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Introduction

Promoting effective learning and teaching is paramount to the Welsh Government's agenda. Key to achieving effective learning and teaching is ensuring that class teachers have the necessary skills to approach their teaching in ways that reduce the likelihood of children misbehaving. Teachers also need to be equipped with effective skills and responses for those instances where difficult behaviour does occur.

Where teachers have good preventative and responsive skills the likelihood of difficulties emerging or developing into incidents will be markedly reduced.

This handbook is intended as a resource to enhance the practice of teachers at primary level, primarily for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), although others may also find something of interest in it.

The handbook focuses on general behaviour management methods and does not specifically cover issues relating to special educational needs (SEN).

How to use this handbook

Teachers may use the materials in different ways, depending on their role and their needs:

- as an interesting read to confirm their confidence in their own skills at managing behaviour in the classroom
- as a resource pack that provides ideas and approaches for addressing particular issues or difficulties
- as a resource for coaching or mentoring NQTs
- as a resource to help support other staff.

This handbook focuses on the classroom level only.

Understanding behaviour

Understanding the root cause of the child's behaviour is essential, as without this it is unlikely that any behaviour strategy will be sustainable. There are five basic models in understanding child behaviour.

These include:

- biological
- behavioural
- cognitive
- systemic
- psychodynamic.

Biological

Children have a tendency to interact with the environmental influences around them and this interaction informs their behaviour. Research evidence has come from studies around twins separated at birth and early infancy. This goes to show that both nature and nurture are involved in our development, although when dealing with behaviour attention needs to be paid to creating a positive environment and experiences to promote good behaviour.

Behavioural

Behaviour can be modified through 'conditioning'. This is achieved by another event following an action. There are two types of 'conditioning'.

Classical conditioning – a behaviour is connected with a certain stimulus, for example a child feels happy and excited on a Friday afternoon as this is the time the whole class has 'Fun Friday'.

Operant conditioning – a behaviour is connected and repeated by rewarding the positive behaviour and issuing sanctions for the negative behaviour.

Cognitive

The cognitive approach helps the child judge and reason effectively and have a perception of their surroundings. This means that the way in which we behave is influenced by our thinking.

The cortex is the conscious, rational-thinking part of the brain and determines the child's response to certain situations. Research has shown that if an infant is constantly being subjected to negative situations, for example experiencing domestic violence and/or neglect, then the connections that form the cortex to help deal with situations in a rational way are limited. In situations such as this the child is left to rely on the limbic system which is the body's alarm system. So when a child is faced with a mild situation, for example the person sitting next to them takes their pencil without asking, instead of the rational-thinking cortex being engaged the limbic system is triggered displaying the flight/fight reaction.

Systemic

The systemic approach looks at targeting the individual's behaviour within the system. These systems can include:

- their family
- their friends
- their school
- their classmates
- their community
- their outside school clubs, e.g. Scouts.

The quality of these systems is a great influence on the child's behaviour. For example, a child living in a family where domestic violence takes place will naturally struggle within another system, i.e. school. The behaviour the child experiences at home, for example shouting, violence and/or aggressiveness, will not work in a school context which can cause problems for the child. In situations such as this, working with the family to understand the environment in which the child lives is paramount in finding solutions to help their behaviour.

Psychodynamic

The psychodynamic approach is one used in a clinical setting as it focuses on understanding and intervening by unravelling past conscious and unconscious experiences in order to help the child deal with them.

Tips: Behaviour theory

- A child will repeat a behaviour if it is being rewarded.
- A child will be less likely to repeat a behaviour if sanctions are issued.
- If there is no consistency with rewards and sanctions then it is likely the child will continue to display the unwanted behaviour.
- The more attention the teacher gives to a child's behaviour the more likely it is that that behaviour will be repeated.

Effective classroom management

In order to create a positive learning culture within a school, effective interventions need to be implemented. We will consider the following interventions:

- effective classroom management
- positive relationships
- the classroom.

The 'Tips for teachers – practical advice' section (pages 92–99) also sets out some practical tips for teachers to help them with their personal effectiveness.

Effective classroom management

Effective behaviour management is based on the teacher's ability to successfully create a well-managed, structured classroom environment so that learning can occur. Teaching a number of children with different needs, behaviours and attention spans can be challenging. However, when a positive learning culture is created, the children will learn better because they will know what is expected of them.

Well-managed classrooms:

- begin the year with a set of rules and routines which are understood by all children
- have agreed rewards and positive reinforcements
- have set sanctions for misbehaviour
- have a selection of options for dealing with disciplinary problems
- make use of their physical space
- have well-planned lessons
- encourage respect and develop positive relationships.

Tips: Behaviour theory

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Rules

Rules create clear expectations for the children and need to define what is acceptable behaviour. These must be reinforced on a regular basis and placed in a visible place on the classroom wall. Include the children in developing the rules as this will give them ownership and they will be more likely to accept their terms and conditions and therefore comply.

Tips: Rules

- When designing your classroom rules, they should be:
 - clear
 - comprehensive
 - enforceable.
- Write the rules in a positive way and avoid using 'don'ts'. For example, 'I will walk sensibly around the school' rather than 'Don't run around the school'.
- Children require understandable directions. Hence, the rules need to be specific and explainable, e.g. telling children to 'Be good' or 'Don't do that' is too vague.
- Display the class rules and go over them with the children on a regular basis.
- Check children's understanding of the rules.
- Explain the rationale behind the rules.
- Be consistent in enforcing the outcomes for breaches of the rules when an incident occurs.

Routines

Routines help to minimise behavioural challenges in the classroom and are key to a well-managed and organised classroom. Children enjoy routines that are easy to understand and easy to accomplish, yet flexible enough to alter if circumstances change. Research shows that most behavioural problems result from a lack of consistent classroom routines.

Tips: Routine

- Display the class routines and go over them with the children on a regular basis.
- Check children's understanding of the routines.
- Explain the rationale behind the routine.
- Model the routine or procedure for the children.
- Be consistent. Take time re-enforcing the routines because when they are established at the beginning of the year, the entire rest of the year will be more enjoyable and productive for both teacher and children.

Praise

Praise is an effective way to encourage children to engage in the desired behaviour as it focuses on a child's effort rather than on what is actually accomplished. When educators give genuine praise that is specific, spontaneous, and well-deserved, it encourages continuous learning and decreases competition among children.

Peer praise

Encouraging children to praise each other not only creates a positive, fun classroom environment but also motivates individuals to make positive choices. Children need to be taught how to praise their peers by clapping or cheering when they see a fellow child doing something positive.

Tips: Effective praise

- Make sure you define the appropriate behaviour when giving praise.
- Praise should be given immediately following the desired behaviour.
- Vary the ways in which you praise.
- Relate praise to effort.
- Encourage perseverance and independence.

- **Do not** give praise continuously and without reason.
- Be sincere when praising.
- Never give praise and follow it with immediate criticism.

Rewards

Rewards (or reinforcers), when they follow behaviour, make that behaviour more likely to occur again. They form the basis of human behaviour and motivation, and can be used effectively to encourage children to acquire skills and develop appropriate behaviour. To be effective rewards need to be something to which the children aspire to and want. Younger children will desire different rewards than older children.

For rewards to be effective they should be:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Immediate | Immediately reward behaviour you wish to increase. |
| Consistent | Consistently reward to help maintain the desired behaviour. |
| Achievable | Ensure that the rewards are achievable to help maintain attention and motivation. |
| Fair | Make sure all children are fairly rewarded during the school day. |

Types of rewards:

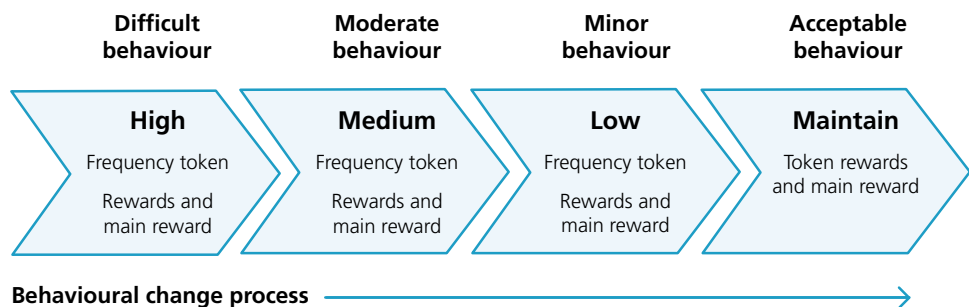
| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Social | Praise and recognition, for example a positive phone call home. |
| Tangible | Material rewards, for example the use of tokens. |
| Activity | Physical rewards, for example extra play or allowing children to choose their own reward, e.g. class soccer, painting faces, etc. |

Examples of rewards:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Tokens | Class celebration |
| Raffle tickets | Sticker |
| Special day | Lucky dip |
| Certificates | Phone call home |
| Free time | Extra play |
| Position of responsibility | |

Frequency and level of rewards

The frequency and level of rewards given to children depends on the level of behaviour. If a child is displaying frequent and quite difficult to manage behaviour, then the frequency and level of reward must be high.



Positive relationships

Teacher–child relationship

The heart of effective behaviour management is building positive relationships with children. This allows the teacher to connect to the children forming a strong foundation from which behavioural change can take place.

Tips: Building relationships

- Welcome the children as they enter the classroom.
- Ensure all children understand what is expected of them.
- Create a positive environment where each child feels relaxed and accepted.
- Show an interest in each child's family, talents, goals, likes and dislikes.
- Engage with the children during lunchtime and playtime.

- Treat each child with respect, never embarrass or ridicule.
- Share all successes with the class.
- Believe by recognising their strengths that every child has the ability to learn and achieve.
- Involve the children in making decisions regarding rules and activities within the classroom.

Positive approach

It is important to focus on positive rather than the negative statements when interacting with children, guiding them towards positive outcomes rather than highlighting their mistakes.

| Positive talk | Negative talk |
|---|---|
| 'Craig, I'd like you to look at the board. Thank you' | 'Craig, stop chatting and look at the board.' |
| 'Jody, if you know what day of the week it is, raise your hand. Good girl.' | 'Jody, I've told you don't shout out.' |
| 'Peter, remember to walk down the corridor sensibly. Thank you.' | 'Hey, Peter stop running down the corridor.' |

Children's manners and respect

Many children do not have good manners modelled at home. It is therefore important for teachers to model and reinforce manners to help develop children's social skills. Manners not only make a good impression on others but also make us feel good about ourselves.

Tips: Manners and respect

- Always acknowledge and reinforce when a child demonstrates good manners.
- Encourage children to treat others with respect by modelling the desired behaviour.
- Inform the children of the importance of treating others the same way they like to be treated.
- Role play various situations to demonstrate appropriate responses.

- Establish a politeness policy for basic manners (see positive behaviour hotspot).
- Teach children the importance of showing respect to others; write thank-you notes.

The classroom

Effective entry into class

It is important to create a positive well-structured environment right from the start. Self-categorisation theory states that people strive to conform to their representation of the group norm. Hence, based on this theory, classroom behaviour can be established on the basis of what the majority of the children are doing and how they are behaving.

The teacher needs to immediately establish respect in a calm, assertive manner. Make clear that the classroom has set rules. This needs to be practised every time the children enter the classroom, i.e. beginning of school, after playtime.

Tips: Welcoming the children into class

When greeting the children outside the classroom stand at the door and welcome them in. Ask each child to enter one at a time, informing them of the set task.

It is highly likely that one or two (or maybe more) children will 'test' boundaries, and will not enter the classroom in the desired way, e.g. they may start talking or shouting out, trying to jump the queue, etc. If this happens, very promptly and assertively inform the child 'You're not ready to come into our classroom...please wait there until you are ready to come in' (direct the child to wait outside the classroom in clear view of the teacher).

When all the children have entered the classroom and they are engaged on the set task, praise and reward the desired behaviour. This way the children are more motivated to carry out the task in order to receive the reward.

Return to the child whom you have asked to wait outside the classroom and ask them if they are ready to come into the classroom. It is highly likely that the child will now be ready and will enter the classroom in a calm and focused manner. If the child is not ready, then give them a further few minutes (ensuring they are in clear view of the teacher) then return to them and repeat the process.

Strategic seating

Seating plans and layouts in classrooms can vary tremendously. According to the British Council, teachers should consider the following when seating children.

- Can I see children's faces? Can they see me?
- Can everyone see the board (if you're planning on using it)?
- Can the children see one another?
- Can I move around the room so that I can monitor effectively?

Tips: Strategic seating

- For the teacher to 'catch' both good and difficult behaviour early, e.g. eyes wandering, facial expressions, etc. The children who have the potential to display unwanted behaviour should be facing the teacher.
- When a child begins to display inappropriate behaviours, however small, immediately catch the behaviour before it escalates to a level where it becomes too difficult to control.

Position of the teacher

The position of the teacher in the classroom is key to establishing a positive learning atmosphere.

Tips: Position of the teacher

- If possible try not to stand or sit with your back to the children to identify appropriate and inappropriate behaviours immediately and respond appropriately.
- When using a board, write on an angle to have a full view of the classroom.
- Establish the whole room as your territory by moving around.
- Scan the classroom, and 'sweep' it with your eyes over and over to 'catch' appropriate or inappropriate behaviour.

The lesson

Gaining the children's attention before starting a lesson is essential in order to create a positive learning environment. Below are some suggestions on how to gain children's attention.

Tips: Ready to start the lesson

- When ready to start the lesson wait until you have the children's full attention. It is very important not to start to speak to the class if any of the children are still talking.
- Explain the task and check the children's understanding.
- If the lesson requires quiet partner talking, one way to ensure this is happening is to catch a child whispering as soon as the activity has been set. Stop the class and reward that child for whispering with a token reward. Whispering starts to become contagious and by rewarding certain children throughout the lesson, you'll find that the whole class is concentrating on the activity in a quiet and productive atmosphere.

Tips: Gaining their attention

The rhythm game

Let the class know that when you want their attention you'll clap a rhythm and they must copy that beat. When you stop clapping you want their eyes on you and no talking.

- The children who complete the task are rewarded with the chosen token reward.
- Make it challenging for the children by clapping more complicated beats.
- When increasing difficulty levels remember to provide them with challenges that they are able to complete without feeling frustrated, otherwise this will have a detrimental effect on their behaviour.

- **Silence all around game**

- Let the class know that when you want their attention you'll say '1, 2, 3, 3, 2, 1 silence all around has begun'. The children must then freeze with no talking.
- The children who freeze the longest complete the task and are rewarded with the chosen token reward. If all children freeze for a set time they are all rewarded.
- Time the children to see if they can break their best record. If they break the record they can be rewarded with extra token rewards.

Give me five

Let the class know that when you want their attention you'll hold up your hand and say 'Give me five'. Everyone holds their hand up and begins to count down from five to one, getting progressively quieter until they whisper 'one'.

Tips: End of lesson

- At the end of the lesson inform the children that there will be a competition in the form of a table inspection. They will have, for example, 60 seconds to tidy their work areas and a mark out of 10 will be allocated to each table.
- Inform the class what went well with the lesson and thank them for their participation.
- Stand at the door and dismiss the children in small groups to prevent congestion in the corridor.
- As each child is dismissed either say something positive to them or give them a smile and goodbye.

Whole-school approaches

In order to facilitate appropriate behaviour from children, all schools should have in place a behaviour policy document. This policy document should be shared with parents/carers and governors as well as all staff and children.

Detailed guidance on developing a behaviour policy for schools is contained in Section 3 of *Inclusion and Pupil Support* National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 47/2006 (2006).

A detailed example of a school behaviour policy is contained in the Annex.

Well-evaluated behaviour management programmes

There are a number of behaviour management programmes for primary school-aged children that have received positive evaluations, including the Incredible Years Teacher Classroom Management and Dinosaur Curriculum programmes, PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Skills) and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning).

Incredible Years

The Incredible Years programmes are aimed at children of Foundation Phase age. The Teacher Classroom Management programme emphasises skills such as the effective use of teacher attention, praise and encouragement, use of incentives for difficult behaviour problems, proactive teaching strategies, how to manage inappropriate classroom behaviours, the importance of building positive relationships with students, and how to teach empathy, social skills and problem solving in the classroom.

The Dinosaur Curriculum emphasises training children in skills such as emotional literacy, empathy or perspective taking, friendship skills, anger management, interpersonal problem solving, school rules and how to be successful at school. The treatment version is designed for use as a treatment programme for small groups of children exhibiting conduct problems. The prevention version is delivered to the entire classroom by regular teachers, two to three times a week.

Multiple randomised control group evaluations of the Teacher Classroom Management programme indicate significant:

- increases in teacher use of praise and encouragement and reduced use of criticism and harsh discipline

- increases in children's positive emotion and cooperation with teachers, positive interactions with peers, school readiness and engagement with school activities
- reductions in peer aggression in the classroom.

Multiple randomised control group evaluations of the Dinosaur Curriculum indicate significant:

- increases in children's appropriate cognitive problem-solving strategies and more prosocial conflict-management strategies with peers
- reductions in conduct problems at home and school.

Independent replications in England, Wales, Norway, Canada and the US confirm these findings.

Incredible Years Wales is based at the Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention in the School of Psychology, College of Health and Behavioural Sciences, Nantlle Building, Normal Site, Bangor University, Gwynedd LL57 2PZ (www.incredibleyears.wales.co.uk).

PATHS

The PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Curriculum is aimed at Key Stage 2. It is a comprehensive programme for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behaviour problems while simultaneously enhancing the educational process in the classroom. This innovative curriculum is designed to be used in a multi-year, universal prevention model. Although primarily focused on the school and classroom settings, information and activities are also included for use with parents/carers.

PATHS has been field-tested and researched with children in mainstream classroom settings, as well as with a variety of children with additional learning needs. The PATHS Curriculum, taught three times per week for a minimum of 20–30 minutes per day, provides teachers with systematic, developmental-based lessons, materials, and instructions for teaching their students emotional literacy, self-control, social competence, positive peer relations, and interpersonal problem-solving skills. A key objective of promoting these developmental skills is to prevent or reduce behavioural and emotional problems. PATHS lessons include instruction in:

- identifying and labelling feelings
- expressing feelings

- assessing the intensity of feelings
- managing feelings
- understanding the difference between feelings and behaviours
- delaying gratification
- controlling impulses
- reducing stress
- self-talk
- reading and interpreting social cues
- understanding the perspectives of others
- using steps for problem solving and decision making
- having a positive attitude toward life
- self-awareness
- non-verbal communication skills
- verbal communication skills.

Teachers receive training in a two- to three-day workshop and in biweekly meetings with the curriculum consultant.

The PATHS Curriculum has been shown to improve protective factors and reduce behavioural risk factors. Compared to a control group, evaluations have demonstrated significant improvements for children on the programme in the following areas:

- improved self-control
- improved understanding and recognition of emotions
- increased ability to tolerate frustration
- use of more effective conflict-resolution strategies
- improved thinking and planning skills
- decreased anxiety/depressive symptoms (teacher report of special needs students)
- decreased conduct problems (teacher report of special needs students)

- decreased symptoms of sadness and depression (child report – special needs)
- decreased report of conduct problems, including aggression (child report).

SEAL

SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) is an amalgam of several evidence-based approaches. The materials are designed to provide a whole school approach to promoting social, emotional and behavioural skills for children. It is used by many primary schools. However, currently it does not have the same level of evaluation outcomes as Incredible Years or PATHS.

KiVa Antibullying Programme

The KiVa Antibullying Programme is a universal intervention for the reduction and prevention of bully/victim problems. The main arena for the programme is the school, and school staff have the primary responsibility for the introduction and implementation of the programme.

All students within a school participate in most aspects of the programme. Additional individual interventions are targeted at students who are identified as bullies or victims of bullying.

Core components of the program are implemented at the school level, the class level, and the individual level.

School-wide components include the administration of an anonymous questionnaire to assess the nature and prevalence of bullying at each school, a school conference day to discuss bullying at school and plan interventions, formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee to coordinate all aspects of a school's programme, and increased supervision of students at 'hot spots' for bullying.

Classroom components include the establishment and enforcement of class rules against bullying, and holding regular class meetings with students.

Individual components include interventions with children identified as bullies and victims, and discussions with parents/carers of involved students. Teachers may be assisted in these efforts by counsellors and school-based mental health professionals.

Getting to know your children

The teacher and the child

The teacher's skills in managing their class depend upon the quality of their relationship with the children. It is essential to start with a new class in the right way by building positive and respectful relationships from the outset.

Over time, a teacher must build up trust and 'friendship' with the children as this establishes the basis for behavioural management and change.

Fundamental to success is building strong relationships with the children thereby creating a caring, loyal and respectful bond. This forms a strong foundation from which behavioural change can take place. Through displaying acceptance and care for all the children in the class, the children will gain respect from their teacher.

There are a number of ways to build a strong and respectful relationship with the class. These include the following.

- Be a positive role model for the children; for them to be respectful to others they must be treated with respect.
- Create a caring, relaxed, supportive and fair environment where each child feels accepted and that they belong.
- Recognise every child's strengths and believe that every child has the ability to learn (especially children with SEN and disabilities).
- Acknowledge, reinforce and share all successes with the class.
- Involve the children in making decisions regarding rules and activities within the classroom. This helps them to 'own' their own rules.
- Take time to speak to each child individually to find out about their interests, talents, goals, likes and dislikes.
- Discuss classroom rules and consequences so that all children understand clearly what is expected of them.
- When using reprimands, never embarrass or ridicule the children.
- Interact with the children during playtime (e.g. joining in a game of football or hopscotch) or by just having a chat. Children naturally enjoy this kind of interaction and it helps to give them confidence. You are also showing that you have a legitimate 'care' for their needs.

You as the teacher: self-management

Teaching children and managing sometimes difficult situations is never an easy job. Teaching can sometimes become stressful even for the most accomplished teacher. It is vitally important that teachers think and feel as if they are in control all the time. Positive attitudes are contagious. By being positive, you will affect and change the children's outlook within the class in an empathetic and forward-looking manner. Never let the children know you have doubts in your own ability or are unable to cope in particular situations. Exude confidence at all times.

Tips: The golden rules of teaching

- Believe that you can make a difference. Take your time and use the SMART goals.
- Celebrate all your achievements, however small.
- Understand that you are human and you will make mistakes. Remember, mistakes are merely the portals to learning.
- It is important to understand that children's behaviour may only improve slightly or sometimes not at all. It may even get worse before it gets better, which can make us feel helpless, even inadequate.
- Keep a flexible approach and do what works best for you and the children.
- Plan ahead, but be flexible and accept change. Remember it takes time to accomplish all your goals. Also, keep your goals realistic.
- Don't take it personally when sometimes children will not show appreciation for your efforts.
- If you feel overwhelmed, talk it through with another colleague.
- Take time out to enjoy a healthy lifestyle, including exercise, healthy eating and sleep.
- Adopt a sense of humour and have some fun.

Knowing your children

If you are a new teacher or are given a new class, it is important to get to know the children as soon as possible.

Tips: Knowing your children

One way of achieving this is to give your children a clean sheet of paper. Then, ask them to write down the following information:

- their name
- their birthday
- their best friend(s) in class
- their favourite television programmes
- their favourite kind of music
- their favourite singers or groups
- their outside-school interests (e.g. what they like doing at weekends or in school holidays)
- the names of their 'pets' and the type of animal, fish or insect (e.g. dog, cat, hamster)
- the first names of their parents or carers
- where they like to go on holiday or where they would like to go
- their favourite football or rugby team or their favourite sport or pastime
- their favourite foods
- their biggest dislikes
- their favourite activity/subject in school
- their idea for a school/classroom trip.

Take time to read all the children's answers. You can have a lot of fun by engaging the class with some of their answers, e.g. who said their favourite food was black pudding? Whose favourite sport is snooker? Who owns a pet snake? Whose favourite television programme is *Gardening Time*?

Through remembering their responses (why not keep them in your desk drawers?) you can have a conversation with the children at the start of the day, in playtime, after the weekend, at the start of a new term, etc. For example, 'How is your pet snake, Holly?', 'I see Manchester United lost again, Alex', 'JLS are number one in the charts, Sarah', 'Has your cat had her kittens yet, Alisha?'

Children like to know that you as a teacher have an interest in them as a person and not just as a learner. They will naturally respect your interest in them and respond in kind.

Ascertaining the child's point of view

It is also important to ascertain children's points of view on their school and its use of, for example, school rules. Not all children, however, are naturally confident to talk about or give their opinions easily. Some children may be shy or inhibited. Others may be natural extroverts.

Equally, some children will feel comfortable giving their news immediately. Others may need considerable time to think about what they want to say. Some children may even find it easier to draw as they talk. Others may feel confident enough to show us or demonstrate what they believe has gone wrong. If so, do not overreact to their suggestions.

Over time, teachers need to be sensitive towards a child's preferred means of communicating and use this as a key to establishing their understanding and point of view.

Creating time and space

There is a continual pressure on time in schools. For a classroom teacher, finding time to talk to an individual child while at the same time managing a classroom situation can be difficult. Using your classroom assistant or learning school mentor appropriately can be helpful here, in the same way as it is when 'testing' individual children in their attainment targets.

Particular care should be taken about how and where to talk to a child when the issue is either confidential or disciplinary. It is important that this conversation remains private.

Equally, it is particularly important how a new child to the class is introduced and what is said. This requires some careful thought and preselection of wording.

Teachers can also learn a great deal about children through individual reading sessions. Often, these may reflect a child's moods or concerns at the time.

Successful teachers need to be good listeners and have active listening skills. This usually means listening with individual attention, remembering what is said (including the details) and noting the children's feelings during the discussion.

Good teachers also have to be able to listen to themselves, accept pauses and silences, remain relaxed and in control both in class discussions and with individual children. Teachers need to acquire appropriate skills in responding to what children say. This can be achieved by asking the right questions, by paraphrasing, summarising or reflecting back. Learning to ask the right questions often comes with experience.

Inappropriate behaviour

All children will from time to time be difficult. This is a normal part of growing up. However, apart from teaching per se, both new and experienced teachers have to learn the oral or body language of children in their class who are experiencing learning difficulties or behavioural problems. Warning signs can often include: restlessness, boredom, inactivity, being disrespectful to teachers or other children, short concentration spans, frustration, anxiety, attention-seeking, being easily distracted, an inability to tell the truth, passing negative comments, being physically disruptive, bullying, shouting, crying, failing to complete academic tasks, being hyperactive, urinating in class or engaging in a wide range of unwelcomed behaviours.

The use of praise

Some teachers are regularly only negative with their children. Children like to know when they are doing well and appreciate being told so. Sometimes it is appropriate to 'praise' a child in a one-to-one situation. Sometimes, it is better in whole-class situations. It depends what you are praising the child (and/or whole class) for. Is it for good work? Is it for an out-of-school activity? Is it for scoring three goals in a school football match or for playing the piano well in assembly?

The selective use of praise with children is one of the best and most effective weapons in a teacher's armoury. Properly used and appropriately applied, it can make individual children and whole groups or classes feel very good about themselves. As such, it is utilising positive reinforcement in the best possible manner.

Conversely, it is wrong to 'label' children inappropriately, especially in front of classmates. For example, calling a child a 'hooligan' is likely to mean:

- the child is more likely to behave like a 'hooligan' in the future
- it becomes a term of ridicule within the class and it can even 'backfire' on the teacher who has used it.

The systemic approach and displays

Getting to know children well means understanding their family background or circumstances, who their immediate friends are, how they feel about their school and class, and how they relate to the wider community (e.g. clubs they may be part of, etc.).

Does the child in your class have older or younger brothers or sisters in the school? If so, engage in discussion with them about their brother(s) or sister(s). Just as you as a teacher have a life outside the school, so the children also have their lives as part of family and community groups. Their outside-school lives are exceedingly important to them and should always be respected.

Equally, the use of light, temperature, colours and display features can be important to both a child's mood and learning. The use of displays within the classroom is an important part of its organisation. The use of displays not only reflects the curriculum but it also presents children's achievements. Good displays can be utilised as:

- a curriculum resource
- as a prompt or reminder for children
- as a celebration of individual child achievement
- as evidence to others of the work done by the class (e.g. other children, parents/carers, the headteacher, local authority staff, Estyn, visitors, etc.).

Through visibly displaying their work, teachers signal that they value children's efforts and are giving recognition of their achievements. Used in this way, display features in the classroom are as much a 'reward' as the use of certificates, prizes, merits, stars or other incentives.

Don'ts

Some teachers inadvertently destroy their relationships with individuals or whole classes of children through their own negative reactions or overreactions. These should be avoided at all times as once a relationship is 'broken' it is much harder to fix. Some teachers regularly spoil their own relationship with children by sending out mixed or confusing messages (e.g. by shouting at them or praising them alternately).

Tips: Don'ts

The list now presented provides some ideas on the activities to be avoided and which most children tend to dislike.

- Do not shout or raise the voice unnecessarily. It is a good rule never to shout at all except in an emergency (e.g. fire). Never shout or call out remarks or 'names' of an abusive nature.
- Do not ever victimise or hit a child for any reason. Keep calm even in the most difficult of situations.
- Do not attribute bad behaviour to unrealistic isomorphisms (e.g. 'You are just like your older brother Adam, and he could never behave either', 'I'm not surprised at your behaviour considering where you live and the state of your family', 'You're going to get into the same trouble as your sister, Sian').
- Do not rip up children's work in front of them or their classmates, however poor it may be. Suggest that they start again and give them time to do so.
- Do not have an argument with their parent(s) or carer(s) in the classroom within sight or earshot of the child or their classmates.
- Do not tell the headteacher your views on a child in front of their classmates.

Research indicates that children like teachers who:

- are empathetic
- they can trust
- have a sense of humour
- encourage and promote interesting discussions and set worthwhile tasks and assignments
- teach well at all times
- give children praise when it is deserved
- show they like and understand children
- are warm, enthusiastic and show they enjoy their job
- are consistent and fair
- treat children with respect
- create a sense of 'freedom' in class
- listen to their children's views and act accordingly
- vary their teaching styles and in interesting ways
- can laugh at themselves.

Warning signs

Teachers should also always be on the lookout for warning signs of child abuse, bullying, eating disorders, illness, stress, self-mutilation, harassment, underachievement and anxiety. For example, a child falling behind with their school work or failing to complete homework may indicate a problem in the family home (e.g. divorce, separation, parental break-up, imminent house move, etc.).

Through getting to know their children well and being aware of their personalities, moods and feelings, teachers are in the best position to spot or detect potential warning signs for major problems, often before they fully occur. Through talking to a child and finding out the cause of the problem, a teacher can inform the headteacher who, in turn, may need to contact outside agencies. The Welsh Government is very keen to promote early intervention approaches in the interests of the child or the child's own safety or future personal development, including their best learning opportunities.

The Foundation Phase

Dealing with play-led behaviour

One of the key aims of the Foundation Phase is to help all children develop thinking skills, to learn how to learn and enjoy the learning process. The development of children's self-image and feelings of self-worth and self-esteem are at the core of the curriculum.

However, not all children enter the Foundation Phase knowing what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It is important that practitioners create a positive environment where clear expectations are understood by the children, parents/carers and staff.

Children require a wide range of experiences both to support their personal, **social and emotional** development, and to help them make sense of their own immediate world and the wider world around them.

Social development is a key part of the Foundation Phase and focuses on children's social interactions and relationships with their peers and adults. Children should develop an understanding of the behavioural expectations of the setting/school and understand that rules are essential to develop an understanding of what is fair and unfair and to be willing to compromise. Practitioners could involve children in the decision-making process enhancing their understanding of such rules/expectations

Emotional development focuses on the variety of feelings and emotions that children develop and their ability to express them to others. As they progress, children should be helped to develop coping strategies to understand and control their emotions, for example being able to manage change in routine and in the way they use materials. Practitioners should also be aware that some children will need to be taught how to develop coping strategies through story-making and role modelling.

Play provides opportunities for children to learn through imitation, imagination and fun and to learn about experiencing the consequences of their actions. There will, however, be occasions when practitioners will need to provide the scaffolding and opportunities for children to acquire and develop the skills that enable them to:

- pay attention when the practitioner signals for attention
- respect one another
- take turns, share and cooperate
- ask questions/ask for help.

Paying attention when the practitioner signals for attention

There are certain times throughout the day when the practitioner needs to gain the childrens' attention, for example to pack away at the end of the day. One approach to gaining attention is to play a certain piece of music or to clap a rhythm. It is crucial that practitioners are consistent in their approach, positively reinforcing the desired behaviour and dealing appropriately with any child who is not following the instruction. If any child fails to follow this instruction on a regular basis then appropriate action needs to be put in place. For example, the practitioner can stand next to the child before the instruction is given to help support them or indeed instruct the child directly to perform the required action.

Respecting one another

Settings/schools should develop, in every child, a sense of personal and cultural identity that is receptive and respectful towards others.

Practitioners should observe how children function as a member of a group, as well as their ability to understand their relationship with others and how they help and respond to the needs of others. Children should demonstrate respect, as well as understand and value differences in people.

Take turns, share and cooperate

Practitioners should observe how children function as a member of a group, as well as their ability to understand their relationship with others and how they help and respond to the needs of others. Children can express strong emotions such as anger or sadness and can become frustrated when they are prevented from doing something – taking turns and sharing can be the catalyst for emotions. Some young children are still developing these skills and do not have the ability to communicate and negotiate with other children. This can often result in an impulsive reaction, for example pushing the child out of the way. To help develop the children's ability to take turns, share and cooperate they can be given a 'sharing badge' so that they have a prompt/reminder of the importance of sharing; or practitioners may introduce a game that develops turn taking, from working in pairs to working within a small group.

Asking questions/asking for help

Children should be encouraged to ask questions and to ask for help if they are unsure of what to do next. If there is no routine for this it can become unmanageable and consequently affect the teaching and the learning in the setting/school. If the practitioner is working with a group the child needing help may, for example, hold up a card on which a question mark is printed – the child is aware of the relevance of the card and that the practitioner knows that they need help.

Getting ready for home time

The end of the day provides an excellent opportunity for reflection time for the children, allowing them to consider what they have learned and experienced during the day. Allow time for them to ask questions and discuss how they could/would change the way they do things the following day. It is therefore important to end the day on a positive note and celebrate the contributions the children have made throughout the day.

Dealing with specific classroom difficulties – practical solutions

Schools must develop a whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour which ensures a consistent application of rules, rewards and sanctions.

Despite schools adopting a range of preventative measures there will always be occasions when it is necessary for classroom teachers to respond to disruptive or inappropriate behaviour. This chapter sets out some practical solutions.

The Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) chart

It is important to try and identify the reason for behaviour occurring. Remember, all behaviour has meaning and is communicating something. It has a function and it is the teacher's challenge to find this out. The Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) chart can be used to formulate a clearer understanding of the behaviour.

The Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) chart is used to collect information through observing information about the events that are occurring within a child's environment.

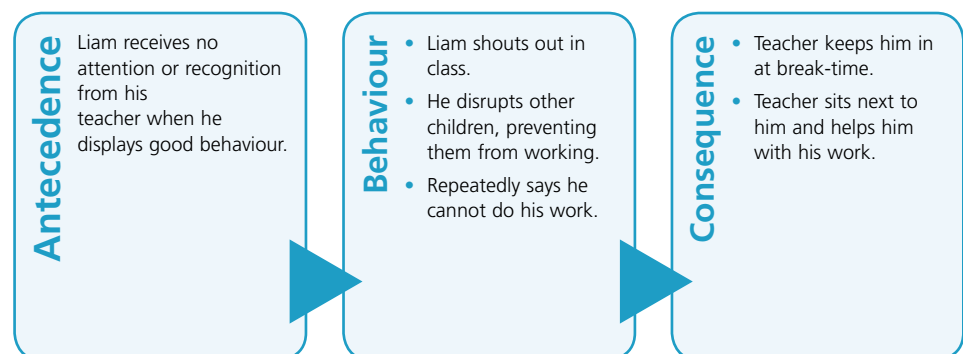
A = Antecedent: what happens before the behaviour occurs.

B = Behaviour: the observed behaviour.

C = Consequence: the positive or negative results of the behaviour.

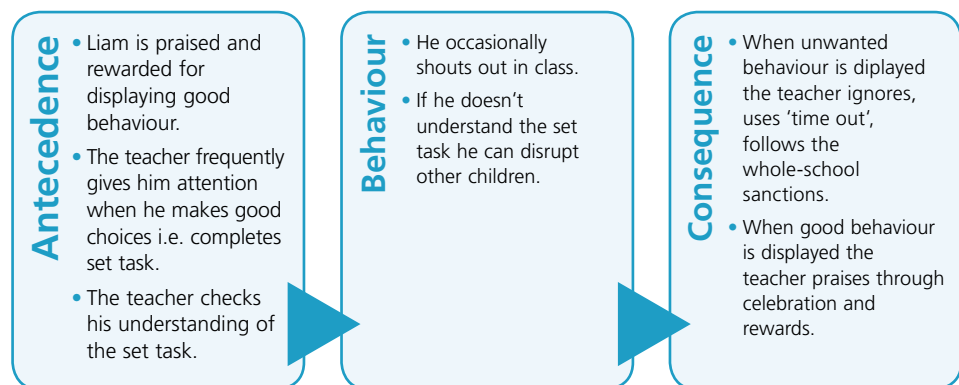
ABC analysis – unwanted behaviours

Through analysing the ABC chart it helps to identify why the child is likely to repeat the unwanted behaviours. In the following example, Liam is seeking attention from the teacher. When he displays good behaviour he receives no attention. When he displays unwanted behaviour the teacher gives him attention by staying in with him during break-time and sitting next to him in class. In this example the unwanted behaviour is more likely to continue.



ABC analysis – reducing unwanted behaviours

Analysing the ABC chart helps to identify why the child's unwanted behaviours are more likely to decrease over time. The teacher gives Liam positive attention for good behaviour but when he displays unwanted behaviour the teacher implements the whole-school sanctions and he receives little or no attention. In this example the unwanted behaviour is more likely to decrease.



A problem-solving approach

When formulating strategies to help a child understand and manage their behaviour it is unlikely that prescriptive approaches will work. Instead the strategies need to be specific to the individual's needs.

To identify the behavioural needs of a child a problem-solving approach needs to be implemented. Formulating appropriate strategies requires an examination of the behaviour, which can be achieved by asking a series of specific questions. The answers help to understand the nature and causes of the behaviour and what it might mean for that particular child.

Through being aware of a child's antecedents to unacceptable behaviour it is possible to reduce or even avoid behavioural problems. This can be established through a problem-solving approach.

Problem-solving approach questions

- What seems to be the underlying cause of the child's behaviour?
- Where and when does the child display this behaviour?
- What are the triggers for the behaviour?
- In order for the child to get their needs met what acceptable behaviour can they use?

- What strategies can be implemented for behaviour change?
- How can the child's progress be monitored?

Preventing disruptive behaviours

Proactive strategies

Proactive management strategies are designed to equip the teacher with preventative measures to implement before a behaviour problem occurs. These strategies create a sound routine, clear expectations and coping strategies designed to reduce frustration and outbursts. The secret to successful proactive interventions is strategic planning – otherwise teachers are put in a situation where they have to react to the behaviour problem. This unplanned reaction tends to be emotionally laden. It is always best to focus on increasing positive behaviours through praise and reinforcement instead of trying to reduce unwanted behaviours. Proactive behaviour management is the bedrock of good behaviour. However, reactive techniques are also necessary.

Redirection

It is important to understand that we cannot control a child's behaviour, but we can redirect it. Children can display behaviours that warn us that they are about to lose control; by recognising these 'early warning signs' we can stop the behaviours from getting worse by redirecting them. Try not to put energy and time into unwanted behaviour. Instead implement the appropriate sanctions in a calm manner. As soon as the child displays appropriate behaviour celebrate with motivational and dynamic energy. The child will soon appreciate the different energies and act accordingly for a positive outcome.

Tips: Redirection

If a child shouts out to answer a question, remind them how they were sitting with their hand raised ready to answer the question. Then give them another chance to answer the question, displaying the desired behaviour.

- If a child becomes disruptive at the beginning of the lesson when the books are being handed out redirect their attention by choosing them to hand out the books.
- If a child finds it difficult to line up sensibly ask them to stand at the front of the line and lead the other children.

Choices

It is important to understand we cannot control a child's behaviour but we can enable them to make their own choices and then understand the consequences of that behaviour. If a child is engaging in unwanted behaviour give them 'time out', either inside or outside the classroom. Then ask them to choose to either continue with the unwanted behaviour and have the appropriate sanctions or return to class displaying positive behaviour. Allow the child approximately five minutes to make this choice, which gives them time to calm down and think rationally.

Responding to challenging behaviours

Reactive strategies

Responding correctly to an incident of unwanted behaviour is vitally important. Reactive strategies are designed to manage the behaviour at the time it occurs. These strategies are effective providing they are planned for and used correctly.

Reactive strategies should ensure that:

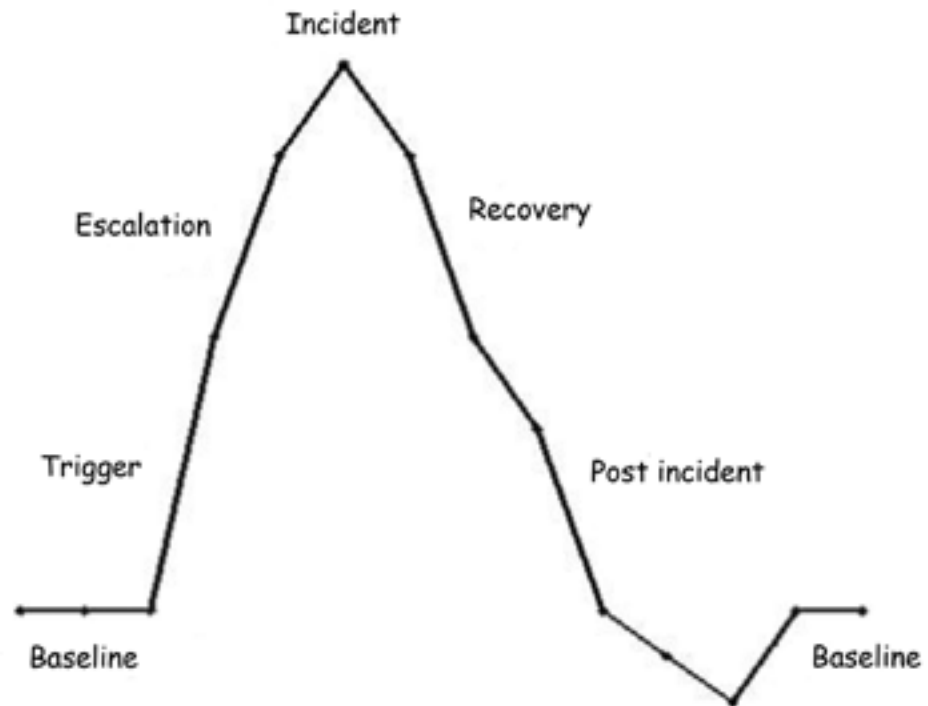
- staff are non-confrontational
- the local authority's/school's positive-handling strategies are followed
- the school's guidelines of dealing with challenging behaviours are followed
- the child is safe
- staff and other children are safe.

Dealing with challenging behaviour

When dealing with a situation it is important to wait for a child to calm down fully, to get back to 'baseline', before discussing the incident. This prevents the situation from escalating out of control. The time-intensity graph on page 36 illustrates the course of an anger-fuelled behavioural incident.

The 'recovery phase' following an incident is a risky time to discuss the incident and to start requesting apologies. This is because it is a time when further incidents are highly likely.

Time–intensity graph



Using reasonable force

All school staff members in charge of children have a legal power to use reasonable force to prevent children committing a criminal offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property; and to maintain good order and discipline among children.

The focus should be on preventing, as far as possible, the need for the use of force on children, by creating a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that lessens the risk and threat of violence of any kind. The use of force should only be a last resort; schools should minimise the possibility of force being needed. However, this may not always be possible and in such circumstances staff need to be aware of sensitivities associated with any form of physical contact with children.

The judgement on whether to use force and what force to use should always depend on the circumstances of each case and, crucially in the case of children with SEN and/or disabilities, information about the individual concerned.

Tips: Reduce the likelihood of situations requiring the use of force

Although preventative measures will not always work, there are a number of steps that schools can take to help reduce the likelihood of situations arising where the power to use force may need to be exercised.

- Create a calm, orderly and supportive school climate that minimises the risk and threat of violence of any kind.
- Developing effective relationships between children and staff are central to good order.
- Adopt a whole-school approach to developing social and emotional skills such as the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme.
- Take a structured approach to staff development that helps staff to develop the skills of positive behaviour management, to manage conflict and also to support each other during and after an incident. Further guidance is provided in *Inclusion and Pupil Support*.
- Effectively manage individual incidents – it is important to communicate calmly with the child, using non-threatening verbal and body language and ensuring the child can see a way out of a situation. Strategies might include, for example, going with the staff member to a quiet room, away from bystanders or other children, so that the staff member can listen to concerns; or being joined by a particular member of staff well known to the child.
- Wherever practicable, warn a child that force may have to be used before using it.

Situations where staff should not normally intervene without help

Sometimes an authorised member of staff should not intervene in an incident without help, unless it is an emergency. Schools should have communication systems that enable a member of staff to summon rapid assistance when necessary. Help may be needed in dealing with a situation involving an older child, a large child, more than one child

or if the authorised member of staff believes they may be at risk of injury. In these circumstances the staff member should take steps to remove other children who might be at risk and summon assistance from other authorised staff, or where necessary phone the police.

Examples of situations that call for reasonable force

Examples of situations that particularly call for judgements of this kind include when:

- a child attacks a member of staff or another child
- children are fighting, causing risk of injury to themselves or others
- a child is committing, or on the verge of committing, deliberate damage to property
- a child is causing, or at risk of causing, injury or damage through accident, rough play or misuse of dangerous materials or objects
- a child absconds from a class or tries to leave school other than at an authorised time
- refusal of a child to remain in a particular place is not enough on its own to justify use of force. It would be justifiable where allowing a child to leave would:
 - entail serious risks to the child's safety (taking into account age and understanding), to the safety of other children or staff, or of damage to property
 - lead to behaviour that prejudices good order and discipline, such as disrupting other classes
- a child persistently refuses to follow an instruction to leave a classroom
- a child is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a lesson
- a child is behaving in a way that seriously disrupts a school sporting event or school visit.

In these examples use of force would be reasonable (and therefore lawful) if it was clear that the behaviour was sufficiently dangerous or disruptive to warrant physical intervention of the degree applied and could not realistically be dealt with by any other means.

Wherever possible, these judgements should take account of the particular characteristics of the child, including their age, understanding and any SEN or disability that they may have. This would include the outcomes of any risk assessment and, as appropriate, any specific strategies and techniques set out in the child's positive handling plan.

Before using force staff should, wherever practicable, tell the child to stop misbehaving and communicate in a calm and measured manner throughout the incident. Staff should not act out of anger or frustration, or in order to punish a child, and should make it clear that physical contact or restraint will stop as soon as it ceases to be necessary.

The types of force used could include the following

- Passive physical contact resulting from standing between children or blocking a child's path.
- Active physical contact such as:
 - leading a child by the hand or arm
 - ushering a child away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
 - in more extreme circumstances, using appropriate restrictive holds, which require specific expertise or training.
- Where there is a high and immediate risk of death or serious injury, any member of staff would be justified in taking any necessary action (consistent with the principle of seeking to use the minimum force required to achieve the desired result). Such situations could include preventing a child running off the pavement onto a busy road or preventing a child from hitting someone with a dangerous object such as a glass bottle or hammer.
- Staff should make every effort to avoid acting in a way that might reasonably be expected to cause injury. However, in the most extreme circumstances it may not always be possible to avoid injuring a child.
- Staff should always avoid touching or restraining a child in a way that could be interpreted as sexually inappropriate conduct.

Recording and reporting incidents

Schools are strongly advised to keep systematic records of every significant incident in which force has been used, in accordance with school policy and procedures on the use of force and its child protection requirements. The purpose of recording is to ensure policy guidelines are followed, to inform parents/carers, to inform future planning as part of school improvement processes, to prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the incident and to provide a record for any future enquiry.

Behaviour management strategies

This section includes practical tried and tested strategies designed to manage specific forms of behaviour and quickly re-establish appropriate behaviour. When implementing strategies it is important to understand that the behaviour can get worse before it gets better. Therefore consistency and patience is imperative to the success of changing negative behaviours into positive ones.

The forms of behaviour covered are:

- attention seeking
- leaving class/school without permission
- swearing
- lack of motivation
- calling out
- making unwanted noise
- aggressive behaviour.

Attention seeking

Providing attention can be a powerful tool in encouraging positive behaviour and reducing unwanted behaviour. Children enjoy receiving attention for a variety of reasons. If certain children do not receive enough positive attention for their good behaviours, they will often resort to behaviour that results in negative forms of attention, for example making noises or calling out. Some would prefer to receive this negative attention than to do without attention altogether. Using both positive attention and ignoring at the right moments can be very effective. The child soon learns that positive behaviours result in positive attention and negative behaviours result in no attention.

Possible reasons for attention seeking are listed below.

- Lack of rules and boundaries.
- No sense of belonging.
- Low self-esteem.
- A degree of immaturity.

Tips: Attention seeking

- First carry out an ABC analysis to collect information about the child's behaviour.
- Put aside a few minutes a day for one-to-one time with the child. If the child then looks for the attention, remind them of their specific time. For this strategy to work consistency is imperative.
- Ignoring the behaviour can be a powerful strategy although it does have its drawbacks:
 - the child's behaviour can escalate. This is because they are trying to receive the attention they are used to and are testing the new rules that have changed
 - other children may repeatedly bring the behaviour to the teacher's attention
 - the behaviour may become a risk to the health and safety of others.
- If a child has displayed unwanted behaviour withhold attention for about 30 seconds, for example. After an unwanted behaviour, the child should exhibit at least 30 seconds of good behaviour before you provide them with positive attention.
- 'Catch them being good' before things go wrong, for example 'Sam, well done, you've worked very hard.' Pay lots of attention when the child is behaving well and reward often.
- Let the child know about the behaviour you like, for example 'Well done for putting up your hand to answer the question.' Make eye contact with the child; give a simple smile or nod of the head.
- Put more energy and attention into good behaviour than unwanted behaviour. Give attention immediately following the behaviour that you liked.

Try to provide positive attention at least once every five minutes.

- If necessary, implement the appropriate sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy.
- Devise a behaviour plan (see the 'Playground behaviour – practical ideas' section, pages 84–88) with the child to help them take control of their own behaviour.
- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues, a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Leaving class/school without permission

For a child to leave the class without permission is not only unacceptable but is also a health and safety concern.

Possible reasons for leaving the classroom without permission might include the following.

- Lack of rules and boundaries.
- Trying to gain the teacher's attention.
- Upset by something going on in class.
- Wants to go somewhere more appealing.

Tips: Leaving class without permission

- First carry out an ABC analysis to collect information about the child's behaviour.
- As soon as a child leaves the classroom their whereabouts must be established – this can be achieved by informing the headteacher immediately.
- Provide the child with a 'Quiet Time' card which they can show when they feel they want to leave the classroom. This card allows them 5–10 minutes of quiet time either within the classroom or within a partner classroom. When the child shows the card they are rewarded for making the right choice instead of leaving the room without permission.
- If the child leaves the classroom because they are trying to gain the teacher's attention, when they are returned to class have minimal interaction with the child and involve them in the class task. The reason for this is to avoid letting them believe that the way to get attention is to leave the room.
- If necessary implement the appropriate sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy.
- Devise a behaviour plan (see the 'Playground behaviour – practical ideas' section, pages 84–88) with the child to help them take control of their own behaviour.
- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Swearing

One of the most common behaviour problems plaguing teachers today is swearing, probably because it's part of children's everyday language. The language and behaviour that children use can be influenced by their environment.

Possible reasons for swearing include the following.

- Lack of rules and boundaries.
- To gain attention.
- To make or impress their friends.
- To express anger, frustration or fear.
- As part of role play, mimicking behaviour in the media.
- Because they're upset.
- To explore cause and effect.

Tips: Swearing

- First carry out an ABC analysis to collect information about the child's behaviour.
- Let the child know it is acceptable to feel angry, frustrated, or frightened but swearing is not acceptable.
- Check the child's understanding of the word and why they use it. The child may think the word is acceptable because they heard their parent(s)/carer(s) or friends use it. Help the child to understand that these words can hurt other people's feelings.
- If a child swears because they feel angry, frustrated or frightened provide them with other ways to express their feelings, for example ripping a sheet of paper.
- If a child swears as part of their everyday language, talk about how inappropriate words make people feel and what words can be used instead. A meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) would also be advisable.
- If a child swears for attention inform them in a calm, brief manner that their language is unacceptable and that there are more appropriate ways to gain your attention.
- If necessary implement the appropriate sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy.
- Devise a behaviour plan (see the 'Playground behaviour – practical ideas' section, pages 84–88) with the child to help them take control of their behaviour.
- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Lack of motivation

There are many reasons why some children lack motivation towards schoolwork. It is important for the teacher to encourage the child to see school as a place where they can be successful. The child needs to feel that they can achieve and that schoolwork is fun and interesting. It is also helpful for the teacher to understand what motivates the child so that these can be used in engaging the child to learn.

Possible reasons for a lack of motivation include the following.

- Low self-esteem.
- Learning difficulties.
- Lack of enthusiasm.

Tips: Lack of motivation

- Understand exactly the child's academic ability and if necessary consider referring them for a learning disability evaluation, as their motivational problem may be linked to a learning difficulty. This can be done through the school's Special Educational Needs Education Coordinator (SENCo).
- Recognise all efforts and attempts at improving and completing work by praising and positively re-enforcing.
- Help focus the child by using a 5-/10-minute hourglass and a tracker sheet. Place the hourglass in front of the child and inform them of the work they need to complete within the set time. If they complete their work a sticker/stamp is placed on their tracker sheet, when they receive for example four stickers/stamps they are rewarded with five minutes of free time.
- Where appropriate use a buddy system for completing a set task.
- Pay attention to the child's abilities and not their shortcomings.
- Provide opportunities for the child to take risks in new learning situations.
- Provide opportunities throughout the day for the child to experience success, and send home positive progress notes or set up a home-school link book.
- Devise a behaviour plan (see the 'Playground behaviour – practical ideas' section, pages 84–88) with the child to help them take control of their own behaviour.

- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Calling out

Calling out in class is a common problem facing teachers today. It can disrupt the teacher's concentration on delivering the lesson and the children's concentration. It can prevent other children from participating and may also encourage other unwanted behaviours. It is therefore important to deal with this behaviour at its first onset because if a child is allowed to call out in class other children may be encouraged to do the same in order to get the required attention. Also, if a child calls out to get attention and they have little/nothing to say they can be ridiculed by the rest of the class which can be very damaging to that child's self-esteem.

Possible reasons for calling out include the following.

- Lack of rules and boundaries.
- To seek the attention of the teacher for a reason – the recurrence of this can create difficulties for the teacher.
- To gain recognition from their classmates.
- They are not aware of the class rules (hands up if you have something to say).
- To feel they have accomplished something good, especially if they knew the right answer.
- In the case of children with attention deficit hyperactive disorder they may have poor impulse control and just say what comes into their head without thinking first. These children will need help to develop their skills in self-control.

Tips: Calling out

- First carry out an ABC analysis to collect information about the child's behaviour.
- At the beginning of every week review your classroom rules regarding calling out, if appropriate. Then explain the rewards for putting hands up and consequences for calling out. Explain why it is important to raise your hand. Tell the children that they need to learn how to raise their hand so you can choose them to answer a question. Inform them that it is not fair to others in the class when children call out. Explain that you will not call on someone who does not have a hand raised.
- Phrase your questions 'If you know what day of the week it is, raise your hand.' By saying 'raise your hand' last, they remember what to do and very rarely call out.
- Actively look for good behaviour and praise it, especially among children who sometimes find it difficult, for example, to put their hands up instead of calling out.
- If a child says they call out because they are afraid they'll forget what they want to say, encourage them to write what they want to say on paper, then put their hand up. Remember to reward when they display the correct behaviour.
- Try ignoring those who shout out and call on the one child who remembers to raise their hand, or say 'I'm waiting for someone to raise their hand before I take the answer.'
- Be creative and instead of asking the children to raise their hand change it to, for example, 'fold your arms', 'touch your ear', 'stand up'.
- If necessary, implement the appropriate sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy.
- Devise a behaviour plan (see the 'Playground behaviour – practical ideas' section, pages 84–88) with the child to help them take control of their own behaviour.

- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Making unwanted noises

Making noises in class is a typical example of low-level disruption and a structured approach will help minimise and eliminate the problem. A child may hum, click their tongue, crack their knuckles, etc. These behaviours are obviously distracting to the teacher and other children's concentration and if persistent the child could be ridiculed by their peers, which is damaging to self-esteem.

Possible reasons for making unwanted noises include the following.

- Lack of rules and boundaries.
- Attention seeking.
- Stressed or bored and looking for subconscious ways to distract themselves from it.

Tips: Making unwanted noises

- First carry out an ABC analysis to collect information about the child's behaviour.
- Check the child knows he is making a noise. Some children make noises without realising they are doing it.
- Talk to the child about the noises they are making and sensitively discuss that they are not appropriate in class and are disturbing learning and concentration. It would be important to emphasise that together both teacher and child will work on raising his awareness of the behaviour and eradicating it through the use of a reward scheme.

- The reward scheme to support this approach could be devised together with the child but a simple toy safe or similar could be placed on their table, which would ideally be near to the teacher, to ensure easy access to praise, reward and remind the child without doing so publicly across the classroom. Start the process using five-minute intervals, so if the child did not make a noise within five minutes place a token in the child's safe. Continue this for the duration of the lesson/day. At the end of the day the child should count their tokens and if they have received the pre-agreed number they will get the overall reward of free time, for example. Again, this reward could be decided with the child to give them ownership.
- If, however, the child makes a noise within the five minutes the time must be decreased to three minutes in order to find an achievable target so the child has confidence in their ability to reach it. The time frame could then be increased as the child is succeeding, ideally in increments of five minutes, until the child completes a whole lesson/day without making a noise.
- If necessary, implement the appropriate sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy.
- Devise a behaviour plan (see 'The link between bullying and children's behaviour' section, pages 72–77) with the child to help them take control of their own behaviour.
- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Aggressive behaviour

An angry child often lacks the inner self-control to deal with their anger, and some also lack the ability to express their feelings verbally. The child may display anger by becoming withdrawn and unresponsive towards their peers and teacher, or fly off the handle and lash out verbally or physically.

Possible reasons for aggressive behaviour include the following.

- Build-up of frustration.
- Being bullied.
- Not being understood.
- Lack of justice and fairness.
- Lacking in confidence.

Tips: Aggressive behaviour

- First carry out an ABC analysis to collect information about the child's behaviour.
- Encourage the child to talk to their friend when they feel angry.
- Help the child count to 10 and take slow deep breaths between each number. This helps to counteract the fight or flight stress reaction that underlies anger. Deliberately taking a slow, deep breath not only brings a soothing sense of relaxation, but will also help to focus the child's attention in the present moment.
- Talk to the child about anger using an analogy with which they can easily identify, e.g. anger can be like a 'firework' or a 'volcano'.
- Teach the child empathy, they will be more likely to understand other people's feelings and become less aggressive towards them.
- Give the child a small ball to keep on their desk and squeeze every time they feel stressed or angry. This will help release the child's anger. Praise and acknowledge when the child makes the right choice and squeezes the ball.
- By catching the child behaving well and providing immediate, positive feedback the aggressive behaviour will start to diminish.
- Provide the child with a 'Quiet Time' card, which they can show when they feel angry. This card allows them 5–10 minutes of quiet time either within the classroom or within a partner classroom. When the child shows the card they are rewarded for making the right choice.
- If necessary, implement the appropriate sanctions according to the school's behaviour policy.

- Devise a behaviour plan (see 'The link between bullying and children's behaviour' section, pages 72–77) with the child to help them take control of their own behavior.
- Make sure the child knows you care about them. Remember the child took a long time to develop this unwanted behaviour, so be consistent and patient as the behaviour takes time to change.
- If the behaviour continues a meeting with the parent(s)/carer(s) may be advisable to establish the cause of the behaviour.

Re-engaging individual children – some practical ideas

Some children's behaviour may be so disruptive that they require additional attention and concerted support. Disruptive behaviour is easy to detect, however many children with emotional difficulties may turn inward and become withdrawn and not engaged with others. Their problems may only really become evident in their reduced socialisation and disengagement from their peers. Some children and young people lack the social skills to cope effectively within a classroom setting.

There are particular problems identifying those children who turn inward with their difficulties. As they are often not acting out their difficulties, they may go unnoticed unless all teachers in school are able to scan and screen for such difficulties. There is a need to ensure that appropriate attention is paid to this group of children who may not cause staff difficulties but who may be at significant risk of becoming 'lost' in the system.

Monitoring and evaluating behavioural progress

Some behaviours are difficult to change. In these cases, behaviour plans need to be implemented to help monitor and evaluate the behaviour. Before compiling these plans an approach such as an ABC analysis needs to take place to help identify and understand the child's behaviour.

It is important to involve the child in discussing, planning and reviewing their targets for learning and behaviour.

There are many ways to monitor and evaluate children's behaviour:

- reward charts
- home-school link books
- self-monitoring
- behaviour contracts – including parenting contracts
- individual learning plan (ILP)
- individual behaviour plan (IBP)
- Pastoral Support Programme (PSP).

To ensure a behaviour plan is successful:

- have a good understanding of an individual's behaviour, e.g. the trigger points and reinforcers – noting the frequency and intensity is imperative
- use the ABC analysis (see page 32)
- ensure that the child understands their behavioural difficulties
- focus on the priority behaviours that need to change
- identify the desired behaviour you want the child to adopt
- agree short-term SMART targets, which will reflect progress in achieving the desired behaviours (see below)
- obtain relevant information from other staff, e.g. the SEN Coordinator
- involve the parents/carers in establishing ways to monitor, reinforce and reward the desired behaviour between home and school
- discuss appropriate sanctions for dealing with inappropriate behaviour at home and school with parents/carers and child
- agree when the behaviour plan is to be reviewed
- ensure the behaviour plan is signed and dated by key individuals.

SMART targets

When setting targets they need to be:

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Specific | Be specific and clearly define the behaviour required. |
| Measurable | If you can't measure it, you can't manage it so be clear when the child is successful. |
| Achievable | Goals need to be set so that the child has a realistic chance of achieving them. |
| Relevant | Focus on no more than three behaviours, which are relevant to school. |
| Time bound | Ensure there is a time limit, so the child has something to achieve within a fixed period. |

Reward charts

Reward charts can be used to manage a classroom community or modify the behaviour of a single child. They are an effective way to motivate the child as they can track their own progress, providing the child understands what is meant by good behaviour and can stay focused until they achieve the overall reward, i.e. at the end of a lesson, day or week.

Home–school link books

Home–school link books are an effective way for parents/carers, children and teaching staff to communicate with each other. The book can be used for a number of purposes, for example an update on behaviour and personal achievements. It may also be used by parents/carers to let teaching staff know information about significant events/incidents that may have happened at home that might affect the child.

Self-monitoring

Self-monitoring can be an effective tool to help the child improve their self-awareness and understand their behaviour by working with them to help to resolve their difficulties.

The benefits of self-monitoring are that it:

- involves the child in deciding on the behaviour to be monitored
- helps the child become more aware of their behaviour
- provides the child with an awareness of the frequency of behaviour
- actively involves the child in the process of behaviour modification.

Using the self-monitoring profile

- Focus on no more than three behaviours, otherwise the exercise can become too complicated.
- Encourage the child to complete the grid after each session.
- Use the chart for just one week.
- Assess the information on the chart and formulate appropriate strategies.

- Celebrate, where possible, the child's ability to improve their behaviour.
- Explore the strategies the child has used to improve their behaviour.

| A Self-Monitoring Profile | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------|-------|-------|------------------------|--------|---|---|
| EXAMPLE | | | | | | | | |
| Child's name: Jack Load | | | | | Date: 15 February 2010 | | | |
| Behaviours to be monitored: | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Calling out in class | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Swearing | | | | | | | | |
| 3. Leaving the classroom without permission | | | | | | | | |
| Behaviours monitored by: Niki Barn | | | | | | | | |
| Time | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Totals | | |
| | | | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8.45–9a.m. | | | | 3 | 1,2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 9–10a.m. | 1,3 | | 1,2 | | | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 10–10.30a.m. | | | | | 3 | | | 1 |
| 10.30–11a.m. | Break | Break 2 | Break | Break | Break 2 | | 2 | |
| 11–12p.m. | | | | | | | | |
| 12–1p.m. | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch 2 | | 1 | |
| 1–2p.m. | 3,2 | | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 2 |
| 2–3.15p.m. | 3,1,1 | 3 | | | | 2 | | 2 |
| Child's comments: This week has been a bit better than last week. I didn't have a very good day on Monday because a Year 6 girl started winding me up during lunchtime. I'm going to try to do better next week. | | | | | | | | |
| Totals: 1 = 6 2 = 6 3 = 7 | | | | | | | | |

Behaviour contracts

A behaviour contract is a written agreement between the child and teacher and can include the child's parent/carer. It provides the child with a structure to bring about behaviour modification. The child should be involved in the writing of the contract, including the consequences and rewards.

The contract should incorporate the following:

- no more than three goals, such as no calling out in class
- the agreed consequences for not achieving the goals
- the agreed rewards for achieving the goals
- the agreed timescale – for example, a day or a week
- a definition of who will monitor the behaviours and how
- a date for reviewing the contract.

My contract

Name: _____ Date: _____

These are my goals:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

These are the consequences if I don't meet my goals:

These are the rewards if I meet my goals:

My contract will be reviewed on: _____

Signatures: _____

Where necessary a more formal contract could be put in place using a parenting contract under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Guidance on parenting contracts is available in *Inclusion and Pupil Support*.

More formal action

Individual learning plans (ILPs) with behavioural targets

An individual learning plan (ILP) can be used when a child displays behaviour that causes some concern, but the severity or the frequency of the behaviour is not too great. The child's learning and behaviour targets can be incorporated on an ILP.

Consider the following issues when implementing ILPs:

- how to share with parents/carers
- involving the child in drawing up the plan, ensuring the plan is child-friendly
- baseline information about the children's curriculum levels and needs
- agreeing short-term SMART targets, which will reflect progress in achieving the desired behaviours
- three or four specific objectives, which are related to the targets
- the teaching strategies to be used
- the support and resources needed to help meet those targets
- reviewing at least twice a year, but ideally, termly.

Individual behaviour plans (IBPs)

Children whose behaviour is difficult to manage in school for a sustained period despite the implementation of the ILP, or whose misbehaviour becomes more frequent, challenging and/or severe, will usually have an individual behaviour plan (IBP).

The IBP is designed to record the strategies used to help the child to progress and will set out the targets that the child should be working towards. It provides more detailed planning and a greater level of differentiation.

Consider the following when implementing IBPs:

- writing in partnership with parents/carers
- involving the child in drawing up the plan, ensuring the plan is child-friendly
- short-term SMART targets, which will reflect progress in achieving the desired behaviours
- three or four specific objectives which are related to the targets
- the behaviour-management strategies to be used
- the support and resources needed to help meet those targets, including any special arrangements or changes
- ways for members of staff to recognise and praise the child's positive behaviour
- proactive and reactive strategies to respond to unwanted behaviour
- reviewing at least twice a year, but ideally termly.

Pastoral Support Programmes (PSPs)

The Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) is for children whose behaviour is worsening rapidly, leading to either a series of fixed-period exclusions that may lead to permanent exclusion or risk of failure at school through disaffection. A PSP must be drawn up and implemented if a child is at risk of being permanently excluded. It is designed to help children improve their social, emotional and behavioural skills so that they are able to manage their behaviour more effectively.

Consider the following when implementing Pastoral Support Programmes (PSPs):

- identifying a member of staff to coordinate and oversee the PSP planning and process
- involving the local authority when planning how best to support the child through involvement of other services, e.g. Education Psychology, Primary Behaviour Support Service, Specialist Teacher Advisers, Exclusions and Reintegration Officers, Education Welfare Officers or other agencies

- coordinating agencies and family working with the child to ensure ongoing support
- agreeing short-term SMART targets for the child to work towards
- the role of the PSP as a preventative measure for children at risk of exclusion
- the PSP needs to be practical and manageable
- developing and implementing the PSP in conjunction with other existing plans.

Further guidance on PSPs is available in Annex 3.iii of *Inclusion and Pupil Support*.

It is essential that the IBP or PSP is not used to replace the SEN processes within either the school or the LA, which include the development of Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Case study

Ben, aged 9, had difficulties controlling his behaviour both inside and outside the classroom. He was very aggressive towards other children and showed staff little or no respect. Teachers often commented how unhappy he looked.

His teacher realised that his behaviour was linked to his lack of self-esteem and self-worth. She established this through other staff who often commented how unhappy he looked. During circle time sessions when he was asked to say something positive about himself he either refused or replied with a negative comment, for example "I don't like being me".

His teacher coordinated a personalised programme for Ben aimed at boosting his self-esteem and self-worth. This involved reward cards to catch and reward all positive behaviours, one-to-one time with the class teaching assistant working on emotional literacy skills, and positive notes home to his carer. Over time his behaviour improved and he was given the responsibility of play leader.

The use of nurture groups

Nurture groups provide effective learning environments for children with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties derived from attachment issues. Depending on the child's background and experiences (disruptive relationships and/or limited early learning experiences) they can either display high emotions or can be very withdrawn.

Nurture groups are short-term interventions where children remain for no more than four school terms, except in exceptional circumstances. The child is then reintegrated back into their mainstream class. The nurture group staff work closely with the child's class teacher to start on the reintegration process as soon as the child enters the group.

Background and research

In 1969, Marjorie Boxall, an educational psychologist for Inner London Education Authority, started nurture groups for children from stressful or disrupted backgrounds. She realised that most of these children were unable to make trusting relationships with adults or engage appropriately with other children because of inadequate early nurturing. Through providing a safe place in school she was able to create the right environment where these children could develop and grow.

There has been a lot of evidence to support nurture groups since they started in 1969. The main emphasis is based on Bowlby's attachment theory, the relationship between the child and the adult. This theory identifies the way that the quality of early experiences in a child's development affects behaviour. The therapy which nurture groups provide helps to reverse the damage caused through neglect or abuse.

The effectiveness of nurture groups was researched by Iszatt and Wasilewska (1997). They looked at two sets of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties: one set of children were placed in a nurture group, and one set in a mainstream school. The group who had not received the support of a nurture group were three times more likely to require formal assessment than those in the group that had, and seven times more likely to require special school provision.

How nurture groups work

Within a nurture group there will be between 6–12 children with one teacher and one teaching assistant. Before a child is accepted into a nurture group assessments are given and a series of observations carried out. The parent(s)/carer(s) are encouraged to support the programme and consent is always obtained before the child starts the group.

The nurture group environment is a crucial factor in its success. It is designed to help the child feel cared for and safe. Children are encouraged and supported to help develop trusting relationships with adults. Over time the child's self-esteem, self-respect and a sense of well-being are increased, resulting in them feeling happier, more confident and more motivated to learn. The children also begin to learn to use effective social skills and adopt alternative strategies to use in difficult situations.

The nurturing atmosphere in the room is created by including a sofa and a cooking area. The cooking area is a fundamental part of the room as this is where the children have breakfast and snacks, and are encouraged to share through communication anything of interest or concern. This provides an excellent opportunity for social learning.

Typically, the children register with their mainstream class and are collected and taken to the nurture group. The children reintegrate with the rest of the school during lunch and breaks.

A nurture group:

- develops well-being through relationship-building
- values individuals' achievements
- promotes personal, social and emotional well-being for everyone involved
- understands that how children feel can affect the way they learn and interact
- creates a safe environment within the classroom ensuring rules, routines and positive reinforcements are in place
- understands developmentally the learning of children
- addresses the children's emotional and developmental needs which encourages them to develop further

- develops positive relationships to improve children’s self-esteem and to make them feel they are valued individuals
- communicates and prepares children for changes in their daily routine (for example going to lunch early, a class trip, visitors, a supply teacher, etc.), understanding that changes such as these can be overwhelming and unsettling for some children.

This approach helps staff understand the child’s behaviour and provides them with proactive and reactive strategies to help defuse situations in a calm way. The Boxall Profile can be used to help with this process. The Boxall Profile is a two-part checklist which provides an assessment framework for the child and an intervention plan for staff – it is completed by staff who know the child.

A typical day in a nurture group

A typical day in a nurture group should be ‘equivalent to the first three years at home’ (Boxall, 2002). This is achieved by keeping to the same routine including the same people, place and times which helps to develop the child’s trust and self-esteem. This typical day in a nurture group (below) is an example which is intended as a guide only, and has been taken from the book *Running a Nurture Group* by Simon Bishop (Sage Publications Ltd, 2008).

Figure 15.1

| Tips: Typical day in a nurture group | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 9.00–9.40a.m. | Register Showing What are we doing today? Action songs Preparing for breakfast |
| 9.40–10.10a.m. | Breakfast |
| 10.15–10.30a.m. | Assembly |
| 10.30–10.45a.m. | Playtime |
| 10.45a.m.– 12.15p.m. | Free choice activities Literacy Maths |
| 12.15–1.15p.m. | Lunch |
| 1.15–1.30p.m. | Reading |

| | |
|---------------|---|
| 1.30–2.30p.m. | Monday: games outside Tuesday: art activities Wednesday: trip to shops for ingredients Thursday: cooking Friday: in classes |
| 2.30–3.15p.m. | KS1: children out to play and back to class KS2: children return to class at 2.45p.m. |

Characteristics of nurture groups

The Nurture Groups Research Project, in consultation with members of the Nurture Group Network and staff working in nurture groups, devised the following list of characteristics which should be evident in nurture groups (Boxall, 2002).

Tips: Characteristics of a nurture group

A nurture group should:

- be located clearly within the policies and structures of a local authority or school continuum of SEN provision, either as an integral part of an individual school or as a resource for a cluster of schools
- ensure that children attending the nurture group remain members of a mainstream class where they register daily and attend selected activities
- have a pattern of attendance whereby children spend part of each day in the nurture group or attend regular sessions during the week
- be staffed by two adults working together modelling good adult relationships in a structured and predictable environment, which encourages children to begin to trust adults and to learn
- offer support for children's positive emotional and social growth and cognitive development at whatever level of need the children show by responding to them in a developmentally appropriate way

- supply a setting and relationships for children in which missing or insufficiently internalised essential early learning experiences are provided
- ensure that relevant national curriculum guidelines are followed for all children
- take full account of in-school policies and participate fully, and be fully considered in the development and review of policies
- offer short- or medium-term placements, usually for between two and four terms, depending on the child's specific needs
- ensure placement in the group is determined on the basis of systematic assessment in which appropriate diagnostic and evaluative instruments have been used, with the aim always being to return the child to full-time mainstream provision
- place an emphasis on communication and language development through intensive interaction with an adult and with other children
- provide opportunities for social learning through cooperation and play with others in a group with an appropriate mix of children
- monitor and evaluate their effectiveness in promoting the positive social, emotional and educational development of each child
- recognise the importance of quality play experiences in the development of children's learning.

Further information on setting up and running nurture groups is available in a separate Welsh Government handbook *Nurture groups: A handbook for schools* from the following link:
www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills

Reference and further reading

Nurture Groups in School: Principles and Practice by M Boxall (Paul Chapman, 2002).

Running a Nurture Group by S Bishop, The Nurture Groups Research Project (Sage Ltd, 2008).

Using sanctions effectively – practical ideas

Whole-school sanctions

Effective behaviour management relies heavily on the school's behavioural policy to provide a well-structured and consistent whole-school approach. This policy should specify the sanctions and rewards available for staff to use to deter negative and promote positive behaviour. The policy must be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure its effectiveness.

Sanctions are only effective when used in the context of a positive classroom culture, where there are clear rules and routines as well as the use of rewards to reinforce positive behaviour. They should be used sparingly to achieve a positive result and should not overburden the person imposing the sanction. When issuing sanctions to a child because of inappropriate behaviour, they should not be implemented in isolation. They must be paired with more positive responses and teaching of skills. Sanctions need to be timely, specific, logical, reasonable and fair, with a clear beginning and ending.

It is important that sanctions are:

- understood by children, staff and parents/carers
- fair
- consistently applied according to the school's behaviour policy
- a logical response to a behaviour
- realistic to the misbehaviour displayed.

Schools have a legal right if a child misbehaves to impose sanctions which are reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the case. Schools should monitor the use of sanctions by age, ethnicity, gender, SEN and disability.

Example of sanctions being used in schools

- One-to-one reprimand.
- Removal from the group/class.
- Withdrawal from a particular lesson or peer group.
- Withdrawal of access to the school IT system (if the child misuses it by, for example, accessing an inappropriate website).
- Prevention from participating in non-curriculum activities, for example a school trip or sports event.

- Removal of break or lunchtime privileges.
- A variety of forms of detention, for example a social skills behaviour preventative programme.
- Parental involvement.
- Loss of privileges.
- A fixed-period exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion.

When to issue sanctions

Sanctions should be implemented if a child is engaging in any of the following:

- breaking school/class rules
- affecting the education and well-being of other children
- preventing the teacher from teaching
- failing to follow instructions
- a serious incident, e.g. hitting; kicking; spitting; swearing; biting; bullying; stealing; damage to school property; leaving the classroom, school building, or school grounds without permission; refusing a member of staff after three requests.

The types of sanctions issued need to be reasonable and proportional to the circumstances of the case. If they are too severe, delayed or inconsistent they will probably fail to work.

Ultimately, the headteacher (or the most senior teacher in the headteacher's absence) may choose to exclude a child from the school on a fixed-term or permanent basis. This, however, should only be taken as a last resort for very serious cases and, particularly in primary schools, should be used rarely. Further guidance on the exclusion process is available in *Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008).

Teaching social skills

Sanctions must not be issued in isolation. Instead they should be paired with more positive responses and teaching of social skills in order to promote behaviour change. The personal and social education (PSE) framework provides many opportunities for undertaking this work. Many schools in Wales also use approaches such as Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and the Incredible Years.

Learning social skills is an essential part of a child's education. Developing social skills can help individuals to make good choices, and decide how to behave in varied situations. An essential ingredient in creating and maintaining a positive school environment and reducing misbehaviour is the implementation of sound social skills.

A child's behaviour, academic performance and their social relationships both in and out of school are influenced by their knowledge and understanding of social skills. It is clear that it is not only the family's responsibility to teach children important interpersonal and conflict-resolution skills, but that the school also has an important role to play. Working together to promote these skills both at home and at school benefits the child and also helps to create a strong home-school link.

Providing a child with a full range of social skills gives them with the ability to make social choices. The benefits of social skills are:

- creating a positive and safe school environment
- helping children to overcome stressful situations
- providing children with an ability to express emotions, e.g. anger, in an appropriate and safe way
- learning to walk away from a situation and being able to request an adult's help
- understanding how their actions can affect other people
- taking personal responsibility for promoting a safe and positive school environment.

Lack of social skills

Children with limited social skills can:

- have relationship difficulties with parents/carers, teachers and peers
- engage in inappropriate behaviour on a regular basis

- when older, and in adulthood, have a higher incidence of involvement in the criminal justice system
- be depressed, aggressive and anxious
- as an indirect consequence, have poor academic success.

Examples of social skills

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cooperation | Listening |
| Sharing | Praising others |
| Participation | Positive communication |
| Being a friend | Being polite and courteous |
| Helping others | Displaying good manners |
| Being patient | Respecting ourselves and others |
| Following directions | Showing respect |
| Taking turns | Accepting differences |
| Remaining on task | |

Examples of social skills activities

This week's social skill

Choose a social skill from the list above and focus on it for the week, e.g. sharing. Introduce 'sharing' to the class and ask them to think about:

- what it means to them
- how it makes them feel when someone shares something with them
- what they can do to practice the social skill 'sharing'.

At the end of the week ask the children to share with the class all their sharing experiences and activities.

I spotted you!

In the classroom keep a box with a slot in it and some 'I spotted you!' nomination forms. Encourage the children to look for anyone (including teachers) in the class/school displaying good social skills, and to write their name and the social skill on a nomination form and post it in the box. A list of social skills can be written on the slips so that the child can tick off the appropriate one. At the end of the week, the teacher reads the slips and reinforces the correct behaviour through praise and/or reward.

Secret friend

Put all the children's names in a box. Each child in turn chooses a name and becomes that child's secret friend for the day. The secret friend then practises any social skill on that child. For example, they can show good manners by opening the door for them, asking them to play a game in the playground, etc. At the end of the day each child tries to guess the name of their secret friend.

'Can we sort it?'

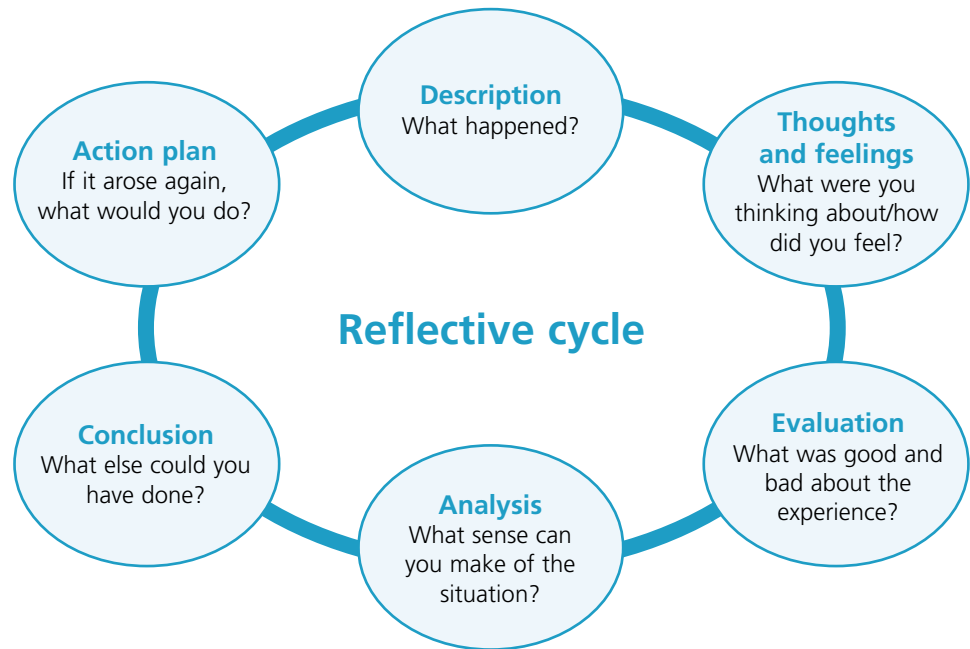
As a school, keep a log of incidents that have taken place in the playground then during circle time present one of the incidents and ask the class 'Can we sort it?'. Ask the children to discuss or role play to come up with positive solutions and practical advice to help prevent the incident from happening again.

Detention

Detention can be an effective sanction provided it is coupled with development of social skills. When detention is part of the school's behaviour policy, potentially any child can be put in it. If the detention is outside normal school hours, then 24-hour notice must be given to parents/carers for safety reasons. If a child is given detention it is good practice that they should receive a form of play so that they can exercise. This can be achieved by supervising the child outside in a designated area.

Reflective learning

It is important for a child who has engaged in inappropriate behaviour to reflect and understand their actions. The reflective learning process helps children to do this by helping them understand whether it was a good or bad experience, what came out of it and whether they would or could have handled it in a different way, as well as how it made them feel. Through using the model on the next page this can be achieved and coupled with social skills training tasks as a preventative for future inappropriate behaviour.



Loss of privileges

According to the type of inappropriate behaviour the sanctions issued to the child could also include the loss of privileges.

Loss of privileges could include:

- non-curriculum activities, i.e. attending a school/class fun day
- after-school activities
- playtime
- representing the school, e.g. concert.

It is important to note that a reward that the child has already earned should not be taken away. A child's misbehaviour often decreases over time when behaviour 'costs' a child, i.e. the focus should be on 'not gaining' as opposed to 'taking away'.

It is also important to note that taking away a longer-term reward (e.g. a trip to the pantomime) can sometimes worsen behaviour as the child will no longer have anything to work for. In situations like this the use of a strike chart may be more appropriate, for example if the child receives three strikes on the chart then the main reward is taken away. The use of strike charts usually gives a child up to three chances before being penalised. It is the child's choice whether to engage in positive or negative behaviour. There may be occasions, however, when main rewards may need to be changed if a child's behaviour is severe.

Sustaining motivation

When issuing sanctions the child's motivation to learn and develop needs to be taken into consideration. The whole process of sanctions is designed so that a child understands their behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated by the school.

When a child is given a sanction they may feel as if they have 'blown it' which may result in a worsening of the behaviour and an 'I don't care' attitude. In order to keep the child focused and motivated, implement the 'Golden five minutes' rule. Here, within five minutes of the reprimand/sanction, find something to praise the child on. For example, sitting correctly, reading quietly, completing their work, putting their hand up to ask a question. This is very effective at keeping the child motivated to engage in more appropriate and better behaviour.

Behaviour causing concern?

If a child's behaviour is causing concern then please see the 'Playground behaviour – practical ideas' section (pages 84–88) with regards to re-engaging individual children.

The link between bullying and children's behaviour

When issues of bullying are reported, schools need to ask themselves some basic questions:

- How extensive is the problem?
- What are the characteristics of the children involved?
- Why is it occurring?
- Can the school do more to get rid or minimise the problem?

Serious cases of bullying should always be logged, reported to local authorities and the appropriate follow-up action taken. The most serious cases may need to involve either or both the social services and/or police.

Assessment and intervention

The general principles which apply to the assessment of young children and later juniors in primary schools are the same for both bullies and their victims. In particular, it is important to:

- ascertain, as precisely as possible, both the nature and context of the difficulties presented
- draw up a profile (often a case study) of the various aspects of the child's development observed over a period of time, taken from as many sources as possible
- link assessment closely to intervention
- involve the parent(s)/carer(s) and, in so doing, get to know something of the child's home background
- to enlist, if necessary, the aid of the appropriate support services which may include the school's SENCo or local authority's psychological service or social services.

Short-term measures to improve the situation may include:

- the teacher talking to the bully, making it clear that bullying is unacceptable. Depending upon severity, reporting the bullying immediately to the headteacher who in turn may refer to the local authority, depending on local arrangements
- providing firm reassurance to the victim that action is being taken to stop the bullying

- inviting (and expecting) the cooperation of the parent(s) or carer(s)
- increasing supervision by adults in school and the playground, and ensuring (if necessary) that the children involved are escorted to and from school and/or collected by a responsible family member
- giving constructive tasks to the bully. This may or may not involve removing some privileges from them. In extreme cases, examples of serious or repeated bullying may require fixed-term or even permanent exclusion or removal to another school. It is important to ensure that it is the bully and not the victim who is punished further
- breaking up bullying gangs and not allowing gang bullying to take place within schools
- using empathetically other members of the class (peer group) to support the victim. This can be just as important outside school as within a school's boundaries.

Longer-term measures can include:

- increasing adult participation in play situations to promote appropriate social skills
- building up the self-confidence of the victim and, where necessary, the bully as well
- ensuring that the bullied child's learning needs are being met in school
- helping parent(s) or carer(s) to adopt more committed and positive child-rearing practices; sometimes this will require help and resources from external agencies
- teachers, learning school mentors and even classroom assistants examining their own management style. This is often to ensure it does not provide a model of dominating behaviour. Headteachers too may need to examine their own approaches to school discipline
- utilising peer-mediated strategies. These measures can include rewarding the whole class for improvements in the behaviour of individuals or by using small groups to promote and foster cooperation

- watching and managing the language used by children in class or school and ensuring it is not too aggressive
- if necessary, in schools with more serious or frequent problems, involving education psychologists in, for example, behaviour modification programmes or sociometric techniques
The use by experienced educational psychologists of such processes as specialised repertory grid techniques can be especially helpful.

Using information from children

In order to identify children being bullied, sometimes it is necessary to utilise the School Council or carry out in-depth class or school-based studies. Simple questions need to be asked.

- Does anybody in your class bully other children?
- Does anybody in your class get bullied by other children? If so, who?
- Would you tell anybody if you were being bullied? If so, who? Where does bullying usually take place? In school or outside school?
- What do you think should be done about bullying in the school?
- Is there anyone you know who requires help from staff in the school because they are being bullied or victimised?

In summary, bullied children can be helped to feel safer and to cope with bullying through:

- the introduction of a specific social skills programme such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)
- appropriate interventions to support the bullied child in (and out of) school, where necessary, sometimes involving external agents such as educational psychologists or social services
- implementing appropriate school-based strategies and policies
- action taken by the school to change its own practice, identification of the problem and sometimes, school ethos.

A zero tolerance approach towards bullying is always a prime requisite. Research indicates it is possible to teach children to feel valued and not to bully by:

- a thorough assessment of the in-school factors giving rise to the behaviour
- planned action to support the victim and to prevent the bully from repeating the behaviour
- demonstrating support for the victim, often utilising the help of the peer group and classmates
- a school revising its own practice and making appropriate changes, including amending its own bullying policy document and seeking the advice of external agencies.

As indicated on page 20, the KiVa Anti-bullying Programme has been shown to be effective by rigorous evaluation.

Recording information

Teachers need to take care at all times to look out for any external signs of bullying and to know what action to take when it is identified. Advice from the headteacher can be paramount in this regard. Teachers should use appropriate bullying incident logs such as the examples set out below.

Case study: Darren

Darren is ten years of age. He started missing school occasionally at the age of seven. He was reported for being absent repeatedly at the age of nine. His parents repeatedly made excuses for him claiming that he was ill, often with colds or flu. Eventually, the school contacted the education welfare officer who made a home visit. She spoke to Darren and his mother. It turned out that Darren was being repeatedly bullied both physically and verbally. He was often too afraid to go to school. Further investigations showed that he was also the subject of bullying on the school bus to and from school and in the yard during playtimes. His mother had taken him home to see her general practitioner twice following bouts of physical bullying. Darren believed that by reporting the boys who bullied him, he would be subjected to more serious bullying. His mother was also concerned about being victimised within the local community. The bullying started because Darren was smaller than his peers, overweight and not so good at sporting activities.

After the intervention of the education welfare officer and the school taking appropriate action, the bullying stopped. Darren is now attending school regularly and making better progress with his schoolwork.

Alleged Bullying Incident Log

| | Name(s), age, gender | Setting |
|--|----------------------|---------|
| Children alleged to be experiencing bullying behaviour | | |
| Children alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour | | |

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Reported by: | Date: |
| Investigation by: | Date: |

| |
|---|
| Account of individual(s) alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour: (use separate sheet if required) |
|---|

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Looked After Child? Yes No | Ethnicity: |
|----------------------------|------------|

| |
|--|
| Action: (use separate sheet if required) |
| Review date: |

| |
|---|
| Account of individual(s) alleged to be engaging in bullying behaviour: (use separate sheet if required) |
|---|

| | |
|----------------------------|------------|
| Looked After Child? Yes No | Ethnicity: |
|----------------------------|------------|

| |
|--|
| Action: (use separate sheet if required) |
| Review date: |

| | | | |
|---|-----|----|---------------------------------|
| Was alleged bullying confirmed? (please circle) | Yes | No | Insufficient evidence to decide |
|---|-----|----|---------------------------------|

| | | | |
|--|-----|----|---------|
| Was the matter resolved? (please circle) | Yes | No | Details |
| | | | |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Future action (if appropriate) | |
|--------------------------------|--|

Confirmed Bullying Incident Log

| | Name(s), age, gender | Setting | How many times have they | |
|--|----------------------|---------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | | | Bullied others before? | Been bullied before? |
| Children experiencing bullying behaviour | | | | |
| Children engaging in bullying behaviour | | | | |

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Reported by: | Date: |
| Reported to: | |
| Investigated by: | Date: |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Details of bullying incident: Those experiencing bullying behaviour: (use separate sheet if required) | |
| Looked After Child? Yes No | Ethnicity: |
| Those engaging in bullying behaviour: (use separate sheet if required) | |
| Looked After Child? Yes No | Ethnicity: |
| Action: (use separate sheet if required) | |
| Review date: | |
| Monitoring (you may circle more than one) | |

| | | | |
|----------|--------|----------|-------|
| Physical | Verbal | Indirect | Cyber |
|----------|--------|----------|-------|

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------|------------|--------|------------|------------|---------|--------|-----|-------|
| Racial | Homophobic | Sexual | Appearance | Disability | Ability | Gender | LAC | Other |
|--------|------------|--------|------------|------------|---------|--------|-----|-------|

The link between children's non-attendance and behaviour

In cases where there is a genuine concern about the reasons provided for an absence, or absence is frequent, the education welfare service will usually arrange to make a home visit. This visit is not only to clarify the reason but also to check upon the welfare of the child. Often, a child missing school for unacceptable or 'unauthorised' reasons masks a plea for help. This plea may be due to educational reasons. However, it could be related to family issues or, in extreme circumstances, to bullying or child abuse. It is important therefore, that schools act upon and follow up on all cases of 'unauthorised' absence as soon as possible.

Occasionally, following home visits, it may be necessary for the education welfare service to refer the child to other agencies. These may include the social services or the education psychologist services within the local authority. Sometimes, local case conferences may be called to discuss a child's difficulties, including possibly their home circumstances. Thereafter, this child should be carefully monitored throughout their schooling.

Evidence from research

Reasons for missing school

The main reasons given by primary-aged children for missing school for 'unauthorised' reasons include: bullying, dislike of a particular teacher or aspects of the curriculum, poor relationships with teachers and/or fellow children, 'it's cool to miss school', feeling 'bored' at school and not feeling safe either at school or on the way to or from school.

Other causes include children who have difficulties such as low self-esteem, school phobia, ADHD and related syndromes, emotional social or behavioural difficulties or other forms of additional learning need. It is for these reasons that a skilled assessment of the 'unauthorised' absent child is often advisable and in the child's own interest.

Research indicates that children who experience home difficulties are more likely to truant from school. Reasons related to home background factors include:

- lack of parental/carer support for children's learning
- parental-condoned absenteeism

- poor parenting skills
- second/third generation truant families
- lack of home discipline
- bullying or victimisation in the home
- taking holidays during term-time
- home–school communication difficulties or breakdowns
- parental divorces or home-care arrangements
- poverty
- lack of sleep
- a lack of parental supervision (e.g. parents or carers who leave the home early and are not there to support the child or to provide a breakfast).

Unauthorised absence

There is abundant evidence from research to indicate that the vast majority of ‘unauthorised’ absence from primary schools is parentally condoned. Sometimes parents or carers fail to understand the importance of regular attendance at school or the legal requirements placed upon them. Sometimes, parents/carers simply prefer to have their child at home for company or lack the motivation to ensure that they make it into school. These and other reasons are why it is important for schools to liaise with the education welfare service to ensure that a home visit and a detailed follow-up report are made.

Research also suggests that there are different ‘types’ of children who miss school for ‘unauthorised’ reasons. Some children are naturally shy or quiet. Some may have ‘phobic’ tendencies. Others may be disruptive children who are often in trouble at school.

Some children will talk openly about their reasons for missing school. Others will not. Some will provide genuine reasons for missing school. Others will do the opposite. It is also for these reasons that advice from the local education welfare service is often advisable. Welsh Government policy requires schools to follow up on all ‘unauthorised’ absences as soon as possible. Early prevention may forestall subsequent potential persistent absence. It should also ensure that schools help to make appropriate referrals to other specialist agencies as and when necessary.

Positive features in managing school attendance

Research evidence shows that schools that prioritise attendance can often improve rates of attendance by anything between 2 and 8 per cent a year. By contrast, schools that do not prioritise attendance can often inadvertently make things worse. Examples of good practice taken from research evidence and school inspectors' reports include:

- managing first-day absences well
- children enjoying their lessons, getting on well with their teachers and learning satisfactorily
- parents/carers supporting schools on attendance matters in a positive manner
- children liking their schools, and therefore attending
- giving rewards for making regular or 100 per cent attendance (e.g. attendance certificates, prizes, or other forms of incentive)
- holding 'praise' assemblies to award attendance prizes
- organising a successful nurture group
- having an effective whole-school policy on attendance
- utilising children's views on attendance
- forging good links with external agencies
- good relationships between the school and the local education welfare service
- helping absent children catch up with work missed
- sound use of learning school mentors, classroom assistants, attendance or administrative assistants and the education welfare service
- providing parents/carers with accurate school attendance data including unauthorised absences
- providing challenging benchmarks on attendance and responding to data showing natural or local norms
- the positive leadership of the headteacher and/or deputy head in attendance issues

- interviewing parents or carers automatically in cases of prolonged absence
- preventing the link between bullying and attendance and, when prevalent, acting upon it
- arranging medical appointments during school time when necessary
- making transport arrangements for children with travelling difficulties or with SEN or disabilities
- using the police as appropriate
- establishing a learning support centre to deal with return to school issues, reintegration and subsequently to meet children's needs, especially in cases of long-term absence.

These twenty-two approaches are best-practice exemplars highlighted by research and Estyn reports.

Case study: Janine

Janine is nine years old. She started missing school at the age of five without good reason. Her mother always condoned her absences and made plausible excuses for her. Following the intervention of her school after the absences became more frequent and prolonged, Janine was found by the education social worker to be living in a caravan with her mother and her boyfriend some 30 miles away from the school's catchment area.

The conditions inside the caravan concerned the education social worker so much she reported the case to the social services department. Subsequent interventions found it necessary to rehouse the mother and to provide regular support to Janine and her mother from social services. The mother was found to need housing benefit and income support while Janine was awarded free school meals. Janine is now making more regular attendance, although she is being constantly monitored by both the school and social services.

Weak features in managing school attendance

Evidence from research and Estyn suggests that some of the weaker features among primary schools in managing school attendance include:

- not paying sufficient attention to lateness, poor punctuality, and poor parental attitudes towards regular school attendance
- allowing too many unauthorised holidays
- allowing too many holidays in term-time without the prior consent of the headteacher
- not having any focused monitoring of children's attendance or using appropriate attendance data wisely, including the failure to undertake comparative exercises
- failure to analyse attendance patterns by gender, year group, by term, day of week or, in certain cases, ethnicity
- failure to conduct first-day responses to absence
- using recording codes for absences inconsistently
- not checking the accuracy of data marked by supply teachers
- not recognising that a school's poor rate of attendance is leading to declining standards at the school and acting accordingly (one of the key reasons for a school being found to have 'weaknesses', being placed in special measures or in 'challenging circumstances')
- marking registers inaccurately or not following legislation and Welsh Government guidance
- recording certain categories of absences inaccurately (e.g. term-time holidays, illness, etc.)
- the poor attendance of a few persistent non-attenders having a marked overall adverse impact on a school's overall rates of attendance, with little being done about it
- not enough being done to emphasise the importance of regular and punctual attendance to parents/carers
- failing to act upon the link between bullying and attendance
- failing to act upon the link between a school's poor internal facilities (e.g. dirty toilets) and children's attitudes and attendance

- not understanding the consequences of high staff turnovers and constantly requiring the need for supply teachers
- having no follow-up procedures in place for long-term absentees
- not using the education welfare service wisely or appropriately
- not referring serious cases of absence either to the education welfare service or to other external agencies
- not following up on children who fail to turn up for their in-school assessments
- poor leadership of the headteacher and/or deputy on attendance issues
- not being aware of the link between non-attendance and children with free school meals, SEN, children with disabilities and other groups of vulnerable children.

Case study: Aled

Aled suddenly started having temper tantrums in class. These lasted for a few minutes at a time. He then became calm. Suddenly, at the age of 10, he started missing school, at first only for a day or two and then for several days at a time. He complained of feeling unwell. After the school referred him to the education welfare service, he was taken to see his general practitioner and the local educational psychologist. Subsequent investigations found that Aled was suffering from diabetes and had a hearing loss. After medication and the fitting of a hearing aid, Aled's attendance improved. Although academically behind many of his peers, he is enjoying school more.

Playground behaviour – practical ideas

Playtime

Creating a well-structured playtime can help tackle the inactivity, boredom and poor behaviour of children who spend approximately a quarter of their school day in the playground.

An unstructured playtime can sometimes be the cause of a range of behavioural incidents which not only impact on the health and well-being of other children but also upon the morale of the midday supervisors. If these are not dealt with appropriately, such incidents can carry on after playtime and impact on lessons.

It is therefore important to create a well-structured playtime with trained midday supervisors and support staff to ensure consistency between classroom and playground behaviour. Incidents must also be dealt with effectively and immediately to prevent them escalating and recurring.

There are a number of possible reasons why children display inappropriate behaviour during playtime. These include the following.

- Unstructured playtimes.
- Lack of appropriate space to play.
- No play equipment.
- Children being unfamiliar with playground rules.
- Disagreements, e.g. over a game of football.
- Bullying.
- Children lacking coping skills.

In order to encourage the right conduct, staff training on playground procedures is essential. It is important that all school staff apply the same principles and procedures.

The importance of play

Emotional, physical and cognitive skills are developed through play. Engaging in play enables children to discover more about themselves and the world. Play provides opportunities for children to learn through imitation, imagination and fun, and to learn about experiencing the consequences of their actions.

Play also has an effect on a child's stress levels. For example, stress chemicals are lowered in the body thereby enabling the child to deal with stressful situations more successfully by playing imaginatively and creatively. Gentle rough and tumble play and laughter are also known to have anti-stress effects, activating the brain's emotion-regulating centres and causing the release of opioids, the natural brain chemicals that induce feelings of pleasure and well-being (Sunderland, 2006).

Evidence has shown (e.g. Heck et al., 2001) that children who engage in cooperative games (non-competitive games) are less likely to engage in aggressive behaviour. Invite your local authority physical education instructors to teach the children (and playground buddies) a range of cooperative games and activities.

Playground rules

School staff should be included in writing guidance for playground behaviour. This should include guidance on appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, with written definitions and examples so that all staff are clear on the expectations required of the children. A list of inappropriate behaviours should be created, i.e. hitting, kicking, spitting.

To achieve good playground behaviour make sure:

- children understand the playground rules
- playground monitors are consistent and fair when enforcing the behavioural expectations
- children are given regular praise for achieving appropriate behaviour
- teachers reinforce good playground behaviour in the classroom, normally through the use of praise.

Buddy schemes

Buddy schemes, playground pals, playground squads or playground friends involve older children in primary schools being used as a mediator for minor disputes, befriending lonely children, helping those who are hurt or frightened, mentoring in minor disputes, teaching games to children and looking after playground equipment.

The children involved in the buddy scheme are required to set an example and encourage the younger children to make positive behavioural choices. During their training they must understand the importance of using caring language, listening to both sides of an argument and being consistent and fair.

Buddies are not members of staff. Therefore they should not have the authority to punish younger peers in, for example, 'time out' or be entitled to remove them from the playground. Instead, they must inform whoever is on duty about the situation and the adult in charge will then take the appropriate action.

Benefits of buddy schemes include:

- reducing incidents of inappropriate behaviour
- encouraging more children to play together
- promoting anti-bullying
- enabling children to resolve play and friendship problems in a fair way
- helping children find friends
- making the playground a happier and safer place
- helping to raise the self-esteem of children
- providing positive role models for younger children
- supporting staff.

Sustainability

As with all initiatives, sustainability is key. There should be regular meetings and refresher training sessions for all buddies and their reserves with members of staff responsible for the playground policies implementation. This includes lunchtime supervisors. It also ensures new buddies are recruited when one leaves.

Friendship stop

If children do not have anyone to play with or feel lonely they can go to a friendship stop. Children sometimes make friends with other children at the stop or they can be supported by a playground buddy who will help them find friends. Include the school council in setting up a friendship stop and in organising where it is located and its purpose. For example, should the friendship stop be besides a bench, a wall or a designated sign that can be used as the friendship stop? There are advantages and disadvantages in making the friendship stop visible to all.

Midday supervisors

The role of midday supervisors is to look after the welfare of schoolchildren during lunchtimes.

Their duties and responsibilities can vary according to the school. A typical list of their responsibilities during playtime might include:

- ensuring children do not leave the school premises

- dealing with misbehaviour
- reporting unresolved problems to the duty teacher or headteacher
- tending to children who are sick or injured
- reporting any serious accidents
- being aware of responsibilities under child protection legislation
- assisting with play activities if required.

Wet play

If wet playtimes are not adequately supervised and planned it is likely that incidents of inappropriate behaviour will increase. In each classroom, there should be a wet playtime activity box which could include ideas for games, pens, paper, comics, jigsaws, etc. Midday supervisors can be equipped with a report book which they can use to inform the class teacher of any inappropriate behaviour. The teacher can then tackle the issues at a suitable time that will not hinder the learning in class.

Case study: Introducing games (primary school, Torfaen)

The school identified that behaviour at break times and lunchtimes was generally good, but occasionally there were some isolated incidents of inappropriate behaviour. The school decided to take a proactive response and provide more structured activities.

This was achieved by:

- contacting the organisation Torfaen Playworkers to teach the children games
- encouraging children to take part in sporting activities
- allocating each class play equipment to use at break times and lunchtimes and enabling the children to pre-book the equipment in the morning
- training midday supervisors in a variety of games which they could teach the children
- introducing the staff on playground duty, new games for the children to play.

After introducing more structured playground activities, the incidents of inappropriate behaviour decreased.

Lining up

Asking the children to line up after play provides a crucial time to ensure a calm transition from outside to inside the classroom. When the bell is sounded for the first time, encourage the children to freeze on the spot. When the teacher has the children's attention, the whistle can be blown for the second time signalling the children to line up. When the children are appropriately lined up, reinforce their good behaviour by awarding a raffle ticket or token to two or three of the children who did it best or quickest. This will help focus the attention of the children. The teacher will then be ready to lead them into class for the start of the next lesson in an orderly manner.

Reference and further reading

The Science of Parenting by M Sunderland (Dorling Kindersley, 2006).

'Decreasing children's risk taking on the playground' by A Heck, J Collins and L Peterson in *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 34, 349–352 (2001).

Games – some practical suggestions

Whole-class games

Children love playing games and they provide more benefits than simple entertainment. They are an excellent way to promote valuable learning opportunities and a safe environment for the exploration and understanding of behaviour.

Games can teach:

- how to 'take turns'
- patience
- teamwork
- the concept of sharing
- the ability to express appreciation
- how to develop motor skills
- listening skills
- concentration
- educational concepts, e.g. games which teach basic reading and phonics
- strengthening relationships
- good sportsmanship.

Get their attention

Here is a selection of fun ways to engage children and attain the desired behaviour.

Statues

This is a great game to play at the end of a lesson to establish the class' attention in a fun and calm way. When the children hear 'One-two-three statue!' they freeze in a statue position. The children who are the stillest and quietest are chosen to, for example, line up by the door first. This game can be repeated until all children are lined up.

Heads down, thumbs up

A maximum of four children are chosen to stand at the front of the class. The rest of the children place their heads on their desk with their eyes closed and thumbs in the up position. The four children

secretly and gently squeeze one child's thumbs and return quickly to their place at the front of the class. The teacher asks if any of the students can guess the correct squeezer, they swap places and become the new champion. It can settle a chatty class brilliantly.

Apple pie

A child is chosen to stand with their back to the class, blindfolded. The teacher signals to one of the children to say the words 'Apple pie' in a voice different from their own. The blindfolded child must then guess the child who said 'Apple pie'. If the child guesses correctly, score a point. If the child guesses incorrectly, then they swap places with the child who said 'Apple pie' and the game continues.

Developing behavioural skills

Can you cool off? (Anger)

Ask the children to find a space and stand with their eyes closed. Ask them to think of something in the past that has made them angry. Ask them to imagine that anger turning into a hot red lump in the centre of their bodies and if they don't do something they will explode. Now ask them to feel soft cold snow falling on their head. As the snow touches them their body absorbs it and begins to cool their anger, and after a while their anger is so cold it disappears and they are back to normal. Ask the children to use this method next time they feel angry.

Don't let it drop (Excess energy)

Each child stands in a space with a beanbag on their head. The teacher then gives instructions, for example 'sit down', 'stand up', etc. The children must follow the instruction without dropping their beanbags. The instructions become more and more challenging as the game progresses requiring the children to listen and concentrate.

Can you keep up? (Reduce restlessness)

Ask the children to find a space in the room facing you. Explain you are going to take them through a series of exercises to see if they can keep up with you. Start by jumping, running on the spot, star jumps, etc., all at a moderate pace, then speed up. When the children are beginning to tire, introduce slower movements to create a sense of calm, for example stretching. This process helps to reduce restlessness and creates a sense of calm among the children.

Money, money, money!

Collecting plastic money for good behaviour is an exciting way to keep children on task. At the end of the day/week the money can be counted and spent in the class shop. This is an effective reward as children, like adults are very motivated by money. In a class of older children, a tally can be kept to record how much money each child has accumulated.

Raffle tickets

Rewarding good behaviour with raffle tickets is a great motivator for children of all ages. The children experience the 'feel-good factor' knowing that the more raffle tickets they receive the greater the chance they have of winning a prize. Arrange a raffle draw at the end of the day, week or term with great prizes. Involve the school council to decide how to arrange the prizes, for example donations from home, school fundraising, writing to companies such as those who make games, etc.

Music marbles

Marbles are placed into a jar for the positive behavior of an individual or class. When the jar is full the class' reward is to choose music which is played at different times during the day. Children can be encouraged to bring in their own music. As most children love to listen to the latest chart hits this is a great motivator.

Special day

Special day provides a positive start to each day and an ideal way to reinforce all the positive behavioural changes each child has made. Imagine having 10–30 children in the class saying something positive about one child – the effect is amazing in boosting self-esteem and, more importantly, acts as a powerful reinforcer for good behaviour. Every day a child is chosen for special day and stands in front of the class. In turn, the children and the teacher say a positive comment about the child, for example 'I like Elli because she plays with me when I'm on my own on the playground.' The child whose special day it is has a series of privileges for the day, for example always first in line, always chosen to go on errands for the teacher.

Tips for teachers – practical advice

You as the teacher

Teaching and managing difficult behaviour can be stressful even for the most accomplished teacher. Think and believe you are a winner and you will win at changing the children's behaviour – Henry Ford said "Whether you think you can, or think you can't – you're right." Positive attitudes are contagious and will affect and change the children's outlook within the class.

Tips: Successful teachers

- Create positive learning cultures.
- Take leadership of their class.
- Organise and plan lessons effectively.
- Believe all children have the ability to achieve.
- Engage inattentive children.
- Involve children in the overall classroom management, giving them ownership and responsibility.
- Have a sense of humor which can be used to disarm challenging situations.
- Have positive body language.
- Model the desired behaviour.
- Welcome children into class.
- Deal with behaviour fairly and consistently.

Modelling behaviour

The teacher's behaviour is the most significant influence in the classroom. Being a positive role model to children encourages them to develop social skills which help them to make positive choices. Children have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, therefore teachers need to model the behaviours that convey these values.

Tips: Desired behaviour

Respecting others

Resolving conflict

Listening to others

Tips: Teacher modelling the behaviour

Do not ridicule a child in front of their peers; instead deal with the behaviour fairly and appropriately.

Deal with the situation in a calm yet authoritative way by applying the appropriate sanctions in a fair and consistent manner.

Provide support for a child by listening and showing interest in whatever they are talking about.

Tips: Dos

- Remain in control.
- 'Catch' poor behaviour before it starts.
- Respect and acknowledge race, gender and culture.
- Be fair and consistent when issuing sanctions.
- Inform parents/carers of positive achievements.
- Listen attentively and show interest.
- Look for the win-win solution.
- Evaluate what worked well.
- Disapprove of the behaviour, not the child.
- Ignore minor misdemeanours.
- Reward good behaviour.
- Teach the child to self-manage their behaviour.

Tips: Don'ts

- Lose control of the situation.
- Use sarcasm.
- Personalise a child's behaviour.
- Get irritated or angry.
- Raise your voice.
- Be uncaring and distant.
- Make threats or promises you can't keep.
- Condemn the individual's character.
- Reprimand the individual in front of their peers.
- Do not make personal comments in front of the whole class but in one-to-one situations.

Body language

The teacher's personality and demeanour are key to creating and maintaining a positive learning culture. An individual's body language (posture, eye contact, facial expression, head and body movements, gestures, touch, etc.) makes up a large proportion of what we are communicating (some believe up to 55 per cent). Therefore, to be an effective communicator to children, it is important to understand and implement positive and effective body language.

Non-verbal communication is a useful tool in the classroom as it is possible to express, for example, approval or disapproval of a child's behaviour in an effective way. Below are a list of suggestions to improve body language.

Tips: Body language

Eye contact

- Eye contact is generally associated with trust, rapport and positivity.
- Too much eye contact can be intimidating and threatening.
- Looking away shows disinterest or deviousness.
- Looking down conveys submission.
- Develop a steady gaze, as an individual who makes frequent eye contact is seen as confident.

Facial expressions

- Can easily communicate (for example) mood, attitude, understanding, confusion.
- A smile can make others feel more at ease.
- A frown can convey aggression or that the person is unsure of something.
- To convey you are in control display a calm, relaxed facial expression with a smile to confirm acceptable behaviour.

Posture

- Posture can convey a whole range of attitudes, for example a lack of interest.
- A good positive posture takes up more space, so make yourself look bigger.
- A proud, upright stance makes you look more important.
- A sagging posture can mean a lack of confidence.
- Standing and walking tall with your shoulders shows confidence as a leader.
- A relaxed stance can be effective when dealing with a challenging situation.

Gestures

- Non-verbal gestures can be used to direct an activity.
- Flat of the hand can be used to signal to the class to calm down.
- Pointing with a hand can invite a child to sit down.
- Finger to lips can signal quiet.
- Thumb up signals good work/behaviour.
- Avoid folding your arms as this can indicate a closed, defensive attitude and makes you appear unapproachable.
- Hands in your pockets, tapping on surfaces, fidgeting, scratching can give the impression of discomfort or embarrassment.

Proximity

- Where possible, allow children their personal space.
- Standing in a child's personal space can be deemed as threatening and could incite a conflict.
- The more room you appear to occupy, the more confident and important you appear.

Tone of voice

- Your voice should be clear, positive and non-threatening.
- Warm and expressive voices, used in an imaginative way, draw children in and make them want to pay attention and listen.
- A lively voice will be motivational and encourage the children to readily engage in the activity.
- Speak at an acceptable speed so that children can understand the information given.
- Do not shout; instead project your voice in an assertive manner.
- Do not use a patronising voice as this can bring about negative child behaviour.

Mannerisms

- Move around the classroom in a comfortable fashion, smiling and making gentle eye contact with everyone.
- Be a visible presence by standing as long as possible through each lesson.
- Think about your breathing to help you calm down, take slow breaths until you start to feel relaxed.
- Clothes have an impact and convey an individual's personality. Smart, comfortable clothes in plain, darkish colours have been shown to work best.

Remain in control

When dealing with a challenging situation it is important to detach yourself and not take it personally. Instead take a deep breath and display a calm and confident exterior as this may help to reduce the child's anxiety and their frustration so that they feel more secure. Remember to keep your tone of voice low and calm no matter how frustrated or upset you may be. Remember to reassure them that you care about them and that their display of behaviour has not affected this. When the child feels the teacher is in control they are more likely to calm down and make the right choice regarding their behaviour.

Case study: Don't take it personally (Mrs Harris, class teacher)

Mrs Harris had a child in her class who, on occasions, would engage in unacceptable behaviour in order to embarrass and/or get a reaction from her. On one occasion the child said to her for no apparent reason, "Miss, do you know you're really fat?" Normally Mrs Harris would have reacted negatively to this type of comment but instead she remained in control and responded with "Do you know, I have asked myself that question. I really don't understand it as I regularly go to the gym and I have a healthy diet. But, no matter what I do I don't seem to be able to lose the weight." The child was not expecting this type of response and immediately apologised.

This type of response from Mrs Harris prevented the child's behaviour from escalating and through her response she created a win-win situation. By answering in this way, it also made her feel in control and this resulted in an unexpected turning point in her relationship with the child.

Try to use the technique that when a negative incident occurs, give it a score out of 10. Ten represents something very serious and one a very minor incident. When a situation arises, for example a child displaying high-level disruption in the class, would you score it a nine or eight? Then ask yourself in a few months' time, would you still see it as that serious? Next time a child displays similar challenging behaviour ask yourself again 'Is it a nine or a two?' This technique helps to put negative situations into perspective.

Tips: Responding

- Start the day/lesson with a positive remark to any child who may display challenging behaviour.
- Welcome them at the door.
- Try to deal with minor misbehaviour non-verbally so that the child knows their behaviour is unacceptable and has the choice to turn it around.
- Deal with situations calmly, quietly and in a non-threatening way.
- Have a database of comments and commands you can use in trying situations.
- If/when a situation arises take a deep breath and count to 10 before intervening.

Case Study: You're not a teacher! (Mrs Cook, midday supervisor)

As with most support staff in schools children frequently make statements like 'you're not a teacher' when asked to follow an instruction by a midday supervisor. On one occasion, Mrs Cook stopped a child from running into the hall to have their packed lunch and asked them to walk in sensibly. The child responded with "You're not a teacher", and refused to follow the instruction. Mrs Cook took the partial agreement approach and responded with "That's correct Keenan, I'm not a teacher I'm a midday supervisor and I'm responsible for your behaviour during lunchtime." As Mrs Cook remained in control and did not respond negatively to the situation, the child followed her instruction and walked into the hall sensibly.

This is an effective strategy to help defuse potential argumentative responses which can lead to a 'lose-lose' outcome.

Managing emotions

Understanding and managing your own emotions brings a positive balance to the classroom. By displaying positive emotions a teacher will instill safety and trust among the children.

Make time for yourself

It is important to de-stress after a working day, thereby helping to recharge the batteries. By looking after yourself, you will help to make sure you're fit and healthy and in a better state of mind to help your children. Teachers sometimes feel guilty about doing so, as if they are putting their own needs before those of their children, but doing so will help you to provide more quality time and better teaching for your children.

McGee* (2001) defines GUILT as:

- **G**ive yourself
- **U**ninterrupted
- **I**ndulgent
- **L**eisure and pleasure
- **T**ime at least twice a week.

You are only human

Not everything is going to go the way you anticipated, whether it's a lesson or a challenging situation. So don't pretend. Children have more respect for teachers who are human and communicate what went wrong and how it can be dealt with more effectively in the future. For example, 'Lana I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to speak to you today about your trip to London, so what I need you to do is to find me tomorrow break time in the playground so we can have a chat.' We can achieve this by following our own social rules and by saying what we mean. It is important to mean what we say by developing our own self-awareness and expressing ourselves correctly.

Tell someone

We all encounter situations which give us concern, whether it is dealing with a difficult class or an individual. When this happens we need to tell someone and talk through the issues with a colleague or friend in order to help gain a proper perspective and solutions. Don't bottle things up. Instead be proactive and talk about it.

* *59 Minutes to a Calmer Life* by Paul McGee (Go MAD Books, 2001)

Tips: Believe in yourself

- Believe that you can make a difference.
- Celebrate all your achievements, however small.
- Understand that you are only human and you will make mistakes. Remember, mistakes are merely portals to learning.
- It is important to understand that children's behaviour may only improve slightly or sometimes not at all. It may even get worse before it gets better, which can make us feel helpless, even inadequate.
- Keep a flexible approach and do what works best for you and the children.
- Plan ahead, but be flexible and accept change. Remember it takes time to accomplish all your goals. Also, keep your goals realistic.
- Don't take it personally when sometimes children will not show appreciation for your efforts.
- If you feel overwhelmed, chat it through with another member of staff.
- Take time out to enjoy a healthy lifestyle, including exercise, healthy eating and sleep.
- And, finally, try to maintain a sense of humour and have some fun.

Annex: Example of a school's behaviour policy – Coed Eva Primary, Cwmbran

Coed Eva Primary School

Positive behaviour policy

Policies related to this: Anti-bullying policy/Home-school agreement/Attendance strategy

Aim

To provide a caring, stimulating, secure and happy environment in which each child can enjoy their work and is given every opportunity to achieve their potential.

Rationale

Behaviour is a key feature of school life about which there should be a clear, shared understanding between headteacher, staff, governors, parents/carers and children.

The behaviour policy has been developed as a response to:

- an awareness that more precise support should be given to staff and children in respect of expectations
- an awareness that there should be a strong whole-school cohesion in this area
- recent training in the use of assertive discipline
- research/reports written on this topic, e.g. Elton report, assertive discipline.

Objectives

- To develop children's self-discipline and self-control.
- To enable children to be on task with their learning.
- To encourage the individual child to recognise the rights of others.
- To promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others.

Good behaviour is necessary for effective learning and teaching to take place. We need a code of conduct and rules which the school community lives by. This code must be explicit and clearly communicated to all members of the school community. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

School expectations of good behaviour

Children are expected to behave in a way that makes it possible for everyone to learn and the teacher to teach. This means following the school rules which form part of our positive behaviour plan.

The infant rules are as follows:

- follow instructions
- keep hands, feet and objects to ourselves
- treat everything and everyone kindly.

The junior rules are as follows:

- follow instructions first time
- keep hands, feet, objects and unkind words to ourselves
- respect one another and our surroundings
- be ready when an adult signals for attention
- use correct voice level.

Playtimes/lunchtimes

To aid consistency and in order to promote the importance of good behaviour during these times the expectations detailed above are promoted by midday supervisors in line with the positive behaviour plan of the school.

Promoting good behaviour and discipline

- At Coed Eva Primary School we seek to foster good-quality relationships between all children, all school staff and parents/carers. We are particularly sensitive to the needs and feelings of all disabled people.
- At the beginning of the school year, home–school agreement is sent to parents/carers by individual teachers outlining the school rules, positive rewards and sanctions for appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- The school works collaboratively with parents/carers, so children receive consistent messages about how to behave at home and at school.
- The school's **positive behaviour plan** will be taught to every child, and clearly displayed throughout the school.
- Staff will expect good behaviour. They will demand and expect positive outcomes.
- We will provide a broad-based, relevant quality school curriculum.
- The school will do all it can to encourage and promote a variety of individual achievements, thus promoting child self-esteem.

- Rewards and sanctions will be consistently applied by all staff.
- We will use support services, i.e. educational psychologist, social services, medical support and educational welfare as appropriate.

Rewards

Children need rewards to reinforce good behaviour and promote self-esteem. This leads to success at school. The emphasis of this policy is based on a positive approach to behaviour. The rewards that children will receive for keeping the school rules are clearly laid out in the school's **positive behaviour plan** and are as follows:

- values award points are given out to children who demonstrate the school's value of the month
- children will receive regular verbal praise for good work and behaviour, i.e. personal, group or whole class
- children will receive regular stars and stickers
- teachers will provide positive feedback to parents/carers in the form of written and/or verbal communication
- the school holds a weekly celebration assembly and celebrates a values cup of the week
- lunchtime supervisors also follow the school's **positive behaviour plan** and award their own rewards
- lunchtime supervisors also award prizes to children in the class in termly celebration assemblies.

Sanctions

There is a need to register disapproval and ensure that effective learning and teaching can take place. This is essential for the stability, security and success of the school.

Unacceptable behaviour cannot be ignored.

It is of the utmost importance that children understand fully that it is the behaviour which is unacceptable and not them.

If a child chooses not to follow the school rules, these hierarchical consequences are clearly displayed on the school's **positive behaviour plan** and will apply:

- reminder
- verbal warning

- time out to reflect on behaviour
- Social Skills Behaviour Programme
- headteacher involvement.

Any incidents of serious misbehaviour will not follow the above criteria and the headteacher will be involved immediately.

Challenging children

Children who consistently break school rules are placed on the school's Social Skills Behaviour Programme.

Social Skills Behaviour Programme

Why will children be put on the Social Skills Behaviour Programme?

- For failing to meet our school's expected standards of behaviour, or repeatedly breaking our school rules.
- Children demonstrating serious misbehaviours will automatically be placed at the discretion of the behaviour management team on the programme.

What will happen on the Social Skills Behaviour Programme?

- Children will be taught social skills to help them interact well with adults and other children during lunchtimes.
- Parents/carers will automatically be informed when their child is placed on the programme.

How do children come off the Social Skills Behaviour Programme?

- Children will finish the programme when they have enough rewards to warrant integrating back with their peers.
- Parents/carers will be notified of completion of the programme.

The role of the headteacher

If the headteacher becomes involved, she liaises with the Inclusion Leader, AENCO and outside agencies to discuss the needs of individual children.

It is the responsibility of the headteacher, under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, to implement the school behaviour policy consistently throughout the school and to report to governors, when requested, on the effectiveness of the policy. It is also the responsibility of the headteacher to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all children in the school.

The headteacher keeps records of all reported serious incidents of misbehaviour.

The headteacher has the responsibility for giving fixed-term exclusions to individual children for serious acts of misbehaviour. For repeated or very serious acts of antisocial behaviour, the headteacher may permanently exclude a child. The role of the governors is detailed in the exclusion policy.

Only the headteacher (or the acting headteacher) has the power to exclude a child from school. The headteacher may exclude a child for one or more fixed periods, for up to 45 days in any one school year. The headteacher may also exclude a child permanently. It is also possible for the headteacher to convert a fixed-term exclusion into a permanent exclusion, if the circumstances warrant this. The chair of governors and the exclusion committee is to be informed of any fixed or temporary exclusions.

If the headteacher excludes a child, she informs the parents/carers immediately, giving reasons for the exclusion. At the same time, the headteacher makes it clear to the parents/carers that they can, if they wish, appeal against the decision to the governing body. The school informs the parents/carers how to make any such appeal.

The headteacher informs the local authority and the governing body about any permanent exclusion, and about any fixed-term exclusions beyond five days in any one term.

The headteacher monitors the effectiveness of this policy on a regular basis, reports to the governing body on the effectiveness of the policy and, if necessary, makes recommendations for further improvements.

If the school has to use sanctions we expect parents/carers to support the actions of the school. If parents/carers have any concern about the way that their child has been treated, they should initially contact the headteacher. If the concern remains, they should contact the chair of governors. If these discussions cannot resolve the problem, a formal grievance or appeal process can be implemented as set in the school's complaints policy.

Agreed by staff: **Date**

Reviewed annually – last review

Agreed by governors: **Date**

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