Little Acorns Montessori

Ascot, Bracknell and Crowthorne

BITING POLICY

Document Control

Version	Date	Review Date	Author	Job Role
1.0	June 2026	June 2027	Jonathan Duffy	Director

Key Contacts

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Designated Officer / Nominated Individual	Jonathan Duffy	All Campuses
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1. Policy Statement

Little Acorns Montessori is committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children in our care. We recognise that biting is a common developmental behaviour in young children and must be responded to with compassion, consistency, and professionalism.

This policy sets out the procedures that all staff must follow to prevent biting incidents, to respond appropriately when they occur, and to support all children involved — including the child who has bitten and the child who has been bitten.

This policy applies to all staff, students, volunteers, and temporary workers at Little Acorns Montessori. It is reviewed annually and whenever relevant legislation or guidance changes.

2. Statutory Framework & Legal Basis

This policy fulfils Little Acorns Montessori's obligations under the following legislation and guidance:

Legislation / Guidance	Relevance to This Policy
EYFS Statutory Framework 2025 (DfE) — Section 3, effective 1 September 2025	Governs all safeguarding and welfare requirements. Mandates procedures for behaviour, health, accidents, and incidents in registered early years settings.
EYFS 2025 — Para 3.51: Accidents and Injuries	Requires written records of all accidents and injuries and first aid given. Records must be signed by a parent or carer.
EYFS 2025 — Para 3.52: Incidents and Behaviour	Requires providers to manage children's behaviour in an appropriate and positive way, and to maintain written records of significant incidents.
Childcare Act 2006 — Section 39(1)(b)	Gives legal force to the EYFS safeguarding and welfare requirements via Regulations.
Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	Places a duty on the nursery to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of children and staff.
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (DfE)	Informs our approach where biting may raise wider safeguarding concerns, including early help, family-centred practice, and multi-agency accountability.
Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR	Governs the storage of personal data including incident and accident records. Records must be held securely and confidentially.

3. Purpose and Aim

Staff at Little Acorns Montessori will do all they reasonably can to prevent biting incidents from occurring. We understand that due to the speed and spontaneous nature of biting, it is not always possible to prevent every incident. This policy ensures staff respond consistently and effectively each time.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Understand the developmental reasons why young children bite.
- Reduce the frequency of biting through proactive environmental and behavioural strategies.
- Protect the health and wellbeing of all children involved.

- Ensure all incidents are recorded accurately and consistently.
- Support families of both the child who has bitten and the child who has been bitten.
- Meet all statutory requirements under the EYFS 2025 framework.

4. Understanding Why Children Bite

Biting is a recognised behaviour in children typically aged between 1 and 3 years. It is rarely aggressive in origin. Common causes include:

- Teething — biting provides sensory relief from gum discomfort.
- Communication — children who lack verbal skills may bite to express frustration, anger, or a desire for something.
- Exploration — young children explore their environment through taste and touch.
- Overwhelm — tiredness, overstimulation, or hunger can reduce a child's self-regulation capacity.
- Attention-seeking — some children have learned that biting produces an immediate response from adults.
- Social development — children are still learning the concepts of boundaries and empathy.

Staff must not attribute malicious intent to a biting child. Responses must always be calm, non-punitive, and developmentally appropriate.

5. Prevention Strategies

Staff must proactively seek to reduce the likelihood of biting occurring. The following strategies should be implemented and reviewed regularly:

Environmental Strategies

- Maintain a stimulating, well-resourced environment with sufficient activities to reduce frustration.
- Ensure adequate space and resources so children are not crowded or competing for materials.
- Conduct regular risk assessments of the environment, particularly in relation to known biting patterns.

Sensory and Resource Strategies

- Provide accessible teething rings and age-appropriate chew toys for children who are teething.
- Offer sensory activities (e.g. playdough, sand, water) to meet sensory processing needs.

- Provide biting rings that are clearly labelled per child and cleaned regularly.

Behavioural and Staff Strategies

- Observe children closely to identify triggers and early warning signs of distress.
- Use positive, consistent language to support children in expressing needs and emotions.
- Increase supervision in areas or at times where biting has previously occurred.
- Where a child has a known pattern of biting, staff must carry out close supervision and complete a risk management plan in consultation with the Nursery Manager.

6. Immediate Response Procedure

In the event of a biting incident, the following procedure must be followed immediately and in the order below:

Step 1 — Attend to the Bitten Child First

1. Move calmly and quickly to the bitten child. Prioritise their care.
2. Comfort the child and check the area for injury (broken skin, bruising, swelling, indentation).
3. If the skin has been broken, administer first aid immediately in line with the nursery's First Aid Policy. A paediatric first aid-trained member of staff must be called.
4. Apply a cold compress if bruising or swelling is visible.
5. If the bite has broken the skin, the area must be cleaned with an antiseptic wipe and covered with a suitable dressing. Parents must be informed that the skin has been broken.

Step 2 — Respond to the Child Who Bit

6. Speak to the child who bit using simple, firm, calm language: "Biting hurts. We do not bite."
7. Do not shout, shame, or physically restrain the child beyond what is required to ensure safety.
8. Do not bite back. This is never appropriate under any circumstances.
9. Acknowledge the emotion that may have caused the behaviour: "I can see you were frustrated. Let's find another way."
10. Redirect the child to another activity under continued supervision.

Step 3 — Notify the Room Leader or Key Person

11. The member of staff who witnessed or responded to the incident must notify the Room Leader or Key Person immediately.
12. If the incident is significant (broken skin, deep bite, distressed child), the Nursery Manager must be informed without delay.

7. Recording and Reporting

Accurate recording is a statutory duty under the EYFS 2025 framework (paragraph 3.51). All biting incidents must be recorded in writing on the same day as the incident.

7.1 Documentation Requirements

Upon a child receiving a bite, the following documentation must be completed:

Document	For Which Child?	Purpose
Accident Form	The child who has been bitten	Records the injury, first aid given, and parent notification. This is a statutory requirement under EYFS 2025 para 3.51.
Incident Form	The child who has bitten	Records the behaviour, context, triggers, and actions taken. Used for monitoring patterns and informing preventive strategies.

7.2 Accident Form — Minimum Required Information (Child Bitten)

- Full name of the child who was bitten.
- Date, time, and location of the incident.
- Nature of the injury (e.g. skin intact, bruising, broken skin).
- First aid treatment administered and by whom (name and qualification).
- Name of the member of staff who completed the form.
- Signature of the parent or carer upon collection (same day where possible).

Note: The name of the child who inflicted the bite must NOT appear on the accident form. Confidentiality of the biting child must be maintained at all times (UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018).

7.3 Incident Form — Minimum Required Information (Child Who Bit)

- Full name of the child who bit.
- Date, time, and location of the incident.
- Description of the circumstances and any identified triggers.
- Actions taken by staff (immediate response and redirection).
- Name of the member of staff who completed the form.
- Signature of parent or carer upon collection (same day where possible).

7.4 Record Storage

- All accident and incident forms must be stored securely in the child's individual file.
- Physical files are held in the Manager's locked filing cabinet at Bracknell and Crowthorne, and a locked cupboard at Ascot.
- Digital records, where used, are stored in Famly with appropriate access controls.
- Records must be retained for a minimum period in line with the nursery's Data Retention Policy and UK GDPR requirements.
- All records are subject to the nursery's confidentiality policy and must not be shared with other families.

7.5 Monitoring and Review

- The Nursery Manager must review incident and accident forms regularly (at minimum monthly) to identify patterns or trends in biting behaviour.
- Where a pattern is identified, the Manager must convene a review meeting with relevant key persons and, where appropriate, involve parents.

- Incident data should inform amendments to risk management plans and preventive strategies.

8. Parent and Carer Communication

8.1 The Parent of the Child Who Was Bitten

- Staff must inform the parent or carer of the bitten child on the day of the incident, at or before collection.
- The parent will be shown the completed accident form and asked to sign it.
- Staff must explain the nature of the injury, the first aid provided, and any follow-up care recommended.
- If the skin has been broken, the parent must be advised to monitor the wound and seek medical advice from their GP or NHS 111 if they have any concerns about infection.
- The name of the child who caused the bite must not be disclosed to the parent of the bitten child. This is a matter of confidentiality and data protection.

8.2 The Parent of the Child Who Bit

- Staff must inform the parent or carer of the child who bit on the day of the incident, at or before collection.
- The parent will be shown the completed incident form and asked to sign it.
- Staff must communicate in a non-judgmental manner. The developmental context of biting must be explained sensitively.
- The name of the child who was bitten must not be disclosed.

8.3 Persistent or Escalating Biting

- If a child continues to bite repeatedly, the Nursery Manager must arrange a meeting with the child's parents or carers as a matter of priority.
- The purpose of this meeting is to: identify potential triggers and causes; share observations; agree a joint strategy between home and nursery; and review progress against existing risk management plans.
- Parents should be reassured that biting is a developmental behaviour and that the nursery is committed to working in partnership with them to address it.
- Staff must ensure that neither child is made to feel guilty or ashamed.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 All Staff Must:

- Follow this policy consistently on every occasion a biting incident occurs.
- Administer first aid promptly and in line with their paediatric first aid training.
- Complete both the accident form (bitten child) and incident form (biting child) accurately and on the same day.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times regarding the identity of both children involved.
- Report the incident to the Room Leader or Nursery Manager without delay.
- Attend training on behaviour management and developmentally appropriate practice as directed.

9.2 Room Leaders Must:

- Ensure all biting incidents in their room are reported, recorded, and followed up.
- Identify patterns of behaviour and communicate these to the Nursery Manager.
- Ensure preventive strategies are embedded in the daily routine of the room.
- Support key persons in communicating sensitively with parents.

9.3 Nursery Manager Must:

- Oversee implementation of this policy across the nursery.
- Review incident and accident records regularly for patterns and trends.
- Convene parent meetings where biting behaviour is persistent or escalating.
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate training and support.
- Review and update this policy annually, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes.
- Ensure the policy is accessible to all staff and shared with parents upon request.

9.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Must:

- Be informed of any incident where a bite may raise a wider safeguarding concern (e.g. evidence of distress beyond the biting context, signs that a child may be experiencing harm elsewhere).
- Liaise with external agencies including the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or local children's services if a safeguarding concern is identified.
- Ensure that safeguarding considerations are embedded within this policy and practice.

9.5 Parents and Carers Should:

- Engage openly with staff regarding their child's behaviour, triggers, and strategies being used at home.
- Sign accident and incident forms on the day of an incident wherever possible.
- Attend meetings with the Manager if their child is involved in repeated biting incidents.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding the names of other children involved in incidents.

10. Extreme or Escalating Biting — Critical Incident Procedure

In rare cases, biting may become severe, frequent, or result in injury to staff. This section sets out the mandatory steps that must be taken when biting escalates beyond a routine incident. This procedure operates in addition to — not instead of — the standard procedure in Section 6.

10.1 Definition of an Extreme Biting Incident

An extreme biting incident is defined as any one or more of the following:

- Multiple biting incidents by the same child within a single session or day.
- A bite that breaks the skin of a child or member of staff.
- A bite that causes visible injury requiring medical attention (bruising, bleeding, tissue damage).
- A bite resulting in a staff member's skin being broken, regardless of whether they require hospital treatment.
- A pattern of biting so frequent or severe that it poses a risk to the safety of other children or staff.

10.2 Immediate Actions — Extreme Incident

13. Attend to all injured parties immediately. Administer first aid to the child victim and any injured staff member. A paediatric first aid-trained staff member must treat all wounds.
14. If a staff member's skin has been broken by a bite, they must wash the wound thoroughly with soap and running water for a minimum of 10 minutes, then apply a sterile dressing. They should seek medical advice from their GP or NHS 111 as a precautionary measure regarding infection risk.
15. Notify the Nursery Manager immediately. The Manager must be on site or reachable by phone within minutes of the incident being reported.
16. Notify the DSL if there is any safeguarding dimension (see Section 12).
17. Remove the child who has bitten from the immediate situation calmly and safely. The child must remain under direct 1:1 supervision for the remainder of the session.
18. We will not send the child home as a punitive measure. However, if the risk to other children or staff cannot be safely managed with available staffing, the Manager may contact the parent to discuss an early collection as a welfare decision and not a punishment.

10.3 Staff Injury — Specific Requirements

When a member of staff is bitten and their skin is broken:

- An accident form must be completed for the injured staff member on the same day, in line with Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requirements. This is separate from the child's documentation.
- The incident must be entered into the nursery's staff accident book.
- The Nursery Manager must assess whether the injury constitutes a RIDDOR-reportable incident under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013.

RIDDOR Trigger	Reporting Requirement
Staff absent from work for more than 7 consecutive days (not including injury day)	Must be reported to the HSE via the RIDDOR online portal within 15 days of the incident.
Staff sustains a specified injury (e.g. fracture, hospitalisation)	Must be reported to the HSE immediately and within 10 days under RIDDOR 2013 Regulation 4.
Skin broken but staff able to continue working	Not automatically RIDDOR-reportable to the HSE, but must be recorded in the staff accident book. Monitor carefully. RIDDOR triggers if absence later exceeds 7 days.

HSE RIDDOR reporting portal: www.hse.gov.uk/riddor | HSE Incident Contact Centre: 0345 300 9923

10.4 Ofsted Notification

The Nursery Manager must assess whether the incident requires notification to Ofsted. The following applies:

- If a child sustains a serious injury as a result of a biting incident (e.g. significant wound, hospital treatment required), Ofsted must be notified as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event within 14 days, using the Ofsted online notification portal at www.report-childcare-incident.service.gov.uk
- If a staff member sustains a significant injury, the Manager should consider whether this constitutes a significant event under the EYFS 2025 framework and notify Ofsted accordingly. If there is any doubt, the Manager must notify. Failure to report a notifiable event is a criminal offence.
- The Nursery Manager must also notify local authority children's services of any serious accident or injury to a child while in the nursery's care, as required under EYFS 2025.

Note: From November 2025, Ofsted assesses safeguarding as a standalone judgement with a binary outcome of "Met" or "Not met." Accurate, timely notification of notifiable events is therefore directly relevant to the nursery's safeguarding standing at inspection.

10.5 Multiple Biting Incidents in a Single Session

Where a child bites more than once in a single morning or session, the following additional steps must be taken:

19. The Nursery Manager must be notified immediately after the second incident within the same session.
20. A 1:1 risk-managed supervision plan must be implemented for the remainder of the session. The child must not be left unsupervised at any point.
21. A separate incident form must be completed for each individual biting episode. Incidents must not be combined onto a single form.
22. The parent or carer of the biting child must be contacted by telephone during the session — not only at collection — to inform them of the escalating pattern and to agree a response.
23. The Manager must review the child's room placement, routine, group size, and staffing ratios to assess whether immediate changes can reduce the risk for the remainder of the day.
24. An Individual Risk Management Plan (see 10.6 below) must be initiated before the child returns to the setting if the behaviour has reached a level where the safety of others cannot reasonably be maintained.

10.6 Individual Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

Where a child's biting is persistent, severe, or has caused injury to another person, the Nursery Manager must initiate a written IRMP. This must include:

- Name of the child and key person.
- Summary of biting history (frequency, triggers, injuries caused).
- Environmental or routine changes already implemented.
- Specific supervision requirements (ratio, proximity, key person assignment).
- Agreed strategies to be used consistently by all staff.
- Strategies being used at home (agreed at parent meeting).
- Review date (no longer than two weeks from date of plan, or sooner if a further incident occurs).
- Signature of Manager, Key Person, and parent or carer.

If biting does not reduce despite the IRMP, the Manager should seek external support from the Local Authority SENCO, a health visitor, or an early years behaviour specialist.

10.7 Staff Welfare and Support

A staff member who has been bitten — particularly if their skin has been broken — may experience physical discomfort, shock, or distress. The Nursery Manager must:

- Check on the wellbeing of the injured staff member during and after the shift.
- Offer the staff member the option to step away briefly or be relieved of direct childcare duties for a short recovery period if staffing ratios permit.
- Ensure the staff member is not pressured to minimise the incident or discouraged from seeking medical advice.
- Record the staff member's account of the incident in the staff accident book, including all first aid given.

- Hold a brief debrief with the affected staff member at the end of the session to confirm they feel supported and to identify further actions.
- Offer access to the nursery's Employee Assistance Programme or other wellbeing support where available.

10.8 Communication with All Families Following Multiple Incidents

If multiple children have been bitten in a single session or day, the Manager may issue a general communication to all affected families. This communication must:

- Not identify the child who has bitten by name, description, or any detail that could lead to identification.
- Reassure families that the incidents have been managed and that additional measures are in place.
- Be approved by the Manager before being sent.

11. Confidentiality

Little Acorns Montessori handles all information relating to biting incidents in strict confidence and in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

- The name of the child who bit must never be disclosed to the parents of the bitten child, and vice versa.
- Accident and incident forms must not be left visible to other parents, children, or staff who are not involved.
- Staff must not discuss incidents outside of the nursery environment, including on social media.
- Where records are stored electronically, access must be restricted to those with a legitimate need.

12. Safeguarding Considerations

In the vast majority of cases, biting is a normal developmental behaviour with no safeguarding implications. Little Acorns Montessori recognises its role as an active partner within the local multi-agency safeguarding system, in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026). Staff are expected to maintain professional curiosity and consider the wider context of a child's life, not only the presenting behaviour.

- A child who bites severely, frequently, or with unusual aggression beyond what is developmentally expected.
- A child who is repeatedly the victim of biting and shows signs of significant distress, withdrawal, or fear.
- Any concern that a child's behaviour may be linked to harm, abuse, or adverse experiences outside of the nursery.

If any such concern arises, the DSL must be informed immediately. Referrals must be made in line with the nursery's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the statutory guidance in Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026).

13. Staff Training

- All new staff must read and sign this policy as part of their induction.
- From 1 September 2025, students on long-term placements (aged 17 or over), volunteers (aged 17 or over), and apprentices (aged 16 or over) must hold a valid and current PFA certificate in order to be counted in statutory staff-to-child ratios. Any such individuals who do not hold a current PFA certificate may still be present in the setting but will not count toward required ratios. The Nursery Manager must verify PFA status for all such individuals prior to them being included in ratios at any campus.
- All staff must receive safeguarding training that meets the criteria set out in Annex C of the EYFS 2025 Statutory Framework. This training must be renewed at least every two years. The Nursery Manager may identify whether any staff require annual refresher training within that two-year cycle, for example following a safeguarding concern or change in procedure. In addition to the above, each DSL must complete training covering: how to build a safe organisational culture; safer recruitment; and how to liaise with local statutory children's services and local safeguarding partners. Staff must be actively supported by the DSL to apply their training in day-to-day practice, not merely to attend training and move on. The Nursery Manager must maintain records of when training was completed and when renewal is due for all staff at each campus.
- Training records must be maintained by the Nursery Manager.

14. Policy Review

Review Frequency	This policy must be reviewed annually as a minimum.

Trigger for Earlier Review	A significant change in legislation, EYFS framework update, Ofsted requirement, or serious incident.

Next Scheduled Review	June 2027

Policy Owner	Jonathan Duffy

15. Sign-Off

Role	Name	Date
Owner/Director	Jonathan Duffy	June 2026