



Exeter Pre-Prep School

Anti-bullying Policy

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This policy applies equally to all pupils across the school, including EYFS.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

At Exeter Pre-Prep School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop their full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Parents/carers have an important role in supporting Exeter Pre-Prep School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

Exeter Pre-Prep School has a robust approach to bullying and will do all it can to support victims (and perpetrators) and educate pupils about the importance of an anti-bullying culture. The school fosters an inclusive environment and does not tolerate any bullying related to the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration, and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. The school will act to monitor and record any such incidents in order that any policy changes/appropriate action is taken. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our Behaviour Policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

This anti-bullying policy is designed to be clear, practicable and sensible. The school's approach aims to prevent bullying and to deal effectively with bullying if it does occur. We shall do this by:

- maintaining an environment characterised by warmth, positive regard and mutual respect, so that bullying will be less likely;
- raising awareness of bullying through the curriculum and other activities;
- having a clear Behaviour Policy and School Rules for pupils;
- developing effective strategies for recognising and supporting victims of bullying and for recognising and dealing with bullies;
- ensuring that all staff know what to do if they come across bullying, that they treat incidents seriously and that they are consistent in their approach;
- assuring parents and pupils that all reports of bullying will be treated seriously;
- continuing to review this policy on our annual basis and our current practice on an ongoing basis and making use of the most up-to-date national guidance.

References

- Equality Act 2010
- Equality Duty 2011
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies – July 2017
- Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff – Nov 2014

The school follows government guidance with regard to bullying and its policies are compliant with this. All of the above documents reference multiple additional resources.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying can mean different things to different people and takes different forms, but two major elements are that:

1. Bullying is normally defined as persistent behaviour, repeated over time which intimidates individuals or groups through verbal, emotional or physical aggression. However, a single incident is also covered by the policy. It is important that appropriate records are kept of single incidents to allow the school to identify patterns/trends (i.e. persistent behaviour).
2. Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to intentionally hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person. It can take the form of targeting protected characteristics (including racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, homophobic or special educational needs / disability related bullying). It may occur directly through physical (including sexual) contact or intimidation, verbal comments and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can also occur through the use of technology (social websites, email, photos, and text/messaging services/apps, etc) and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic, which focus on special education needs and/or disabilities, health condition, home circumstances and their culture or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause serious and lasting psychological damage and even lead to suicide. Harassment and threatening behaviour are criminal offences. We always treat bullying incidents seriously.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 recognises bullying as a form of child-on-child abuse. In this policy, the word **bullying** is interchangeable with **child-on-child abuse**. The school's procedures for identifying, preventing, dealing with and recording reports of bullying and reports of child-on-child abuse are the same, in order to have a clear, transparent system, to allow patterns and trends to be observed, and for the school to seek to modify and improve aspects of its provision as indicated by such analysis.

At Exeter Pre-Prep School we recognise that there is no "hierarchy" of bullying – all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. We understand that bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face-to-face or indirectly. We understand that all children have disagreements with each other, and friends fall out for a time. This is not usually bullying.

At Exeter Pre-Prep School, three main types of bullying can be identified:

Physical	Hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings.
Verbal	Name calling, teasing, threatening, insulting, writing or sending unkind notes or messages, including cyberbullying.

Emotional Being intentionally unfriendly, excluding, tormenting looks, spreading rumours.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequently complaining of symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches, etc.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide, self-harm or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying, should be investigated by parents and teachers.

RECOGNISING THOSE WHO MAY BE VULNERABLE TO BULLYING

Bullies usually pick on vulnerable pupils. Vulnerability is not always visible to adults and the victim may look and behave like any other pupil. Recognition is made more difficult as some victims are 'passive' whilst others are 'active'. Even though it is not always easy, teachers should try to identify those who might be seen as vulnerable.

Pupils vulnerable to bullying may:

- be new to the class or school
- be different in appearance, speech or background from other pupils
- suffer from low self-esteem, whether as cause or effect of bullying
- be nervous, anxious, insecure – tend to be sensitive and quiet
- be younger and weaker than the rest of the peer group – less likely to retaliate
- be isolated, lonely or 'loners' – sometimes 'only children' with minimal experience of socialising and who are close to their parents
- appear or have in the past been powerful, aggressive, provocative and disturbed: these are 'active' victims
- have special educational needs
- be evidently more academically able than others

RECOGNISING THOSE WHO MAY BE POTENTIAL BULLIES

Identification of the 'typical' bully is difficult, as the background, nature, motivation and actions of bullies can vary considerably. Those who act aggressively and overtly are obviously easier to identify as bullies than those who are more subtle and covert in their actions. Teachers will have to use their experience, training and professional judgement in recognising a bully, who may exhibit the following characteristics:

- aggressive towards peers, teachers, parents and siblings
- likes to dominate, calls out, shows off
- has a positive attitude to violence and exhibits anti-social behaviour
- uses abusive or inappropriate language

Teachers should understand that such behaviour often masks academic or other inadequacies, insecurity, humiliation, the effects of being bullied themselves and other emotional and family problems. Alternatively, such pupils may be academically more able, confident, arrogant, undisciplined at home and spoilt.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Exeter Pre-Prep School takes the following preventative measures against bullying:

- Use of educational elements such as personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), which is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Children's emotional literacy is developed by teaching them a wide vocabulary of words for emotions. We believe that this makes them better able to express their feelings, helping them to resist attempts at bullying and making them less inclined to misinterpret others' actions, which can be a factor in bullying.
- Assemblies, circle time, drama, stories and literature are used regularly, with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.
- The school creates an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils, as well as frequent celebration of success.
- All pupils are told to tell a member of staff if they know that bullying is taking place. Every member of staff is trained in how to respond to such allegations as part of their induction and given regular update training.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents and records of bullying are kept, enabling any possible patterns to be identified.
- The school has a strong and experienced team of staff who are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Staff are always on duty at playtimes and are particularly vigilant in areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- The school reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, or in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- The school has clear policies which are communicated to parents, pupils and staff. The school welcomes feedback from all stakeholders on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

CYBERBULLYING

Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. Cyberbullying can involve social networking sites, emails, and mobile phones.

CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

In addition to the preventative measures described for the prevention of bullying above and details within the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Exeter Pre-Prep School seeks to prevent cyberbullying through the following measures:

- Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and internet use is monitored by the school.
- The school may impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- The school adheres to the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines regarding the teaching of online safety (Teaching online safety in schools, DfE 2019).
- The school offers guidance on the safe use of the internet and mobile phones in PSHE lessons at an age-appropriate level.
- The school offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal information safe.
- The use of mobile phones or cameras is strictly prohibited in school, except where the device is issued by the school and can be monitored.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

- A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- The member of staff witnessing the incident (or to whom it was reported) would reassure and support the pupils involved.
- Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of staff (their class teacher and/or the Head).
- The member of staff would then listen to the child or children concerned and record the details in order to transfer them later to the Bullying Incident Report Form. This form is available for staff to print from the shared J drive online or from the trays outside the Head's office.
- The member of staff would inform the class teacher in the first instance or, if not available, the Head.
- The Bullying Incident Report Form would be completed and then given to the Head.
- The Bullying Incident Report Form will be kept by the Head who will keep a central log of all complaints or incidents of bullying and record the way in which they were dealt with.
- All parties will be interviewed and a record made. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss his/her own reactions.
- Staff teaching the bullied pupil will be informed.
- It will be made clear to the bully why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support may be offered and a commensurate sanction may also be given.

SUPPORTING PUPILS

Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance and support.

It is recognised that support must also be given to the perpetrator. Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

All children concerned in any bullying incident should be fully involved in the discussions leading up to the solution and should not be left feeling isolated. Honest group discussions that involve both bullied and bully (with other children of their choice in attendance and encouraged to participate) help the children to resolve the matter themselves with support and guidance from the staff. All parents will need to be kept fully informed.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions may be applied in accordance with the School Behaviour Policy. The appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying will be decided upon. The implementation of the strategy will be overseen by the Head. Parents will be kept informed by the relevant staff. Any sanctions will be determined by the Head and would reflect the seriousness of the incident. Examples of sanctions might include:

- Writing a letter of apology
- Removal from the group (in class)
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- Withholding participation in school clubs

Should there be little change in behaviour and the bullying incidents reoccur OR if the first incident is extremely serious in nature, there will be a formal warning.

Formal Warning

The Head will speak to the pupils involved and will contact the parents/carers giving details of the offence and inviting them into school to discuss the matter. Parents would also need to be present when their child is given a Formal School Warning. Their support for the school's actions should be enlisted if possible.

Fixed Term or Permanent Exclusion from School

An exclusion would only be considered in a case of extreme and continuing bad behaviour, bullying, violence, etc. Any exclusion for even a short period would be discussed and agreed by the staff. Any exclusion would be at the discretion of the Head.

RAISING AWARENESS OF BULLYING

The school holds an anti-bullying week in November each year with a particular focus on learning about bullying, how to report bullying and developing strategies for dealing with bullying.

Pupils

Pupils need to be made aware that the school disapproves of bullying and will not tolerate it, that victims will be supported and that bullies will be punished. The PSHE programme, the curriculum and other activities will be used to raise awareness of bullying, including:

- Lessons on friendship and managing conflict.
- RE lessons and assemblies, giving examples of 'right living' from various world faiths.
- Sport and PE lessons emphasising the need for teamwork, sharing apparatus, the importance of skilful, disciplined play rather than rough, aggressive tactics, the ability to lose gracefully and be generous in victory.
- Talks from external agencies, appropriate to our age range (e.g. Early Years 'people who help us' topic might include visits from the police, the fire service and local doctors/dentists/vets).

Staff

Staff should be especially vigilant when supervising playtimes, walking to and from activities, supervising clubs and on off-site visits. Staff training/INSET will include 'in-house' sessions run by senior staff and invited professionals from time to time to raise awareness of bullying and its prevention (including online safety and cyberbullying). Staff attendance at professional meetings and conferences will also be encouraged. The Head will pass on any advice received from professional bodies such as the Independent Association of Prep Schools (IAPS) and the DfE to the relevant staff.

Parents

The management of the school, the atmosphere prevailing in the school and the degree of co-operation and communication between home and school must be such that parents do not worry about their children being bullied in school. Parents must feel confident that the school will listen, take their concerns seriously and act against aggressive, bullying pupils; they must feel confident that any victims will be supported and that effective strategies are in place to try to prevent and to deal with instances of bullying. Parental awareness will be raised through:

- Informing them of the existence of the anti-bullying policy and making it available to them.
- Talking to the parents of new pupils at the appropriate new parents meeting about lines of communication and assuring them that any concerns will be taken seriously.
- Reminding parents that bullying is not acceptable at Exeter Pre-Prep School.
- Communication and co-operation with parents of both bullies and those affected by bullying, discussing what they can do at home to prompt new behaviour in the bully and to build self-confidence in the victim.

MONITORING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR APPROACH

The Head and staff will consider all reports of bullying to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled, with a view to improving the school's strategies. These reports will also enable patterns to be identified in order to provide the best duty of care for our pupils.