

St. Martini Pre-Primary School (RF) NPC  
(hereinafter referred to as SMPPS)

## Biting Policy

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### Aims and Intent

Biting is expected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind.

The staff's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior.

Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. This Policy also serves to protect the children that are bitten.

### Key Facts

SMPPS is a safe, high-quality environment and we will always try look for a plan to deal with biting in a constructive way.

The parents are included in this process so children can see that both their parents and teachers reinforce that biting is not acceptable.

## Biting Policy

The consequences of continued biting are outlined in this Policy.

The classrooms are set up in a way that enables the practitioner and assistant/s to have sight of the children at all times.

SMPPS takes biting seriously and has a Low Tolerance Policy that is outlined hereunder.

## Supervision

We believe that prevention is better than a cure and the children are supervised at all times. We bear in mind that biting takes place very quickly, even in front of the practitioners. Regardless, we will always do our utmost to prevent such an occurrence.

SMPPS employs sufficient ECD practitioners to ensure that no child or group of children are left unsupervised. At no time shall any child, or group of children, be left unsupervised.

Staff to Child Ratios:

Three to four years: One ECD practitioner to every 18 children or less, plus one assistant.

Five to six years: One ECD practitioner for every 20 children or less, plus one assistant.

Grade R children: One ECD practitioner for every 20, plus an assistant

Children are supervised indoors, outdoors and in the bathrooms.

Children are not allowed in the kitchen or staff toilets.

All staff members know where he/she needs to be at any given time during the work day.

## Classroom Setup

The classrooms at SMPPS are carefully setup in ways that can help prevent the children from experiencing behavioural challenges. This is done as follows:

1. Arrange the classroom environment so as to have sight of every child at all times.
2. Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.
3. Provide alternatives in order to redirect children to acceptable activity.
4. Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.

## Overview of Biting

Biting is a very common behavior amongst young children. It is a form of communication (albeit a negative one), and is often a response to coping with a challenge or stressor.

At SMPPS we believe by understanding the developmental stages of the children in our care and their individual needs, we can help to proactively prevent many biting behaviors by the environment, which we create for the children.

We understand that a child biting other children is one of the most common and most difficult behaviors to deal with at our ECD centre.

1. It occurs without warning.
2. It is difficult to defend against.
3. It provokes strong emotional responses in the biter, the victim, the families, and the staff involved.

## Biting Policy

For very young children up to 3,5 years, the biting stage is just a passing problem and they try it out as a way to get what they want from another child. It is a process of learning what is socially acceptable and what is not.

Children bite for a variety of reasons: teething, frustration, boredom, inadequate language skills, stress or change in the environment, feeling threatened or to feel a sense of power.

They discover that the bite will get a response from the other child who will probably drop what they had and the biting child will then get the item that he/she wanted.

They will also discover that biting will earn the biter the disapproval of the adults and the child will learn other ways of getting what he/she wants.

Sometimes the urge to bite persists for a child and can become a chronic problem.

## Techniques To Try And Prevent Biting

SMPPS has several positive techniques that are known to help prevent incidences of biting.

1. Nurturing relationships between the staff and the children.
2. The staff pay attention and step in when a child is showing signs of aggression, getting overwhelmed or stressed.
3. Children are given opportunities to work in both small and large groups and the children are taught how to "share" a work/play environment with each other.
4. A variety of activities are made available to the children so that they have the opportunity to choose.
5. The children follow a daily routine which helps with their security when at the centre.
6. The routine consists of circle time, time to pursue own work and/or group work, and snack time. Children learn early on how to navigate classroom transitions in a way that helps them build confidence and alleviate stress.
7. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

## Response to Biting

1. The school Manager/Principal informs parents of the biter of the event, either on the telephone or when they collect the child that day. The name of the victim of the bite is kept confidential if the biting has occurred the first time.
2. We also inform the parent of the victim of the bite, keeping the biters name confidential for the first incident, and giving the assurance that the matter is in hand and the Biting Policy is being applied.
3. The incident is recorded in the Incident Register and on an Incident Report.

## Incident Register and Incident Report

1. Every incidence of biting will be recorded in the Incident Register and signed by the member of staff.
2. An Incident Report will also be completed.
  - a. This report is a confidential, standardised form that all staff members use to document incidents that happen at the centre.
  - b. An Incident Report will be filled in.

### The Biter

1. The biter will be immediately removed with no emotion, using words such as “No! Biting is not okay – it hurts.”
2. The response we give will not reinforce the biting, call attention to the biter nor belittle the child in any way – the child who bit will simply be taken out of the situation.
3. The biter will be allowed to return to work/play after he/she has had an age appropriate conversation with the teaching practitioner.
4. The biter may also be crying and the child will be consoled.
5. Thereafter, the child will be redirected to other work/play.

### The Victim Of The Bite

1. For the victim of the bite:
2. Staff will separate the child who was bitten from the biter.
3. The bitten child will get special attention and be comforted.
4. First aid is applied to the bite as follows:
  - a. Assess the wound and if it is bleeding, apply pressure directly to the wound, using clean, dry gauze, until the bleeding stops.
  - b. Clean the bite wound with a mild soap and warm running water for approximately 3 - 5 minutes.
  - c. Rinse thoroughly, and pat dry with a clean, dry cloth.
  - d. Cover the wound with a clean, dry dressing.
  - e. Should the wound require immediate medical attention, the parents will be notified immediately.
5. The staff will inform the Manager and/or Principal of SMPPS.

### When Biting Continues

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any further biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc).
3. The Principal and/or Manager may also observe the child.
4. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.
5. The teaching staff member will meet with management on a regular basis for advise, support and strategy planning.
6. Every biting occurrence, including attempted bites, location, time, participants, behaviors, staff present, and circumstances has to be recorded.
7. The staff will work together as partners with the parents of both biting children and frequent victims to keep all informed and develop a joint strategy for change. A written plan of action may be developed.
8. Follow-up meetings or telephone conversations will take place as needed.
9. Parents and Management may consider moving a child to another class for a child “stuck” in a biting behavior pattern for a change of environment. It will only be considered if it is developmentally appropriate.
10. Management must gently prepare the parents of the biting child for the possibility that the child may have to be removed from the centre and help them to make contingency plans.
11. If it is deemed in the best interest of the child and the other children, SMPPS, can terminate the agreement.
12. As per our Admissions/Enrolment Agreement, a written warning will be given to the parents before this action will be taken.

### **When Biting Becomes Excessive**

1. If a child inflicts three bites in a one week period a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified. Recommendations for professional help will be provided to the parents and SMPPS will expect the parents to cooperate to the fullest.
2. If the child again inflicts three bites in a one week period, the parents will be asked to keep the child home for two business days.
3. If a child once again inflicts three bites in a one week period the parents will be asked to remove the child from our care.
4. If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes three weeks without biting, we will go back to step 1 if the child bites again.
5. If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day.

### **Biting Confidentiality**

SMPPS and the staff will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has been bitten or bit another child on the first occasion. Should a child bite or be bitten more than once (by) the same child, SMPPS will inform the respective parents revealing the names of the involved children.