



Ocean Breeze School Biting Policy

At Ocean Breeze, we understand that biting can be one of the most challenging behaviors for families. We approach each incident with empathy and care, for the child who bit, the child who was bitten, and their families. Our goal is always to work collaboratively with parents to support each child's growth and development, while ensuring that the safety and well-being of all students and staff remain our top priority.

Biting is a developmentally typical behavior in early childhood, particularly among toddlers. Young children may bite for many reasons, teething discomfort, frustration, difficulty expressing emotions, sensory exploration, or seeking attention. Because toddlers are still learning to communicate and regulate their impulses, occasional biting can be a normal part of development at this stage.

However, biting in preschool-age children is less expected and considered more serious. By this age, children typically have more developed language, self-regulation, and social skills to express their needs and emotions in appropriate ways. When biting does occur in a preschooler, it often signals that the child may be experiencing heightened stress, difficulty managing strong emotions, or challenges navigating peer interactions.

Regardless of age, our response remains grounded in understanding, communication, and collaboration. We work closely with families to identify possible triggers, teach appropriate alternatives, and ensure that all children involved feel safe, supported, and valued.

The following section outlines how Ocean Breeze responds when a biting incident occurs and the steps we take to support all students involved.

Action Plan: Responding to a Biting Incident

Our response to any biting incident is immediate, calm, and consistent. Our goal is to ensure safety, comfort all children involved, and address underlying causes through observation, support, and collaboration with families.

Immediate Response (For All Incidents)

- Staff respond quickly and calmly, separating the children to ensure safety.
- Both children are comforted and attended to; staff remain neutral in tone and demeanor.
- If needed, additional staff may be called to assist.
- An incident report is completed for both students.
- Parents are notified immediately.

Care for the Child Who Was Bitten

- The area is gently cleaned with soap and water.
- If the skin is broken, first aid is administered.
- The child receives comfort and reassurance.

Care for the Child Who Bit

- The teacher calmly states, "Biting hurts. We don't bite our friends," and helps the child use words or gestures to express feelings.
- The child is redirected and may take time to calm before rejoining the group.
- Staff begin observing for triggers.

Progressive Response Plan for Repeated Biting

First Incident

- If the bite breaks the skin or leaves a significant mark, the child who bit must be picked up from school immediately. This is to prevent further incidents and to calm the biter.
- If there is no mark, a staff member closely shadows the child for the rest of the day.
- Staff begin observation and documentation of possible causes or patterns.

Second Incident

- A meeting is scheduled with the family, teachers, and director to develop an action plan to prevent further biting.
- The plan may include adjustments to the environment, visual supports, sensory tools, and emotional regulation strategies.
- Communication and documentation continue for every incident.
- The family may be asked to seek guidance from a pediatrician, behavioral specialist, or early intervention provider.

Third Incident

- Procedures from the first and second incidents are followed again (immediate notification, shadowing, documentation, and plan review).
- The director reviews the child's progress and meets with the family to determine next steps.
- **At this stage, outside support and documentation are required to continue enrollment.**
- The family must provide written documentation or recommendations from a professional, such as a pediatrician, behavioral specialist, early intervention provider, or counselor. This documentation must outline strategies to address the behavior and support the child's success in a group setting.
- The director, teachers, and family will work together to integrate these recommendations into a formal behavior support plan, which will include:
 - Clear goals and strategies.
 - Required family participation and check-ins.
 - A timeline for review and follow-up.
 - If documentation or cooperation is not provided, or if safety concerns persist despite these interventions, the director may require temporary suspension or withdrawal from the program.

Excessive or Repeated Biting

While our goal is always to support each child's development within our program, the safety and well-being of all students and staff must remain our top priority.

If biting becomes persistent, severe, or unmanageable despite multiple interventions, Ocean Breeze may determine that we are unable to safely meet the child's needs within the current setting.

In such cases:

- The school will provide referrals or recommendations for outside services or alternative programs that can better support the child's developmental needs.
- If the severity or frequency of biting poses a significant safety risk, the director reserves the right to take immediate action, including removal from the classroom, without waiting for a third incident.

We recognize that biting can be an emotional and stressful experience for everyone involved. Our approach is rooted in empathy, consistency, and open communication. We remain committed to helping children build healthy ways to express themselves and interact with others, while maintaining a nurturing environment where all students and staff feel safe, supported, and valued.