

The Croft Preparatory School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Whole School Policy, including Early Years Foundation Stage

Reviewed (JFe)	17 March 2025
Peer review completed	24 March 2025
Ratified by SLT	06 May 2025
Next Review Date	March 2027

The legal responsibility for ensuring that the Croft Preparatory School adheres to all relevant statutory regulations, as issued by the DfE, lies with the Proprietors. At their discretion, the Proprietors may delegate the monitoring of the efficacy with which the school discharges its statutory duties to the Facilities Manager and Governing Committee.

Notwithstanding the above delegation, the Proprietors retains ultimate responsibility for how the statutory functions are executed.

Introduction

Bullying affects everyone, not just the individuals who bully and their victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life, nor a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at the School.

Why is an Anti-Bullying Policy necessary?

The School believes that all pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

All institutions, both large and small, contain some individuals with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. The School actively promotes good citizenship, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It will not be tolerated. The School recognises the seriousness of the effects of bullying, both physical and emotional, which may cause significant psychological damage and, in severe cases, even suicide.

It is important therefore, that the School has a clear written policy in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance: 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) and 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)?, to promote this belief, prevent bullying wherever possible and ensure that pupils, their parents/guardians and staff are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Whilst this policy is predominantly concerned with children bullying their peers, it is recognised that adults can also bully and that occasionally children may be bullied by their teacher. The Croft Preparatory School will not tolerate bullying of any kind and, following investigation, if it is shown that a teacher has bullied a child, they will be subject to the disciplinary procedure which may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, summary dismissal. Staff can refer to the Whistleblowing Policy for more details.

Aims & Objectives

- To ensure that all School Leaders, staff, pupils and parents have a clear understanding of the term 'bullying'
- To provide all School Leaders, staff, pupils and parents with the School's policy on bullying, and to inform them that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated
- To provide pupils with strategies to help them deal with bullies
- To provide all School Leaders, staff, pupils and parents with the procedures to follow when bullying arises
- To assure all School Leaders, staff, pupils and parents that any allegation of bullying will be taken seriously and they will be supported when it is reported

What is bullying?

The DfE defines bullying as: 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance cyberbullying via text messages or the internet) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups'.

The effects of bullying on the victim include pain, distress, isolation and anxiety.

Bullying can occur through a variety of anti-social behaviours including:

- Physical**
A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.
- Verbal**
Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling which may include the use of racist or homophobic/sexual language.
- Exclusion**
A child can be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/activities, with those they believe to be their friends.
- Damage to property or theft**

Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully, in order that the pupil hands over property to them.

e) **Cyberbullying**

Bullying that takes place using electronic technology – including email or text messages, the internet and mobile phones. Communications or embarrassing pictures or videos may be sent or posted on social media sites to deliberately upset, intimidate or harass another person.

Cyberbullying is different to other bullying in that it may take place at any time of the day or night and can reach children even when they are alone. The Croft School takes cyberbullying extremely seriously, and has a dedicated Online Safety Coordinator to deal with issues as they arise, and help prevent them. The Designated Safeguard Lead and the Online Safety Coordinator meet at regular times throughout the term.

Bullying may be directed towards a range of actual or perceived physical and social factors including:

- Bullying related to gender, appearance or personality
- Bullying related to ethnicity, race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to disability or health conditions
- Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying related to home circumstances
- Sexist or sexual bullying

Anti-Discrimination

In line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), this Anti-Bullying Policy includes a firm commitment to antidiscrimination, recognising that bullying motivated by prejudice related to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010—such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or transgender identity—is particularly serious. The school is committed to preventing all forms of discriminatory bullying and fostering an inclusive environment where all pupils feel safe, respected, and valued. Staff are trained to identify and respond appropriately to discriminatory language and behaviour, and all incidents will be recorded, investigated, and addressed in accordance with both safeguarding procedures and statutory duties. Promoting equality and challenging prejudice are integral to our ethos and daily practice.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEND) and disabilities:

Research shows that children and young people with SEND and disabilities are more at risk of bullying than their peers.

The Croft Preparatory School is an inclusive school. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are. We have some children who have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times.

High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying as seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

As a pupil

What can you do if you are being bullied?

- Tell them to stop. Be assertive – shout “No!” Walk confidently away.
- If you are being cyberbullied (eg with text messages or email) never reply to abusive emails or messages. Keep the evidence and tell/show an adult as soon as possible. Do not delete anything until it has been shown to an adult. See below for more information about cyberbullying.
- Talk with someone you trust straight away. If you tell a teacher, you will get immediate support. Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the individual who is bullying in a way which will end the bullying, and will not make things worse for you. If you are being bullied outside of School, talk to family members or friends you trust to discuss the problem.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Do not blame yourself. Remember that no matter what someone says, you should not be ashamed of who you are or what you feel.
- Be proud of who you are.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone’s fear.
- Do not be afraid to ask for help. Talking to a counsellor/mentor can help you get through the emotional effects of bullying.

If you know someone is being bullied

- a) TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing puts you on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- b) If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with people who bully without getting you into trouble.
- c) Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

As a parent

- a) Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, with whom they have spent their time, how lunchtime was spent, etc.
- c) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- d) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- e) Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- f) Make sure that you and your child are fully aware of the School policy concerning bullying, and that your child will not be afraid to ask for help if they experience bullying.

As a School

- a) Organise the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, eg, provide increased supervision at potentially problem times.
- b) Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, eg, the Personal, Social Health and Economic Education (PSHE) programme, assemblies, projects, art, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs, Religious Education etc, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.
- c) Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- d) Review the School Anti-Bullying Policy biennially – or more frequently if required – and its degree of success.
- e) The School staff will continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand.
- f) Not use teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender, etc.

- g) Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people, and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- h) Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.
- i) In Year 6, recruit Peer Supporters whose job it is to help out at playtimes or after lunch, in both Prep and Pre-Prep. Peer Supporters can help by providing a listening ear, a friendly chat or by pointing children who need help in the right direction.
- j) Use staff training to raise awareness of bullying, the Anti-Bullying Policy and preventative action, which can be taken to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely.
- k) We will treat bullying as a serious offence, and take every possible action to prevent and/or eradicate it from our School. Allegations are recorded on Engage. The main rationale for this is to evaluate the effectiveness of our whole school approach to bullying and to enable patterns of behaviour to be identified.
- l) The 'Pastoral Log' is stored confidentially on Engage and is reviewed by the Senior Management Team each half term.

Tackling cyberbullying

The Croft Preparatory School has a dedicated Online Safety Coordinator to ensure a comprehensive and thorough approach to Online Safety.

The School educates its pupils in the proper use of technology and the consequences of cyberbullying, through PSHE and Computing lessons and assemblies across the School. School staff are trained to deal effectively with reports of cyberbullying, following set procedures.

The School has systems in place to block access to inappropriate websites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems, and provide live monitoring of computers. In addition, pupils are never left unsupervised when using computers within school, nor are they permitted to bring mobile phones on site or on school trips at any time. All e-communications used on the school site, or as part of school activities off-site, are monitored.

All Pupils from Year 2 upwards are provided with a copy of The Croft School Internet Acceptable Use Policy and the Internet and Email Acceptable Use Policy, which provides more information about staying safe online. The pupils and parents are asked to sign a copy of this agreement.

If a member of staff suspects, or is told about a cyberbullying incident, they should ask the pupil to show them the material in question, on screen. This should then be printed out,

ensuring that all the pages print and there are no omissions. Normal investigative procedures will then ensue. Our Online Safety Policy provides further details.

Action to be taken when bullying is suspected

If bullying is suspected, we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:

Help, support and counselling will be given, as is appropriate, to both the victims and the bullies:

We support the victims in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another teacher or adult if they choose
- informing the victims' parents/guardians
- by offering continuing support when they feel they need it
- by taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying
- by assigning a mentor to monitor the situation

We also discipline, yet try to help the child who has bullied in the following ways:

- by talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved
- informing the parents/guardians of the child who has bullied
- by continuing to work with the child who has bullied, in order to get rid of prejudiced attitudes as far as possible
- by considering issues of self-esteem in the child who has bullied
- by taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below, to prevent more bullying
- by assigning a mentor to monitor the situation

Follow-up procedures

*All staff should be aware that a 'bullying incident' should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reason to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Please refer to The Safeguarding Policy for guidance of how to report a child protection concern.

If staff are concerned about a fellow member of staff they should follow the steps set out in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated involving all parties, as outlined above. All cases will be followed up and parents will be updated of the outcome.

All incidents will be recorded in the class incident file and the pupils' personal files on Engage. The Assistant Head, Pastoral receives a copy of the incident record sheets, providing him with an overview of all bullying occurrences across the School.

Disciplinary steps

1. The child accused of bullying will be warned officially to stop offending.
2. The parents/guardians of the child accused of bullying will be informed.
3. If the child does not stop bullying, they will be suspended for a minor fixed period (one or two days).
4. If they will not end such behaviour, the parents will be requested to remove the child from the School permanently.

Serious disciplinary sanctions will be used to reflect the seriousness of a bullying incident(s) and convey a deterrent effect.

We aim to dovetail this Anti-Bullying Policy with the School's Positive Behaviour Policy which provides further details on the strategies and sanctions which may be employed in cases of bullying. This policy should also be read in conjunction with the School's Online Safety Policy.