



We demonstrate understanding and respect through child-led play

Behaviour and Values Policy

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Behaviour and Values Policy

1 Scope & Purpose

- 1.1 To provide guidelines embedded in our Vision, Aims and Beliefs, which ensure that everyone at Croft Playgroup feels valued, respected and safe.
- 1.2 To ensure that all adults (staff, volunteers, students and parents) provide positive role models, behaving in ways that enable children to feel free to explore and learn without fear of being hindered, ridiculed or hurt.
- 1.3 To recognise that learning self-regulation and socially appropriate behaviour is a developmental process and that through modelling positive behaviour at all times and managing challenging behaviour appropriately, we can provide for the needs of the individual as well as ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone at Playgroup.
- 1.4 To be inclusive and respectful: acknowledging that expectations for behaviour may vary between cultures.
- 1.5 To ensure that all staff, visitors and parents are familiar with our Values and behaviour policy and adhere to it at all times.
- 1.6 To work in partnership with children's parents. To talk about any behaviours which are a concern, always taking into account how that might feel for them. To work with parents to reflect on the reasons or cause for such behaviour and decide jointly how best to respond.
- 1.7 To ensure that our expectations of adult behaviour are underpinned by our values for the "How we want the World to be" which were agreed by all staff.
- 1.8 To hold our Vision, Beliefs, Aims and Values at the heart of how we relate to others.
- 1.9 To share simple 'Golden rules' to support us in managing expectations for children's behaviour.



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2 Our Vision, Beliefs and Aims

- 2.1 Our Vision is to provide the highest quality care for the children and families of our local community so that the children who come to Croft Playgroup feel confident, happy and secure and are able to step out into the world as independent, creative and well-rounded individuals.
- 2.2 At Croft Playgroup we believe that each child is unique and deserves to feel welcomed, loved, respected and valued by the adults and children around them.
- 2.3 Child-led play is vital in building self-esteem in children. We believe that taking time to listen, observe and engage with the children is the most powerful way to build positive relationships in order to support their development in all aspects.
- 2.4 The role of the key person is vital in building the first important relationship between adult and child at Playgroup. We believe in the importance of positive attachment and getting to know the child and their family as part of this process.
- 2.5 We promote free-flow open-ended play so that children have access to our outdoor areas as much as the indoor space.
- 2.6 We know that the family is important and value regular and open communication with our children's families so that, by working together, we ensure the best possible experiences for the children. Our door is always open.
- 2.7 Play is at the heart of healthy development and through a secure and enabling environment, in which adults give each child space to reveal his or her interests and abilities, we aim to nurture each child so that they can flourish.
- 2.8 We support and develop children's learning using the Early Years Foundation Stage which is the statutory framework for Early Years providers. We endeavour to provide stimulating and exciting resources which engage the children.
- 2.9 We recognise that we are role models to the children in our care. This constantly informs our behaviour, language and interaction. We always strive to reflect, evaluate and improve our practise so that the children in our care receive the best possible support.

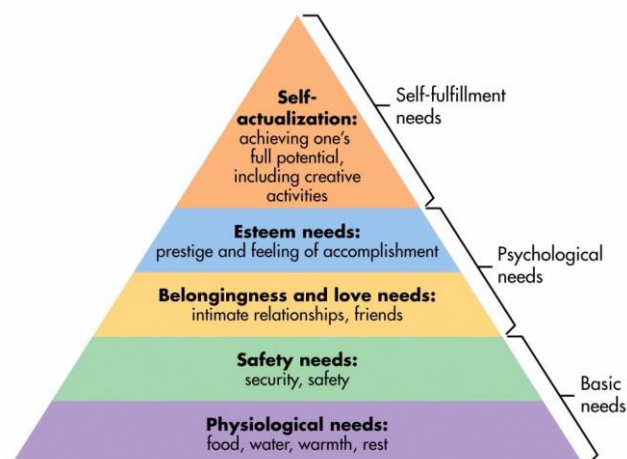
3 Values for “How we want the World to be”

- 3.1 At Playgroup we operate within a framework of agreed values which incorporate those highlighted within British Values and underpin the way we work together. These were agreed as a collective and are as follows:

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- **We show understanding and respect to all adults and children without exception.**
To value and celebrate our own and others' contributions and uniqueness, and to show consideration for our own feelings and the feelings of others.
- **We value each other's similarities and differences.**
To provide access to learning for all, taking into account everyone's needs, background and ability, working together to share the same vision and work towards the same goal.
- **We prioritise child led play.**
To enable children and adults to explore and express themselves freely in an environment which supports decision making and opportunities to consider the consequences of our words and actions.
- **We use 'gentle' discipline; emphasising understanding emotions behind behaviour.**
To empower everyone to communicate openly and honestly in their interactions with each other. To help the children understand the emotions behind the behaviour and to think about the best way to manage and express their feelings.
- **The safety and wellbeing of the children is at the centre of our practise.**
To help everyone to feel able to express their concerns and fears in an appropriate way and to thrive physically and emotionally in their learning. To learn when something is dangerous or harmful to themselves or others.

- 3.2 We run circle time sessions which are related to our values and allow the staff and children time to reflect and think about how we encounter and experience them in day to day life.
- 3.3 We use stories on the theme of 'People who inspire us' to broaden the children's experiences of role models with a rich range of backgrounds, cultures and experiences.
- 3.4 We share our Values with parents at our Welcome Meetings and focus on them in greater depth in our termly newsletters.
- 3.5 We acknowledge the importance of 'Maslow's Hierarchy of needs' alongside our Values so that we understand the importance of ensuring a child's needs are fully met in order for them to achieve their full potential.





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4 Strategies to encourage positive behaviour

- 4.1 We require all staff, volunteers and students to use positive strategies for handling any inconsiderate behaviour, by helping children to find solutions in ways which are appropriate for the children's ages and stages of development. Such solutions might include, for example, acknowledgement of feelings, and support this with use of our feelings board.
- 4.2 Explanation as to what was not acceptable, and supporting children to develop understanding and gain control of their feelings, so that they can learn a more appropriate response.
- 4.3 We ensure that the workshop atmosphere at Playgroup ensures that children have access to a wide range of resources so that they are meaningfully occupied without the need for unnecessary conflict over sharing and waiting for turns.
- 4.4 We support sharing and turn taking by using sand timers where appropriate supporting the children by acknowledging the natural frustrations associated with sharing and waiting for a turn.
- 4.5 We acknowledge and praise considerate behaviour such as kindness and willingness to share.
- 4.6 We support each child in developing self-esteem, confidence and feelings of competence.
- 4.7 We support each child in developing a sense of belonging at the playgroup, so that they feel valued and welcome.
- 4.8 We avoid creating situations in which children receive adult attention only in return for inconsiderate behaviour.
- 4.9 When children behave in inconsiderate ways we help them to understand the outcomes of their actions and support them in learning how to cope more appropriately.
- 4.10 We have a Visual display of basic "Golden Rules" which, the children, staff and parents follow. These are displayed in the setting, and are referred to when appropriate and especially when children are settling in:
 - We use kind words.
 - We have gentle hands and feet.
 - We have listening ears
 - When we have finished, we tidy up what we have been playing with.
 - We walk indoors and use indoor voices.
- 4.11 We never send children out of the room by themselves, unless their behaviour is impacting the safety of other children and adults within the setting. We do not use a 'naughty chair' or a 'time out' strategy that excludes children from the group. We suggest that in these instances the child is on a 2:1 ratio, to protect the safety and well-being of all parties.

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- 4.12 We never use physical or corporal punishment, such as smacking or shaking. Children are never threatened with these.
- 4.13 We do not use techniques intended to single out and humiliate individual children.
- 4.14 We use physical restraint, such as holding, only to prevent physical injury to children or adults and/or serious damage to property.
- 4.15 Details of such an event (what happened, what action was taken and by whom, and the names of witnesses) are brought to the attention of our setting leader and are recorded on a behaviour incident log in the individual behaviour book. (see appendix A) For significant incidents, the child's parent(s) is/are informed on the same day.
- 4.16 In cases of serious misbehaviour, such as racial or other abuse, we make clear immediately the unacceptability of the behaviour and attitudes, by means of explanations rather than personal blame.
- 4.17 We do not shout or raise our voices in a threatening way to respond to children's inconsiderate behaviour.

5 Challenging Behaviour

5.1 We recognise that there are usually reasons behind challenging behaviour:

- Tiredness and hunger
- An undeveloped emotional brain
- Psychological hungers for stimulation, recognition and structure
- Needing help with a big feeling
- Picking up on an adult stress
- Activating the wrong part of the brain (e.g. through shouting which can
- activate the primitive rage and fear systems in the brain)

5.2 Adults will always bear these factors in mind when observing and responding to challenging behaviour. We do this by:

- Being clear about the behaviour that is unacceptable;
- Providing nurture and support away from the situation and allowing time for the child to calm down before talking things through;
- Supporting the child in identifying what might be behind the behaviour and showing empathy;
- Addressing the factors which might be behind the behaviour which might involve an increase in 1:1 attention through child-led play to enhance positive attachments;
- Working together with parents/carers and families to share strategies and ensure we have a shared understanding of what might be behind the behaviour and of the most effective strategies;
- Use of personalised Social Stories;
- Where appropriate, setting up an Individual Play Plan (IPP) or Early Help Record with specific targets related to behaviour;

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- If a child's challenging behaviour requires adult intervention (e.g. because of shouting, throwing or hitting out) one member of staff will be agreed to intervene and support the child in the moment and while he or she resettles. This will ensure consistency of approach for that child and for others present in the setting. Colleagues in the room will approach that staff member as appropriate to ask if they need respite.
- We review our challenging behaviour risk assessment regularly to ensure the risk X severity factor is considered, particularly in extreme cases.
- Liaising with other agencies e.g. health visitor, behaviour improvement team, to access further support and advice.

6 Rough and tumble play and fantasy aggression

- 6.1 Young children often engage in play that has aggressive themes, such as superhero and weapon play. Some children appear pre-occupied with these themes, but their behaviour is not necessarily a precursor to hurtful behaviour or bullying; although it may be inconsiderate at times and may need addressing using strategies as above.
- 6.2 We recognise that rough and tumble play is normal for young children, acceptable with limits and often an important of play for building positive attachments. We regard these kinds of play as pro-social and not as problematic or aggressive.
- 6.3 We talk to the children about potential risks involved in more physical play and develop and agree strategies with them with acceptable behavioural boundaries to ensure children are safe.
- 6.4 We recognise that fantasy play also contains many violently dramatic strategies, e.g. blowing up and shooting, and that themes often refer to 'goodies and baddies' and as such offer opportunities for us to explore concepts of right and wrong.
- 6.5 We are able to tune in to the content of the play, perhaps to suggest alternative strategies for heroes and heroines, making the most of 'teachable moments' to encourage empathy and lateral thinking to explore alternative scenarios and strategies for conflict resolution.

7 Hurtful behaviour

- 7.1 We take hurtful behaviour very seriously. Most children under the age of five will at some stage hurt or say something hurtful to another child, especially if their emotions are high at the time, but it is not helpful to label this behaviour as 'bullying' or 'naughty'. For children under five, hurtful behaviour is momentary, spontaneous and often without cognisance of the feelings of the person whom they have hurt.
- 7.2 We recognise that young children behave in hurtful ways towards others because they have not yet developed the means to manage intense feelings that sometimes overwhelm them.
- 7.3 We will help them manage these feelings, as they have neither the biological means nor the cognitive means to do this for themselves.

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- 7.4 We understand that self-management of intense emotions, especially of anger, happens when the brain has developed neurological systems to manage the physiological processes that take place when triggers activate responses of anger or fear.
- 7.5 Therefore, we help this process by offering support, calming the child who is angry, as well as the one who has been hurt by the behaviour. By helping the child to return to a normal state, we are helping the brain to develop the physiological response system that will help the child be able to manage his or her own feelings.
- 7.6 We do not engage in punitive responses to a young child's rage as that will have the opposite effect.
- 7.7 We respond to pre-verbal children helping them to calm them through holding and cuddling.
- 7.8 Verbal children will also respond to cuddling to calm them down, but we offer them an explanation and discuss the incident with them to their level of understanding.
- 7.8 We recognise that young children require help in understanding the range of feelings they experience. We help children recognise their feelings by naming them and helping children to express them, making a connection verbally between the event and the feeling. "Adam took your car, didn't he, and you were enjoying playing with it. You didn't like it when he took it; it made you angry and you hit him."
- 7.9 Older children may be able to verbalise their feelings better, talking through themselves the feelings that motivated the behaviour.
- 7.10 We help young children learn to empathise with others, understanding that they have feelings too and that their actions impact on others' feelings. "When you hit Adam, it hurt him and he didn't like that and it made him cry."
- 7.11 We help young children develop pro-social behaviour, such as resolving conflict over who has the toy. "I can see you are feeling better now and Adam isn't crying any more. Let's see if we can be friends and find another car, so you can both play with one."
- 7.12 We are aware that the same problem may happen over and over before skills such as sharing and turn-taking develop. In order for both the biological maturation and cognitive development to take place, children will need repeated experiences with problem solving, supported by patient adults and clear boundaries.
- 7.13 We support social skills through modelling behaviour and through activities, drama and stories. We build self-esteem and confidence in children, recognising their emotional needs through close and committed relationships with them.
- 7.14 We help a child to understand the effect that their hurtful behaviour has had on another child; we do not force children to say sorry, but encourage this where it is clear that there is a genuine desire to communicate their regret. Where appropriate and in the majority of instances we model saying sorry.

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7.15 When hurtful behaviour becomes problematic, we work with parents to identify the cause and find a solution together. The main reasons for very young children to engage in excessive hurtful behaviour is that:

- They do not feel securely attached to someone who can interpret and meet their needs; this may be in the home and it may also be in the setting;
- Their parent or carer in the setting does not have skills in responding appropriately, and consequently negative patterns are developing where hurtful behaviour is the only response the child has to express feelings of anger;
- The child may have insufficient language, or mastery of English, to express him or herself and may feel frustrated;
- The child is exposed to levels of aggressive behaviour at home and may be at risk emotionally, or may be experiencing child abuse;
- The child has developmental needs or a condition that affects how they behave.

7.16 We use activities, songs, rhymes and rhythmic movements to support children's reflex integration and development of postural control as we recognise that this is the basis for their development and has a direct impact on their physical and emotional well-being. We seek parental permission before using movements on individual children.

7.17 Where appropriate we use the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice to support the child and family, making the appropriate referrals to a Behaviour Support Team where necessary, or we seek advice from the local health visiting team and other professionals.

7.18 In extreme cases, where strategies and interventions are not working and where a child's hurtful behaviour is having a detrimental effect on the physical and emotional well-being on the other children in the setting, Croft Playgroup reserves the right to reduce the child's timetable and temporary or permanently exclude.

8 Bullying

8.1 Bullying involves the persistent physical or verbal abuse of another child or children. It is characterised by intent to hurt, often planned, and accompanied by an awareness of the impact of the bullying behaviour.

8.2 We take bullying very seriously.

8.3 A child who is bullying has reached a stage of cognitive development where he or she is able to plan to carry out a premeditated intent to cause distress to another. Bullying can occur in children five years old and over and may well be an issue in after school clubs and holiday schemes catering for slightly older children.

8.4 If a child bullies another child or children:

- We intervene to stop the child who is bullying from harming the other child or children;
- We give reassurance to the child or children who have been bullied;
- We show the children who have been bullied that we are able to listen to their concerns and act upon them;

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- We explain to the child doing the bullying why her/his behaviour is not acceptable;
- We help the child who has done the bullying to recognise the impact of their actions;
- We make sure that children who bully receive positive feedback for considerate behaviour and are given opportunities to practise and reflect on considerate behaviour;
- We do not label children who bully as 'bullies';
- We recognise that children who bully may be experiencing bullying themselves, or be subject to abuse or other circumstances causing them to express their anger in negative ways towards others;
- We recognise that children who bully are often unable to empathise with others and for this reason we do not insist that they say sorry unless it is clear that they feel genuine remorse for what they have done. Empty apologies are just as hurtful to the bullied child as the original behaviour;
- We discuss what has happened with the parents of the child who did the bullying and work out with them a plan for handling the child's behaviour;
- We share what has happened with the parents of the child who has been bullied, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

9 Parent/Carer Involvement

9.1 Working in partnership with our parents/carers is integral to our work in supporting children's behaviour. In order for it to work in practice, their contribution is vital.

9.2 We aim to achieve this by:

- Sharing the expectations of behaviour at the playgroup, through informal and formal discussions with individuals and groups of parent/carers
- Talking to individual parents/carers about all aspects of their child's behaviour on a daily basis, as well as at regular parent/carers conferences
- Being fair, non-judgemental and consistent when discussing children's behaviour with parents/carers
- Providing extra support for parents/carers to help manage children's challenging behaviour e.g. through Family Support Services and outside agencies

9.3 We hope parents/carers will feel able to:

- Inform us of any relevant changes to their circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour e.g. new baby, moving house, bereavement, divorce, separation or hospitalisation.
- Re-enforce expectations of positive behaviour by talking to their child at home
- Actively support staff at the playgroup by implementing positive behaviour strategies.

9.4 We ask parents to:

- Be a positive role-model for their child, showing them how to get along with all members of the playgroup and the wider community



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Further guidance

- Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (DfES 2001)-updated (11 June 2014)
- Charter for agreed behaviours
- Staff code of conduct
- The Gentle Discipline Book by Sarah Ockwell-Smith
- What Every Parent Needs to Know: The Remarkable Effects of Love, Nurture and Play on Your Child's Development by Margot Sunderland

Other useful Pre-school Learning Alliance publications

- The Social Child (2007)
- Reflecting on Behaviour (2010)
- Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (2015)

This policy was adopted by Croft Playgroup

Signed on behalf of the Croft Playgroup

Croft Playgroup Committee

Croft Playgroup Manager

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Signed.....

Signed.....

Dated 1st June 2024

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Date policy to be reviewed: June 2025 or earlier if required