Was anything mentioned about home life, response, or disruption?
- Store these alongside the child's accident and incident forms, as this will be used in audits and to determine next steps. Remember that these may be read by the child's parent/carer, and other professionals

Child name:	Date of birth:

Parent/carer meeting form to support a child who bites

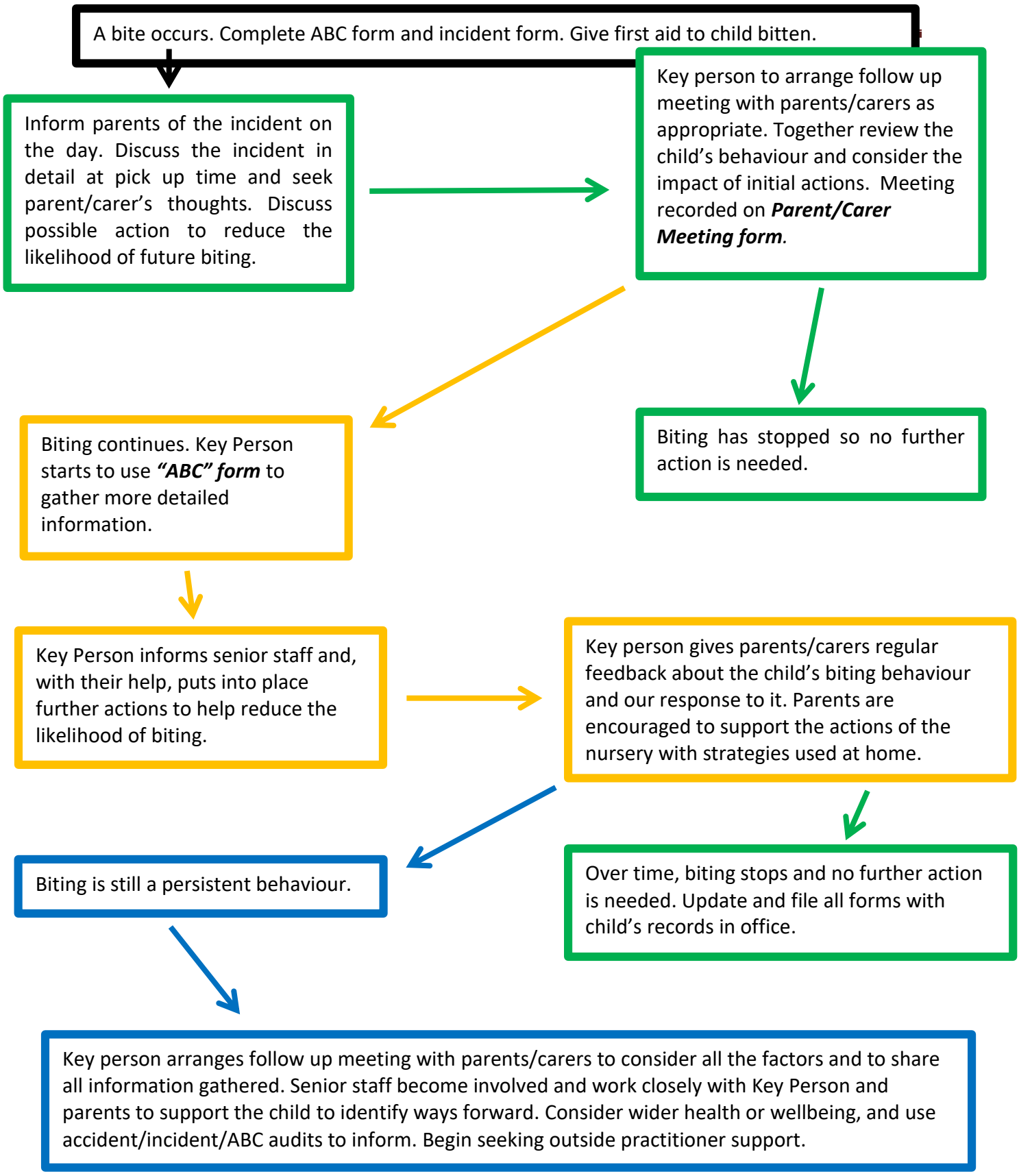
Time/ Date	People attending	Matters discussed	Actions agreed	Review

Nursery			**Staff initials**
Time of day and context	**Antecedent (what happened before the incident)**	**Behaviour (what happened/what was the unwanted behaviour)**	**Consequence (what was the consequences of the behaviour)**
Next Steps:			

Staff signature: Date:

Parent signature:

Appendix 3


A bite occurs. Complete ABC form and incident form. Give first aid to child bitten.
Inform parents of the incident on the day. Discuss the incident in detail at pick up time and seek parent/carer's thoughts. Discuss possible action to reduce the likelihood of future biting.
Key person to arrange follow up meeting with parents/carers as appropriate. Together review the child's behaviour and consider the impact of initial actions. Meeting recorded on ***Parent/Carer Meeting form***.
Biting has stopped so no further action is needed.
Biting continues. Key Person starts to use ***"ABC" form*** to gather more detailed information.
Key Person informs senior staff and, with their help, puts into place further actions to help reduce the likelihood of biting.
Key person gives parents/carers regular feedback about the child's biting behaviour and our response to it. Parents are encouraged to support the actions of the nursery with strategies used at home.
Over time, biting stops and no further action is needed. Update and file all forms with child's records in office.
Biting is still a persistent behaviour.
Key person arranges follow up meeting with parents/carers to consider all the factors and to share all information gathered. Senior staff become involved and work closely with Key Person and parents to support the child to identify ways forward. Consider wider health or wellbeing, and use accident/incident/ABC audits to inform. Begin seeking outside practitioner support.