

GUIDELINES ON DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

RATIONALE

Positive Behaviour Management is :

A process that places human relationships at the centre of our teaching and learning.

An approach that requires mutual change.

Proactive not reactive; flexible not rigid.

A way of infusing trust and dignity, reciprocity must be fundamental to your values, beliefs and feelings.

PRINCIPLES

Human relationships are central to any discussion or resolution of challenging behaviour, tolerance and forgiveness are essential teaching tools.

We must assess the strengths, needs and expectations of those in need and those who support.

Mutual growth, common expression and shared understanding are vitally important.

A consistent approach, although desirable, may have to be tempered.

We cannot make anyone change, but we can change ourselves so that others want to change and go with us.

We change for people we value and trust.

In order to change others, we must be willing to change ourselves.

You can only give people advice when they care about your opinion.

You don't hurt people to get them to change, even if they hurt you, themselves or others.

The most important skill we require is judgement.

AIMS

1. To promote positive and meaningful relationships between pupils and staff.
2. To maintain the dignity of the pupils and staff during stressful and challenging times.
3. To be respectful, accepting and tolerant regardless of the interaction.
4. To make a commitment of time and energy to each child.
5. To be responsible for creating fair and valuing relationships with pupils even when they are unfair or challenging.
6. To understand that all behaviours are adaptive responses.
7. To be willing to relinquish control.
8. To be willing to listen.

GUIDELINES

1. PREVENTING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

- i) Identify and respond to precursors of challenging behaviour.
- ii) Know and clearly communicate your aims/goals.
- iii) Establish definite pattern of activities.
- iv) Have available a range of options to positively conclude an activity, either during or between activities before the behaviour arises.
- v) Be flexible in your success criteria - don't set goals too high before acknowledging and rewarding success.
- vi) Provide balance of challenging and already known activities.
- vii) Continuously seek a balance between change and routine.
- viii) Be willing to stop or abandon an activity or do something else.
- ix) Both you and the child must feel valued in that activity.

2. DIFFUSING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

- i) This is not a good time to be trying to teach anything!
- ii) Understand that the challenging behaviour is an adaptive response.
- iii) The 'problems' are created jointly and therefore may be your responsibility too.
- iv) Focusing on the problem behaviour often validates that behaviour.
- x) Gaining control is not your role or your aim but putting controls in place is
- vi) Safety, security and dignity are your first considerations.
- vii) Be a friend and advocate first - all other roles are secondary.

3- NEUTRALISING THE SITUATION

- i) Carefully consider what you are communicating by your proximity, pace, tone, intensity and vocal response
- ii) Do not make the 'behaviour' the focal point.
- iii) When personal safety is an issue, interrupt that behaviour rather than restrain physically, verbally or environmentally.
- iv) Don't lose your focus.
- v) Listen, think and adjust your response accordingly.

4. REFOCUSING THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

- i) Search for an activity that is interactional and which you're wanting to work towards. Use that activity as the vehicle making sure it doesn't lead to further frustration or difficulties. Be supportive but don't over-prompt, use flexible criteria to ensure success.
- ii) Provide a visual clue when the activity is over.
- iii) Use all the child's responses to help him/her to reach an acceptable/equitable level of participation.
- iv) Avoid being demanding.
- v) Initially, you will have to assume responsibility for leading the interaction by gradually reducing that interaction and encourage child's participation by giving choice.
- vi) Use 'short breaks' as an opportunity to further develop the positive relationships and to further empower the child's positive participation.
- vii) If you need to move to a different location, use the activity as a vehicle for moving on.
- viii) Keep a dialogue going once the emotional intensity of the behaviour subsides. If you decrease your support too quickly it may result in another episode of upheaval.

5. BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP / AVOIDING CHALLENGE

- i) Initiate the giving of praise and reinforcement as soon as possible. Do not withhold praise until something 'good' happens.
- ii) Reinforcement doesn't have to be just verbal - use your teaching actions to communicate the message.
- iii) Your interaction should communicate acceptance, tolerance and the fact you care.
- iv) If your initial attempts are rejected:-
 - change what methods you've been trying
 - revert to neutralising strategies
 - adjust the length of time of your contact
 - build in reciprocity
 - use methods which allow you to be genuine

- v) Give the child feedback for specific acts of participation
- vi) Remember, caring about people, however difficult the situation, is never a mistake.

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