



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL (BMSS)

CODE OF BEHAVIOUR POLICY

**SCHOOL POLICY FOR THE PROMOTION OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT OF PUPILS
& INCORPORATING SCHOOL POLICY ON PHYSICAL INTERVENTION.**

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SECTION 1: SCHOOL CONTEXT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Staff, Board of Management/Interim School Manager and parents of Ballyowen Meadows Special School (BMSS), have developed and agreed this policy in line with the current National Educational Welfare Board (2008) Code of Behaviour Guidelines for Schools entitled “Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools”.

Note 1: In this policy, reference to the Board of Management includes the position of Interim School Manager in place on the date of ratification of this policy.

Promoting positive behaviour within BMSS requires the creation and maintenance of a learning environment which allows staff and parents to support pupils in managing their feelings and their behaviour effectively, both at home and at school. BMSS aims to promote an atmosphere and environment in which each pupil will develop educationally, socially, physically and emotionally to the maximum of his/her potential. This Code of Behaviour aims to ensure that the individuality of each child is accommodated while acknowledging the right of each child to education in a relatively disruption-free environment. The school recognises the variety of differences that exist between children and the need to accommodate these differences.

BMSS admits pupils who have a diagnosis of autism and are also assessed within the mild intellectual range or above. This policy document sets out the school’s aims, principles and strategies for the positive behaviour management of all pupils enrolled at BMSS.

Implementing a Code of Behaviour that places positive behaviour management at whole school level at its core, requires staff to be fully committed to supporting pupils’ learning within a ‘no blame’ culture in which ‘what works’ is what is promoted rather than making self and others ‘wrong’. The reason for this is that pupils with autism do not learn or understand rules and boundaries incidentally, and if they are burdened with being made wrong by those of us who do understand, their anxiety levels will rise and their information processing will break down.

BMSS wishes to provide clear rules and boundaries and the tools to keep them within an environment where pupils can, over time, learn to develop thought processes and actions about what works in the world.

1.2 RATIONALE

BMSS has developed a school Code of Behaviour for the following reasons:

- To ensure existing policy is in compliance with legal requirements and good practice as set out in *Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, NEWB, 2008*;
- To ensure a safe, secure and orderly environment so that the school’s duty of care in relation to the health, safety and welfare of all pupils and staff is met;
- To ensure a safe, secure and orderly climate for teaching and learning in the school so that the educational needs of all pupils are met;
- To ensure that all pupils with autism are able to access the broad, balanced and relevant curriculum offered to pupils throughout our school;

- To ensure that all levels of challenging behaviour or passive behaviour associated with autism are brought to a manageable level so that the pupil is able to display behaviour which shows that they are ready to learn;
- To ensure that pupils' needs are taken into account in all aspects of their school life, including the school environment, planning, teaching and learning objectives;
- To ensure that this policy is a whole school policy;

1.3 CHARACTERISTIC SPIRIT OF THE SCHOOL

BMSS ethos is one that is very much aware of the importance of good relationships between all pupils and adults who are part of the learning environment. A common vocabulary of trust, empathy and respect is used across the school to foster positive relationships and reciprocal behaviour. In order to ensure an educational environment that is guided by our ethos, pupils are supported in managing their own behaviour within the context of effective communication and interaction and the skills of empathy and trust are explicitly taught and reinforced through the delivery of the Social, Personal and Health Education curriculum and also across the curriculum. A positive behaviour support approach provides a cohesive, connective and meaningful way for pupils to learn and generalise key interactive skills within the school community.

1.4 MISUNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOURS

BMSS recognises that not all behaviours need changing. We need to be tolerant of differences and to ensure that we do not interpret all behaviours as requiring change.

Some behaviours can be annoying, but this does not make them challenging.

Some behaviours are coping strategies or part of pupils' needs and/or personality. This is part of our pupils' disability and should not be interpreted otherwise.

1.5 AIMS IN MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

BMSS aims to ensure that the following primary aims below underpin our behaviour management practice to enable us to provide the best possible education for our pupils:

- The provision of an educational environment that is guided by our school ethos;
- The Code of Behaviour is operated with consistency and sensitivity;
- Promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences;
- Create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- Facilitate behaviour that is respectful of the safety and well-being of others by supporting pupils in developing their understanding of self-discipline and respect;
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all members of the school community;
- Allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development;

- The staff of BMSS aim to work co-operatively with one another and with parents to use consistent language and responses to challenging and inappropriate behaviour from pupils;
- A primary aim is to ensure that challenging or passive behaviour associated with autism is brought to a manageable level so that the pupil is able to display behaviour which shows that they are ready to learn;
- To promote an emphasis on positive behaviour management through designing programmes that highlight preventative measures;
- Staff aim to provide a consistency of approach which allows pupils to experience and learn clear rules and boundaries and respond appropriately to them;
- In requiring pupils to make choices about their own behaviour, staff aim to encourage self-reflection and personal responsibility in behaviour management;
- Staff aim to support pupils in identifying clearly what is the cause of their upset. This will support pupils in communicating clearly what has upset them, discussing it, making an effective choice about how to deal with it and addressing any negative results of behaviours which do not work and clearing up with whoever has been affected and moving forward;
- Staff aim to teach pupils how to relax by using specifically taught relaxation and calming techniques, how to monitor their levels of anxiety, and how to return to being 'Just Right' during times of raised levels of anxiety. When necessary staff will use physical intervention techniques to support pupils in the process of calming down and keeping safe;
- Staff aim to promote the achievement of keeping the expectations of the school by rewarding individual pupils for good behaviour and good work;
- Staff will make clear through the way they are being with pupils that they are there to teach them and that pupils are here to learn. Pupils learn that they need to comply with reasonable adult requests whilst at school. Parents are supportive of school staff in achieving this compliance and the school is supportive of Parents achieving this situation at home.

1.6 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In accordance with the BMSS Policy on Equality, all pupils attending BMSS must be given all opportunities to thrive and achieve irrespective of any behaviours that may be perceived as challenging.

Staff will endeavour to help pupils to develop their full potential by supporting them in managing their own behaviours, irrespective of race, gender or disability. This Code of Behaviour applies to all children equally.

1.7 INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

Parent and/or guardians are actively encouraged to work in partnership with the school in a constructive and child-centred way to support their child in the self-regulation of their own behaviour. Parents are also requested to support staff in their work with the child by following the guidelines and procedures outlined in the BMSS Parent School Communication Policy. Parents have opportunities during the four scheduled Parent/Teacher meetings held each academic year to raise any issues arising from their child's Individual Education Plan and/or Behaviour Intervention Plan.

SECTION 2: UNDERSTANDING PUPIL BEHAVIOURS IN BMSS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

All the pupils who attend BMSS are individuals with unique personalities. They also share certain common characteristics due to autism. People with autism have considerable difficulties with communication, social interaction, imagination and often sensory integration. These difficulties sometimes give rise to frustration, confusion and distress. This in turn can give rise to some inappropriate and challenging behaviour. Understanding the causes of such behaviour enables staff to more appropriately and effectively manage the behaviour. Save in certain very limited circumstances, it would be inappropriate and in contravention of school policy for staff to punish pupils. This policy details the school's ethos of care and how our staff seek to engage with and nurture pupils. It also details the very rare circumstances in which punishment would be appropriate.

2.2 DEFINITIONS OF CHALLENGING AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Many people have written a definition of challenging behaviour and for the purposes of this document, we will use the following:

'Behaviours of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the person or others is likely to be placed in jeopardy, or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit use of, or result in the person being denied access to ordinary school-based community facilities'.

Challenging behaviour may take various forms:

- Self-injury
- Violence directed towards other people
- Reckless disregard for own safety and/or the safety of others
- Behaviour which causes serious damage to property

For the purposes of this clarity in this policy document, challenging behaviour and the school's approach to the positive management of such behaviour is outlined under the following headings:

- Level 1 – Preventative Strategies
- Level 2 – Low-level behaviours
- Level 3 – High-level behaviours

The following definition of inappropriate behaviour will be used for the purposes of this document:

- Inappropriate behaviour is behaviour that is significantly disruptive or is likely to compromise our pupils' social inclusion.
- Behaviour that is significantly disruptive to activities in which other people are involved.
- Behaviour that is socially unacceptable, e.g. undressing in public

2.3 MISUNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOURS

BMSS recognises that not all behaviours need changing. We need to be tolerant of differences and to ensure that we do not interpret all behaviours as requiring change.

Some behaviours can be annoying, but this does not make them challenging.

Some behaviours are coping strategies or part of pupils' needs and/or personality. This is part of our pupils' disability and should not be interpreted otherwise.

2.4 PROCESSES AND SKILLS

BMSS uses autism-specific preventative and intervention strategies in combination with the Management of Actual or Potential Aggression (MAPA) approach when managing pupil's behaviour. Details of these strategies and approaches are outlined in later sections. Together these strategies and approaches, as outlined, provide a planned, systematic and graded method that is effective, safe and as least intrusive as possible.

We believe that these strategies and approaches help our pupils to learn and make choices and begin to take control of their behaviour. The approaches used in school are based on a philosophy of non-violent and pro-active methods of dealing with situations involving pupil's anger and aggression. Underlining a structured response is the acknowledgement of caring enough about our pupils in BMSS not to let them be out of control. School staff aim to resolve crisis situations through appropriately calm, controlled, dignified and skilled de-escalation intervention.

2.5 WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

A whole school approach to the promotion of positive behaviour management within BMSS will be achieved through adopting the following common elements:

- Ethos, policies and practices that are in harmony;
- A teamwork approach to behaviour;
- A whole-school approach to curriculum and classroom management;
- An inclusive and involved school community;
- A systematic process for the planning and reviewing of behaviour policy;
- Continuing professional development for all staff in the area of positive behaviour management;
- A whole school approach to the development of class rules;

To ensure that these elements are meaningful during the day-to-day practice in our school, staff have identified key aims to underpin our practice on a whole-school basis to enable us to provide the best possible education for all pupils attending BMSS. These key aims are outlined in the later section, 'Positive Strategies for Behaviour Management.'

SECTION 3: GUIDELINES FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT IN BMSS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

BMSS recognises that pupils with autism have individual needs in relation to managing their own behaviour. Additionally, it also recognises that some children who, in addition to autism and associated learning difficulties, may also demonstrate challenging behaviour. It is the overall aim of the school to provide a caring and supportive learning environment for all pupils, as defined by the four fundamental rights of the child.

The Education Welfare Act, 2000, Section 23, states that the School's Code of Behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school". BMSS recognises the challenges that some pupils may face when self-managing their own behaviour and aims to provide appropriate supports. Therefore, we aim to build and raise all pupils' self-esteem through positive relationships based on mutual respect. To this end, BMSS wishes to promote standards of behaviour, which are guided by the following four fundamental rights of the child and associated responsibilities.

Rights	Responsibilities*
To be valued as an individual	To value others
To be treated with dignity and respect	To treat others with respect
To be loved and cared for as a child first	To love and care for others
To be safe	To keep others safe

**refers to age-appropriate and condition-relevant 'responsibilities'*

This policy aims to preserve these fundamental rights through developing a culture of mutual respect, to empower each individual by equipping them with skills to respond appropriately to situations which might infringe their rights and to fulfil their responsibilities towards others.

Ways in which we show respect for one another:

- Look for the positive aspects of each person
- Reward good behaviour and appropriate responses
- Share examples of good behaviour and appropriate responses with parents
- Listen to each other
- Ensure that everyone's right to privacy, independence and dignity are upheld

Pupils are taught that everyone should have the right to:

- Stay safe
- Be healthy
- Enjoy and achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

- Be treated fairly and with respect
- Be listened to
- Be given the opportunity to reach their full potential
- Belong

Pupils are taught that our responsibilities include:

- Respect for others
- Respect for property
- Honesty and fairness in all we do
- Care and consideration for others
- Following school rules

3.2 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DISCIPLINE

- **STAFF**

The overall responsibility for discipline within the school rests with the School Principal. A pupil will be referred to the School Principal for serious behaviour incidents and for repeated incidents of minor behaviour incidents.

Each Class teacher has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within his/her classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for good order within the school premises. The Class teacher and special needs assistants together, through their respective roles, bring their combined expertise to the management of behaviour and learning in the classroom.

This Code of Behaviour places positive behaviour management at its core. Staff are required to be fully committed to supporting pupils' learning within a 'no blame' culture in which 'what works' is what is promoted rather than making self and others 'wrong'.

The continuing professional development of staff in the area of behaviour management is key to achieving a whole school approach to the implementation of this policy and it is incumbent on all staff members to implement the guidance provided by this document and staff training. It is intended that continuing professional development in the area of positive behaviour management will ensure the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of autism throughout the school;
- Knowledge, understanding and implementation of established interventions and approaches;
- Knowledge and understanding of general and specific behaviours and behaviour management approaches;
- School staff are kept up-to-date with current research relating to the education and well-being of pupils with autism;

The whole staff of BMSS are trained in MAPA with all new staff required to undertake full training and all staff required to undertake annual refresher training. These training courses are provided in-house by BMSS staff. Currently, **Paula Vance (Acting Deputy Principal and Teacher)** is our fully qualified MAPA instructor. Details of MAPA are outlined in a later section.

It is the responsibility of staff to highlight for themselves should they require more training and/or information, particularly in relation to individual pupils with whom they are working.

The School Principal and/or the Board of Management/Interim School Manager will endeavour to provide additional training when and where practicable.

All staff are responsible for making themselves aware of pupils' strengths and abilities to communicate and build on this in their work with each child.

- **BOARD OF MANAGEMENT/INTERIM SCHOOL MANAGER**

The overall responsibility for ensuring the preparation and review of the Code of Behaviour of BMSS rests with the Board of Management/Interim School Manager. The Board of Management/Interim School Manager has ensured that all members of the school community were consulted in the preparation of this policy and, as final authority rests with the Board, the final draft of the policy was approved by the Board/School Manager and no subsequent amendments were made to this document.

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager provides support for the implementation of this policy by sanctioning the continuing professional development of staff.

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager has ensured that they have provided for their duty of care to all pupils and staff by including within this policy the procedures that are in place for the Board of Management/Interim School Manager to deal with serious breaches of behaviour.

- **PARENTS**

The active support of parents is essential for the effective implementation of a behaviour policy. BMSS recognises the importance of consulting with parents in the formulation of this policy. All parents were invited to provide comments on a draft version of this policy via the School Policy Consultation Form.

Parents are provided with full details of the content of the MAPA approach to the management of challenging behaviour in the following ways:

From January 1st 2014 onwards, parents are provided with the BMSS Code of Behaviour prior to registering their child. Under Section 23 (4) of the Act, The Board of Management, represented by the School Principal will from the 1st January 2014 onwards, as a condition of registering their child in the school, require parents to confirm in writing that the BMSS Code of Behaviour is acceptable to them and that they shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by their child.

Parents are also offered a one-day in-house training programme in MAPA on a biennial basis.

In relation to bullying behaviour, parents are requested to engage with school staff and the parents of the 'target' child, as per the procedures contained in the BMSS Anti-Bullying Policy.

- **PUPILS**

At the beginning of each new school year, each class group, together with their teacher, devises a set of good behaviour practices, referred to as 'Class rules' that are based on the aforementioned four fundamental rights of the child and associated responsibilities and also on the agreed 'School Rules'. On occasion, it may be more appropriate to approach this exercise with some pupils on an individual basis. The Code of Practice/Class Rules are devised at a level that is appropriate to the age and stage of development of the group and also contain a graded list of rewards/reinforcers and sanctions. The content of this list should reflect the behaviour needs of each pupil in the class and therefore, should be individualised. The diversity within each class group requires a flexible approach from the teacher and the best use of h/her insight and judgement when making decisions. Class rules will be communicated to parents for discussion and agreement through the Personal Pupil Planning Process.

SECTION 4: POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

As stated earlier, a primary aim of BMSS is to ensure that all levels of challenging or passive behaviour associated with autism is brought to a manageable level so that the pupil is able to display behaviour which shows that they are ready to learn. The strategies outlined in this section are central to the whole-school approach to positive management of behaviour. The purpose of underpinning these approaches is two-fold: Firstly, by ensuring that good behaviour is promoted and challenging behaviour is anticipated through the use of preventative practice; And secondly, through the use of intervention approaches that are chosen and aimed appropriately at low, medium and high levels of challenging behaviour.

Our positive behaviour management approaches place emphasis on separating the behaviour from the person as it is essential for building a caring and empathetic relationship with the child.

The following sections provide details of the staged process to positive behaviour management followed by BMSS. This process involves assessment of behaviour, planning for behaviour intervention and the types of strategies that are regularly used as intervention.

NOTE: USE OF AVERSIVES

The use of an aversive is defined as behaviour modification by using an unpleasant or punishing stimulus.

The use of aversives is not permitted under any circumstances in BMSS. This policy is an essential component of a philosophy, which does not blame pupils, nor hold pupils to account for their behaviour.

4.1 APPROACHES TO POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

BMSS uses a variety of approaches to positive behaviour management. These approaches consist of interventions that operate at the following three levels:

LEVEL 1: Preventative strategies

Preventative strategies are used by all school staff to ensure that the school day is adapted for our pupils' individual needs. The intention of this is to support the child in the self-management of their own behaviour without the need for behavioural intervention.

LEVEL 2: Positive behaviour interventions aimed at low-level behaviours

Positive behaviour interventions aimed at modifying low-level behaviours are used to support a pupil who is unable to self-regulate their behaviour. The intention of intervention is to support the child and work towards independence in the self-regulation of their behaviour. The school may seek parental permission to make a referral for clinical services at this stage.

LEVEL 3: Positive behaviour interventions aimed at high-level behaviours

Positive interventions aimed at modifying high-level behaviours are used to support a pupil whose behaviour is significantly challenging and poses a risk to themselves and/or others. Such behaviour will typically pose a health and safety risk, either physically or by emotional distress, for the child concerned and/or others, i.e. through self-harming, or through physical assault of other pupils or staff. A high level of disruptive behaviour will also require positive behaviour intervention to ensure a calm school environment. The school may seek parental permission to make a referral for clinical services at this stage.

The following outline provides more detail of how behavioural intervention is implemented at each stage of our approach to the positive management of pupils' behaviour in BMSS.

SECTION 5: LEVEL 1 – PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In BMSS there is a whole school emphasis placed on positive behaviour management through preventative strategies. School staff are required to organise all classrooms to meet the individual needs of the children within each class by using the TEACCH approach, i.e. each child is allocated their own individual workstation and a common area is designated for group work. Staff interact on a daily basis with children in such a way as to manage children positively so that opportunities for learning can be maximised. This involves using autism-specific preventative strategies in the following areas to support pupils throughout the school day.

- School Rules
- Language and communication
- Environment
- Personal/Individual
- Sensory Integration

5.2 SCHOOL RULES AND ROUTINES

Many students with autism rely on rules and routines to keep their environment predictable and, therefore, feel safer. Educational professionals and parents must understand the importance of rules and routines for individuals with autism and apply them in various settings and situations. Application of rules and routines in school and home helps students with autism engage more successfully in activities and prevents problem behaviour.

Generally, children with autism have rigid patterns of thinking. Their tendency to follow rules and routines often causes problems for adaptive functioning, including daily living skills, communication, and social interactions. Pupils may insist upon the same routine or environment and be upset or even have an emotional meltdown if the sameness is broken by unexpected changes or people. However, this characteristic of autism can be applied in a positive way. For example, it is widely known that many individuals with autism benefit from structured environments in which they understand the rules and routines. Pupils with autism are more likely to engage in activities in those situations. For example, highly structured programs, such as the TEACCH model, show how consistent application of rules and routines facilitates the child's learning.

Rules and routines must be established for a pupil to follow in class or other places in school, including transitions. It is suggested that the rules and routines be explained and stated using positive words (i.e., saying "Walk quietly on the corridor" instead of saying, "Do not run on the corridor"). The teacher may set up a time for the pupil to read and repeat the rules in a daily routine.

Together with pupils, each class teacher will write class rules. This can take place on a group or individual basis. The class rules will be derived from the agreed school rules.

The following generic school rules have been agreed by the school community. Individual class rules and pupil rules are derived from the list below:

- Be a good listener
- Follow directions
- Be kind and respectful to others
- Do your best and work hard
- Care for our school
- Care for each other
- Choose kindness
- Care for your classroom
- Care for your toys
- Play safely
- Keep your hands to yourself
- Play fairly with others
- Talk calmly to others

Routines help create an efficient environment – they save time. When pupils know routines, they can perform daily activities more quickly. Teachers often establish and teach routines related to (a) taking lunch, (b) handing in work, (c) handing out work, (d) getting ready to leave at the end of the day, (f) lining up for break, (g) walking down the corridor, and so on.

The following steps may be used to develop rules and routines for a pupil:

1. Determine the most important rules or routines.

Most pupils benefit from structure. Observe the pupil's daily routines and activities and prioritise individual needs.

2. Develop rules or desired behaviour for a setting.

Rules and routines can be developed differently depending on situations or people. For example, teachers can establish different rules for their classes. Rules need to be concise and observable. In addition, literally accurate and positive words can be used to prevent confusion.

3. Teach the rules directly.

Once rules are established, teach them to the pupil directly. Direct instruction gives a rationale for the rule and provides knowledge about how to use the information. To teach rules and routines, teachers may use modelling or social narrative strategies. Staff may also teach rules using behavioural strategies, including prompting, fading, shaping, and direct instruction.

4. Provide support.

There is no specific way to provide rules or routines; however, supports should be based on the pupil's age, interests, and individual needs. Visual supports of rules or routines are often very useful in enhancing pupil understanding of activities or sequences.

5. Evaluate and generalise rules and routines.

Monitoring the pupil's progress is an important part of instruction. In addition, the pupil should eventually be able to generalise the rules and routines to various settings.

For most pupils with autism, especially pupils who have limited skills in communication and other adaptive functioning, rules and routines must be directly taught. For instance, an activity schedule consisting of a set of pictures or words provides visual cues and helps the pupils know the sequence of activities. Social stories are also useful to introduce the rules and routines.

Rules and routines can prevent problem behaviour by providing information about what to do in a certain environment. Pupils can benefit from rules and routines as structure alleviates their confusion across settings and activities throughout the day.

5.3 LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

A pupil with an autistic spectrum disorder lacks communication skills. The principle aim of our behaviour approach is to provide our pupils with functional communication skills. The pupils are taught these skills so that they have the tools to communicate their needs either vocally, or by using an augmentative or alternative communication system (AAC), rather than emitting an inappropriate behaviour. In addition to this the following preventative strategies are taken in BMSS in relation to language and communication:

- The staff of BMSS aim to work co-operatively with one another and with parents and clinical staff to use consistent language and responses to challenging and inappropriate behaviour from pupils;
- Staff aim to provide a consistency of approach which allows pupils to experience and learn clear rules and boundaries and respond appropriately to them;
- In requiring pupils to make choices about their responses to their own behaviour, staff aim to encourage cognitive self reflection and personal responsibility in behaviour management;
- Consistent language describing behavioural expectations are made explicit to all pupils. 'Class Rules', are clearly displayed within each classroom. Each class will decide on their own class rules agreed in consultation with the class teacher and to reflect the 'School Rules'. These are reviewed in the first week of each term within individual class groups and where required, with individual pupils.
- The Class Rules will also be revisited regularly, both implicitly and explicitly at regular times during the school term as part of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme and during the specific times when the school is focussing on Anti-Bullying as part of a curriculum theme. During these lessons discussion will take place about what is working, what can be improved and any action they will take with their class in order to support progress towards self-regulation of behaviour.
- Assist parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the Code of Behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures. Staff will inform and explain to pupils their expectations for their learning and behaviour by using differentiated language.
- Our pupils need the security of predictable consequences arising from a particular action. Each staff member will manage challenging or inappropriate behaviour using a range of strategies that have been practised and planned. Each staff member will use the same language and para verbal messages (body stance, expression, tone of voice, etc.), as outlined through MAPA training.
- Staff will communicate through the way they are interacting with pupils that they are in school to learn and progress in their learning. Pupils will be supported in learning so that they comply with reasonable adult requests whilst at school and respond appropriately to demands. Parents are supported in achieving this at home through the sharing of approaches with the aim of promoting consistency in behaviour management between home and school;

- Pupils may on occasion display behaviours that are not violent but are not acceptable in a social situation, such as flapping or making specific sounds. They may be given a verbal or visual prompt to assist them regaining socially acceptable control of this inappropriate behaviour;

5.4 ENVIRONMENT

- The physical layout of the classroom is an important consideration when planning learning experiences for pupils with autism. The organisation and structure of all classrooms in BMSS will reflect the TEACCH approach by allocating individual workstations to each pupil. In addition, where practicable, any undesirable features will be modified in accordance with the individual needs of pupils, taking into consideration their chronological age and their developmental age;
- Consistent routines for all activities throughout the school day. This is achieved by having pre-made and prepared activities with all materials ready.
- Children with autism are very aware of their immediate environment and can be oversensitive to sensory issues, such as light and sound. The classroom will provide an acceptable level of light and sound, as practicable. There will also be enough space within the classroom to allow for movement breaks that will allow pupils to manage their own behaviour;
- Routine is vital for our pupils and they will be given this through a visual daily timetable and those that need a more rigid routine structure will have a visual daily timetable to follow that is scheduled in smaller time intervals, i.e. 10 or 15 minute intervals. Therefore, all time-tables will be produced in view of individual needs, in either written and/or symbol format. Pupils will actively use their individual timetable throughout the school day;
- Pre-assigned roles and responsibilities throughout the school day for staff members.
- Limited auditory distractions.
- Limited visual distractions (few hanging items). Classroom displays will follow the agreed guidelines to take account of pupils' needs in relation to their application to work.
- Visually labelled areas of the classroom.
- A daily class schedule that promotes movement throughout the school day and is displayed in a prominent and central location in the classroom.
- Opportunity for working individually without the distraction of other pupils will also be a method that is used to reduce challenging behaviour. This may involve the pupil spending time in a separate classroom, however, it is always the case that the school works towards the inclusion of all pupils, albeit within the constraints of health and safety considerations;

- A Relaxation Room may be used as a calm environment to give pupils an opportunity to become calm. This room may be a classroom with a space organised for an individual pupil or it could also be in the form of the snoezelen/multi-sensory room.

5.5 PERSONAL/INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- It is recognised that each pupil is an individual and therefore will have his or her own needs. Staff will assess each pupil and following discussion with parents and if required, other relevant agencies, an Individual Behaviour Plan will be implemented to address each pupil's needs.
- Each Class teacher will ensure that the Class team and break and lunchtime supervisors are aware of all behaviour intervention planning.
- All lessons should be differentiated. A differentiated curriculum will, by necessity, support a positive behaviour management policy in that, if a pupil's needs are met appropriately, problems are less likely to arise within the classroom.
- Home/school communication using the home/school communication book throughout the school year will allow a two-way exchange of information in line with the BMSS Parent/School Communication Policy.

5.6 SENSORY INTEGRATION

- Sensory Contact Teaching (hand-over-hand) is used as a positive motivator to aid the completion of beneficial activities. It is done with sensitivity with the Class teacher's or Special Needs Assistant's hand shadowing the pupil's hand to give guidance and to prevent failure. Sensory contact teaching plays an important role in the teaching of fine motor skills, including handwriting, and also everyday skills such as teeth cleaning, cutting up food, etc. **The Board of Management/Interim School Manager sanctions the use of 'hand over hand' sensory contact teaching.**
- Verbal and/or visual warning will be given before the start of sensory contact teaching. If a pupil declines this teaching approach or objects to it during instruction, then sensory contact teaching will stop immediately.

5.7 DELIVERY OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager agrees that staff who have received documented training for individual pupils directly from an occupational therapist, may act on recommendations that involve physical contact with pupils, i.e. brushing and rolling of ball over pupil's back. However, staff retain the right to opt out of acting on such recommendations and the following considerations apply:

- The School Principal may direct that staff refrain from such activities where there are health and safety concerns for staff and/or child protection concerns in relation to an individual pupil. The BMSS Child Protection Policy may be referred to for more information.

- It must always be the case that physical contact is age appropriate and the school principal will take the pupil's age into account when directing staff in relation to clinical recommendations that involve staff having physical contact with a pupil.

SECTION 6: LEVEL 2 –POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS FOR LOW-LEVEL BEHAVIOURS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the event that preventative strategies do not support the child in self-regulating their behaviour and they engage in low-level behaviours, the following positive behaviour interventions are used in BMSS:

6.2 LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- Staff aim to support pupils in identifying clearly what is the cause of their upset. This support will aim to enable pupils to communicate clearly what has upset them, discussing it, making an effective choice about how to deal with it and dealing with any negative results of behaviours which do not work, dealing with whoever has been affected and moving forward. Therefore, a clear choice system is used in order to empower the pupils in making informed choices in relation to the action they take and consequences they will experience. This is discussed within the context of what works and does not work in life.
- Children will be supported in their language and communication through the usual means of communication used by each child. A method of effective communication is essential for each child to adequately communicate with others to be able to express their needs, feelings and/or frustrations. BMSS offers alternative and augmentative communication methods to children who have significant communications difficulties.
- When staff are in the process of supporting a pupil in stopping a behaviour, the pupil is always given a choice by linking the expectation with the action and the consequence. For example, "the school rules say 'Be kind to others'. The pupil will then be given the choice to change their behaviour by making a different choice. The pupil will be given one choice that is advantageous to the pupil with an individually positive outcome. The other choice will be a choice which is unacceptable and has an outcome which is less desirable to the pupil.
- If the pupil requires further clarity, e.g. if the pupil is experiencing upset and information processing is reduced, staff may use two hands out, palms upwards and pointing to one palm staff will say, '(Pupil's Name), you can choose (a) and (b) will happen'. Staff will then point to the other palm and say 'or you can choose (c) and (d) will happen.'
- Working this way requires staff to know what each pupil's powerful positive and negative reinforcers are. This implies that home/school communication is of high importance. If a pupil refuses to choose, staff will say 'Not choosing means you are choosing (c) and (d) will happen.

- The tone of voice used by staff when offering choices will be neutral and assertive, whilst calm and quiet.
- Few/limited words to express what you want the pupil to do.
- Gesture/model along with verbal language.
- Use positive body language – try not to stand over the pupil or present negative body language.
- Use of visual cues to show child what reward they will get for positive behaviour.
- All staff are committed to supporting pupils' learning to comply with rules and boundaries expected in the wider world;
- If a pupil makes a choice which is not in their self-interest then a consequence takes place, e.g. losing out on playtime or choose time. After this has taken place, the question is posed to the pupil: 'Did that work for you?' This encourages good behaviour from an objective, non-judgemental point of view where there is an objective space for pupils to develop an understanding of right and wrong. If appropriate for the child's level of intellectual functioning, the following is discussed with the child:

X behaviour (e.g. taking turns) works because (e.g. people like to take part as a group and they feel they are liked).

X behaviour (e.g. not taking turns) does not work because (e.g. it makes people feel that they are not part of the group and then they feel left out).

How does X behaviour make you feel and how does Y behaviour (what pupil did) make you feel?

When the pupil has reflected on their behaviour and whether it worked or not, staff will say 'What would have worked?'

Never say 'No', always say 'stop' preceded by the pupils name when referring to a pupil's behaviour.

Say 'No' to curriculum questions, e.g. Pupil: "Is the chair red?", Teacher: "No, the chair is blue."

Say 'No' in relation to unacceptable actions, e.g. 'the rule is No hitting'.

- Social stories may be used to teach social understanding and they are matched to the skills of the pupil.
- Teaching pupils negotiation skills and choice making. This aims to empower the pupil and teaches them how to improve the situation.

- Requesting a 'break' aims at teaching pupils to recognise the signs of distress or overload and teaches the child to self-regulate by requesting a break from a stressful situation.
- Try to avoid using pupil's names so as not to establish negative associations with hearing the pupil's name.

It is important to bear in mind that all the above strategies have to be repeated many times. Research shows that pupils with a language disorder need very frequent repetition before they understand and are able to use language. Given the social complexity of autism, consistency and repetition of language and approach are even more important for our pupils in BMSS.

6.3 POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

Teaching through positive reinforcement will provide strategies for preventing and de-escalating behaviours that precipitate the use of physical interventions. In BMSS there is a continuous focus on reinforcing appropriate behaviours. A wide range of positive tactics are used to increase appropriate behaviour (and therefore decrease the inappropriate behaviour), e.g. non-contingent reinforcement, differential reinforcement of other/alternate or incompatible behaviour, vicarious reinforcement.

- Staff aim to promote the achievement of keeping the expectations of the school by rewarding individual pupils for good behaviour and good work through the use of positive reinforcement and appropriate teaching strategies and methodologies as outlined in the BMSS policy on curriculum delivery.
- Positive reinforcement is simply rewards. There are a few key components to successfully using rewards as motivators when working with children with autism. The positive reinforcement needs to be meaningful to the child and the child has to be motivated enough to want to complete a task in order to get h/her reward. Using powerful motivators helps to keep the child focused on the task and it helps to shape desired behaviour. It is essential that the reward is concrete and is given to the child immediately following the desired behaviour so that the child can make the connection between h/her behaviour and the consequence.
- Motivation can sometimes be difficult when educating a pupil with autism. A pupil's response to activities may not always be appropriate or they may be motivated by their own interests/obsessions. There is a place for the use of 'obsessions' to gain motivation, but they are used within reason, such as a 'reward' after the expected work is completed.
- Further tactics are used to increase appropriate behaviour, such as teaching pupils skills in self-management and reinforcing them when using class rules.
- Staff aim to teach the students how to relax by using specifically taught relaxation and calming techniques, how to monitor their levels of anxiety, and how to return to reduce raised levels of anxiety.

- Distraction may be used as a quick way of getting pupils to the situation where we can reinforce positive behaviour.
- Replacement may be used to provide alternative ways to behave that are more acceptable.
- Extinction, or planned ignoring, refers to a strategy where an unwanted behaviour (but not the individual) is ignored whilst minimising the effect on others. It is based on the idea that responses provided by others (such as giving attention or providing an object or activity) may be maintaining an unwanted behaviour.
- Shaping refers to the strategy where gradually we reinforce approximations of the desired behaviour.
- Chaining refers to the strategy where gradually we reinforce approximations of the desired behaviour. This behaviour technique involves breaking a task down into smaller components. The simplest or first task in the process is taught first. Once that task has been learned, the next task can be taught. This continues until the entire sequence is successfully chained together.

Forward chaining follows the steps of the activity in the order that they would usually occur.

Backward chaining starts with the last step of the activity in the order that they would usually occur.

- Offer a less favoured activity first, then a highly preferred activity.
- Provide highly motivating activities to help the pupil make it through a difficult activity.
- Decrease of difficult tasks by decreasing in numbers, time, requirements or difficulty.
- Access to highly preferred items for positive behaviour.

6.4 ENVIRONMENT

- Relocate the activity or people if a problem behaviour keeps happening in the same area or with the same person.
- Removal of problem items before the pupil enters the room.

6.5 SENSORY

- Where appropriate, during the school day pupils may engage in relaxation sessions during which pupils will be taught how to use a range of calming and relaxation techniques in order to facilitate a good night's sleep, and to be used within everyday stressful situations, (e.g. waiting for a turn). If the behaviour of pupils reveals a raise

in anxiety levels within school the pupils are supported by being offered the opportunity to practice their individual calming techniques outside of class in order to lower their anxiety, refocus the pupil's attention and reduce the use of inappropriate or challenging pupil behaviour.

- Some forms of deep pressure activities may be used in the classroom to help the child to regulate their sensory systems. These activities may take the form of exercises or games that involve pressure stimulation of the body's senses. Examples of such activities that are appropriate for school are as follows:
 - jumping on trampoline
 - swinging (subject to the provision of in-service training by Clinical Services)
 - exercise ball for massage (If considered age appropriate and staff are trained by Clinical Services and also if staff are willing to participate)
- Other forms of deep pressure activities that are also of value, such as bear hugs and touching/massage are not permitted under the BMSS Child Protection Policy and, if recommended by a therapist, cannot be carried out in school and therefore may be followed at home only. If School staff attempt to follow unsanctioned recommendations, the Board of Management/Interim School Manager will consider such actions to be a disciplinary matter under BMSS disciplinary procedures. For further description, refer to the earlier section on the Delivery of Occupational Therapy Recommendations.

6.6 PERSONAL/INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

- After any upset, it is important to support the pupil in identifying the cause of the upset. There are three causes of upset:
 - Expecting something to happen and it does not.
 - Doing something and someone or something stops you
 - Wanting to say something and you do not know how to say it.
- Staff can then support the pupil in identifying a strategy that will work in clearing up the upset. The pupil will be praised for identifying the cause of their upset and for clearing it up. This promotes a sense of completion and allows pupils to continue with their day and their self-esteem intact.
- Individual information that is relevant to the whole school staff will be shared to ensure consistency across the school. All staff are contractually bound by confidentiality and therefore, not at liberty to discuss the personal details of children beyond the workplace.

These are examples of some behaviour intervention strategies that might be used. It is not an exhaustive list. All these strategies do not work in isolation. In some cases, teachers will

use their professional knowledge to implement additional strategies depending on the individual.

6.7 GENERALISATION

It is essential that special care is taken to assist the pupil to apply new skills and coping strategies in a variety of environments.

6.8 MAINTENANCE

From time to time it may be necessary to go back and revisit a particular strategy or approach if an individual is experiencing difficulties, to ensure that new skills are maintained over time. This may particularly be the case around times of illness, stress or change.

6.9 FADING OUT PROMPTS AND REINFORCERS

Our ultimate goal for any behavioural intervention should always be to promote an individual's independence, quality of life and self-efficacy. To this end, it is important that any prompts and reinforcers (with the exception of verbal praise) be gradually reduced to as low a level as possible while maintaining the desired behavioural change.

6.10 SUMMARY

In spite of these strategies, some pupils demonstrate challenging behaviours that require a higher level of behaviour intervention. The next section outlines stage two of the approach used by BMSS to positive behaviour management of pupils who demonstrate high levels of challenging behaviour.

SECTION 7: LEVEL 3 – POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTIONS FOR HIGH-LEVEL CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

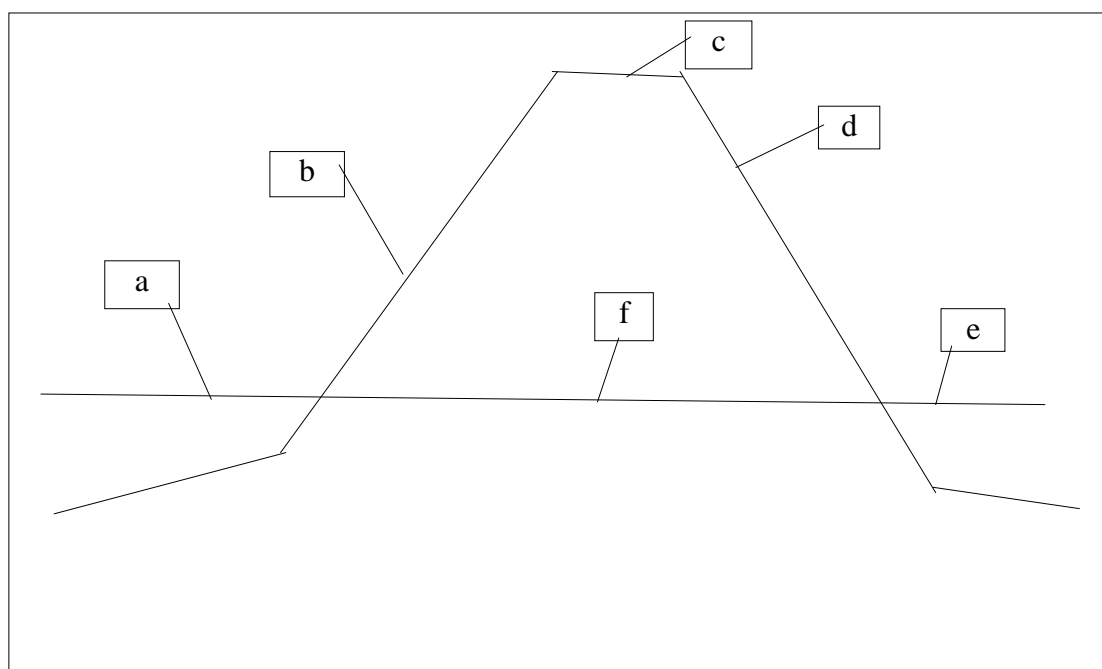
7.1 INTRODUCTION

Any pupil with language difficulties will find expression of his or her deepest feelings difficult at the best of times. In an extreme situation, when the pupil is frustrated, such an expression of feeling may be virtually impossible. Additionally, the pupil is likely to be confused and not capable of complex reasoning. The consequence of this frustration and inability to self-express may lead to challenging behaviour. It is likely that a pupil displaying challenging behaviour could be:

- Seeking a very high level of individual attention
- Seeking to escape from the current task
- Having difficulties communicating his or her needs
- Expecting some form of adult intervention and reaction

- Expecting the adult to offer an alternative which will relieve the situation
- Showing a lot of aggression reflective of the emotion which the pupil is trying to display
- Being violent towards themselves or another pupil, person or property

The use of a range of intervention strategies can be seen in the graph below. The line graph represents the movement of anxiety in relation to a pupil's upset. The labelled points refer to the guidance set out in this policy and demonstrates the use of a range of strategies in supporting a pupil during times of upset to reduce anxiety levels as safely and effectively as possible and to bring the pupil back to a feeling of well-being. Descriptors for the above labelled points are provided following the diagram below.



Descriptors for the labelled points in the preceding diagram are provided below.

- Identifies the use of choices as discussed earlier in this policy. At this point the pupil may choose to practise individual calming techniques. Dependent on the level of upset, student anxiety will either become reduced, and will return to involvement within the curriculum, or will continue to escalate. The school uses a common approach in such situations.
- An assessment of the situation by the Class team will reveal whether to offer another choice or implement further calming down techniques, or consequences (in accordance with the pupil's Behaviour Intervention Plan). Nothing will be said to the pupil when calming down techniques are being implemented. This is because whilst anxiety and fear levels are very high, little or no verbal information is processed, and may lead to sensory overload, and interfere with the calming down process.
- This signifies the crisis point and is the maximum level of anxiety/upset. If a pupil screams or shouts abuse it is more effective to have no verbal interaction until staff can deal with the crisis of the upset when it has passed and the pupil has calmed down enough to process verbal information. Through corridor support, staff adhere

to the strategy of one person leading on the verbal instruction to the pupil – a ‘one voice’ policy.

- D. During this phase of the upset the pupil will begin to gradually be able to process tactile and verbal information more effectively. The Class team, using the one voice policy, will begin to acknowledge the pupil for calming down, and implement individual strategies to further facilitate the calming down process (e.g. keeping a quiet and calm presence, pupil remaining in a seated position, offering a drink).
- E. During this phase it is important that the cause of the upset is identified, and that the pupil will reflect upon their behaviour in relation to the cause of the upset and identify what worked or did not work and what has been the impact of this behaviour. The staff must then identify what action they could have taken, and therefore plan support measures for the pupil. When appropriate this may form the basis for the implementation of reward structures and/or amendments to the pupil’s Behaviour Intervention Plan.
- F. In order to complete the upset, and for the individual to continue with the day in a positive manner, the pupil must ‘clear up’ any upset with individuals involved with the incident.

7.2 REFERRALS TO CLINICAL SERVICES FOR BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT AND CLINICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Parental permission will be sought to make a referral to Clinical Services for additional input and support for pupils displaying a high level of challenging behaviour, as described above. Class teachers will discuss the nature of the behaviour with the School Principal and subsequently the BMSS Parental Permission Form for referral to services will be completed by the Class teacher and School principal and sent to parents prior to making a referral to Clinical services. Only when the school receives the completed permission form, will a referral then be made to Clinical services.

In the event that parental permission for a referral for Clinical services has not been provided by the child’s parents, no referral will be made for Clinical services and a face-to-face meeting will be arranged with the school principal, class teacher and parents to discuss the referral. In the event that after this meeting, parental permission is not provided to the school to make the referral, the school principal will advise the Board of Management/Interim School Manager of same and the Board will review the nature of the child’s behaviour and the continuing retention of the child’s school place in BMSS.

7.3 FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR ASSESSMENT

When our pupils present with high levels of challenging behaviour, school staff will begin to investigate methods and techniques to encourage the best in the child. Conducting a Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) and developing a good Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP) in conjunction with Clinicians, form the beginning stages of the process of behaviour modification. This outline encompasses only a small amount of the work and detail that goes

into the three part FBA and BIP process, which begins by looking at, then analysing, and subsequently, providing strategies for behaviours.

The FBA process described below is used on a whole school basis. It provides guidance to staff in how to produce the necessary documentation, which forms part of the referral for clinical services, and also supports school staff when communicating during multi-disciplinary meetings.

So, to begin with, what is a Functional Behaviour Assessment? A Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) is a process in which school staff will observe the pupil and take data in order to find out why the child is engaging in the behaviour. Since it is thought that all behaviour communicates something and all behaviour is purposeful, the theory behind a Functional Behaviour Assessment is that the behaviour serves a function for the child. By conducting a Functional Behaviour Assessment, school staff will try to identify the function that the behaviour serves for the purpose of finding out why the person is engaging in the behaviour. In order to come up with a behaviour plan that works, one must first correctly identify the function.

FBA's take time to complete because school staff need to observe the individual and need to ask many questions to find out if there are any patterns in the child's behaviour. For example, do they engage in the behaviour with one person, but not another, or does the behaviour only happen in the morning or on the bus? These observations, when written down and data is collected, can sometimes help to identify a pattern of behaviour, hence, offering an idea of the function that behaviour serves for that person.

Next, What Tools Can be Used for this assessment process? When conducting a FBA, several assessment tools may be used. Data collection sheets of various styles, motivation assessments, direct observation, interviews, and questioning of the school staff who work closely with the person, are a few tools that can be used.

In order to identify the function of the behaviour, school staff must first start by specifically identifying the target behaviour in question. It is not enough to say the person is aggressive or has outbursts. These descriptors are too vague. When identifying the target behaviour, school staff need to be extremely specific.

Examples of target behaviour descriptions which are vague and not useful:

- aggressive
- has outbursts
- runs away all the time
- screams at adults
- grabs food all the time

Examples of target behaviour descriptions which are very specific and useful:

- hits other students and adults when asked to do work tasks
- screams, cries, kicks and throws items when upset
- leaves the group activity, without adult permission, several times a day
- uses a loud voice to communicate with adults when he is corrected
- takes food from others plates during lunch and snack

Once the target behaviour or behaviours have been specifically identified, school staff can begin to start observing for that behaviour and recording data.

If the pupil exhibits many types of behaviours, it is helpful to only work on a few behaviours at a time, in order to be truly effective. This means, that some behaviours will be ignored while school staff are working on the targeted behaviours.

To observe and keep good data, school staff will initially need to determine what type of data sheet will be used. Staff will choose the most suitable record sheet from those templates contained in the Staff Handbook.

Using the examples of specific target behaviours above, here are some options for collecting data:

- Hits other students and adults when asked to do work tasks

This behaviour may require some type of data collection which focuses on frequency. For this purpose and the record sheet will record the following:

- Frequency of occurrence of behaviour
- Time of day and duration of behaviour
- If a pupil hits "all day" staff will record each and every hit.

- Screams, cries, kicks and throws items when upset

This behaviour may require some type of data collection which focuses on intensity or duration. School staff will record how long the screaming, crying, kicking, throwing episodes last or you may want to record how intense they are. For example, sometimes the pupil may cry, but other times, he/she may cry, kick and throw items. The activity and time the behaviour happens is also important to record.

- Leaves the group activity, without adult permission several times a day

This behaviour may require some type of data collection which focuses on frequency. Staff will record how many times this behaviour occurs during each activity. A data chart which has the daily schedule and requires staff to place tally marks each time the child leaves that activity. If a pupil leaves the group activity several times a day, staff will record each and every time.

- Uses a loud voice to communicate with adults when he is corrected

This behaviour may require some type of data collection which focuses on finding out why he is "yelling." An ABC data chart may be used for this. An ABC data chart helps to identify the Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence (ABC) for the behaviour. When completing an ABC data chart staff will record what happened right before the behaviour, e.g. what did the teacher say when correcting his work? Then, the behaviour is recorded, i.e. pupil uses a loud voice to communicate with adults when he is corrected. Next, the consequence is recorded. The consequence is simply whatever happens after the child engages in the behaviour, e.g. does the adult leave him alone, does the adult say something back, or does the adult ignore the yelling.

- Takes food from others plates during lunch, snack and at home

This behaviour may require some type of data collection which focuses on frequency. School staff will record how many attempts the person has at taking food as well. It may be helpful

to collect data on what type of food the child is trying to take and what is already on his/her plate. In addition, a record the ABC's of this behaviour may be kept because it may be helpful to know what the reaction of the adult is after the child takes the food. This will be important in determining the function of the behaviour.

So, what are the Functional Reasons for a Behaviour? The FBA assumes that there are functional reasons for each behaviour. Generally, there are four functions that are used. Pupils tend to engage

in a behaviour because they usually find one of the following items reinforcing:

- Escape/Avoidance of a Situation.
e.g. work, uncomfortable clothes, loud noise, touching water.
- Gaining Attention
e.g. from the adult, from another child.
- Gaining a Tangible Item
e.g. food, toy, book, teacher's materials
- Sensory Input
e.g. mouthing objects, spinning items

There are a few ways to find out the function. The most useful way is to take data and analyse the data. The descriptions below provide some indicators that the person might show you for each function.

Escape Function

Some indicators of escape/avoidance reinforcement are:

- The individual engages in the behaviour when a task is presented.
- The individual engages in the behaviour when a new activity begins.
- The individual engages in the behaviour when stimuli they view/perceive as aversive is presented.
- The behaviour ends when the student is allowed to leave the activity.

Gain Attention Function

Some indicators of attention gained reinforcement are:

- Attention (words, eye contact, body language) reliably/usually follows the behaviour.
- The individual looks at or approaches a caregiver before engaging in the behaviour.
- The individual smiles just before engaging in the behaviour.

Gain a Tangible Item Function

Some indicators of access to a tangible item for reinforcement are:

- The individual's behaviour ends when given the item or activity.
- The individual asks for/requests the item.
- The individual's behaviours occur after it is clear that they cannot have the item they want.
- The individual's behaviour occurs when the item is not presented fast enough.

Gain Sensory Input Function

Some indicators of sensory reinforcement are:

- The individual would engage in the behaviour even when other people are out of the room.
- The individual appears to be engaging in the behaviour because they need sensory input, e.g. pushing up against others, mouthing objects, squeezing others, banging tables, hands in ears, rolling on the floor, running around the room, getting up out of seat, etc.
- The individual appears to be enjoying the behaviour, not aware of others around them, not being presented with a work activity, and not attempting to gain access to something

After the function of the behaviour has been identified or at least the Class team and Clinical team have a good idea of what they think the function of the behaviour may be, then it will be time to come up with some solutions to address the target behaviour. Depending on the function of the behaviour, the response will be different. For example, if the pupil's behaviour is maintained by gaining attention for the behaviour, school staff will stop providing attention for that inappropriate behaviour. Another example might be if a pupil is using a behaviour because he wants to escape a task, school staff may have to figure out a way to make the task easier and provide him with a break (escape) before he takes it upon himself to take the break. More time can always be added or work gradually. If a child's function is determined to be their access to a tangible item that they want, school staff can work with the child to teach him or her to request the item in an appropriate manner that is opposite from the inappropriate way of behaving.

Each of the suggestions below is only one of many possible solutions for a Behaviour Intervention Plan. This is only a small portion of what there is to know regarding interventions. With any Behaviour Intervention Plan, it will be important to inform other staff members in the school and family members about the techniques that will be used, so that consistency of strategies and approaches may be maintained.

POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS:

If the function is **escape or avoid a situation**, try one of these options.

- Put in place positive behaviour supports
- Provide a scheduled "escape" before the pupil engages in the behaviour
- Decrease the difficulty of the activity, then gradually increase the difficulty
- Teach the pupil to request a break appropriately
- Do not stop the activity because of the behaviour

If the function is **attention from others**, try one of these options.

- Put in place positive behaviour supports
- Do not provide attention for inappropriate behaviour (no eye contact, no verbal comments, neutral body language)
- Assist the pupil into a safe situation without verbal comments
- Provide an over abundance of attention on a scheduled basis for appropriate behaviour and reward for appropriate behaviour

If the function is **gain access to a tangible item**, try one of these options.

- Put in place Positive Behaviour Supports
- Teach an appropriate way to ask for the item or activity
- Teach the student to "wait" using a wait card, timer, or first-then board
- Use visual supports to show the pupil when he or she will get the item or activity or to show the item is no longer available

If the function is **Sensory input gained from behaviour**, try one of these options.

- Put in place Positive Behaviour Supports
- Provide appropriate sensory input before the pupil needs it or provide it on a regular basis
- Provide an alternate behaviour that may give the pupil the same type of sensory input

7.4 BEHAVIOUR INTERVENTION PLANNING (BIP)

A Behaviour Intervention Plan (BIP) includes information on how to respond to the main challenging behaviours that are shown by the pupil. This ensures a consistent response to each pupil. The BIP is therefore, a written list of strategies and supports for an individual which encourages appropriate behaviours and discourages inappropriate behaviours. Planning a Behaviour Intervention Plan takes place after a Functional Behaviour Assessment and forms part of the child's Personal Pupil Plan.

The FBA is conducted to help identify the function of the child's behaviour and subsequently, in the BIP, a set of strategies, should be written in conjunction with Clinician(s) for each behaviour. This is because each behaviour may serve a different function or motivation for the child and therefore, the response of staff should vary based on the function of the behaviour.

The BMSS Behaviour Intervention Plan is reviewed on three occasions annually at the times of IEP meeting, IEP review meeting and as part of the final IEP review at the end of the year. Additional reviews may take place, at the request of staff, should the current strategies stop working to manage a particular behaviour. The school template contains the following items and may be referred to in the Staff Handbook along with completed sample BIPs.

- pupil's name
- the specific target behaviour
- the predicted function (based on your data collection from FBA),
- strategies to increase appropriate behaviours,
- strategies to decrease inappropriate behaviours, materials and supports needed to implement the BIP,
- skills to be taught to the child, in order for him or her to demonstrate appropriate behaviours

There is a strong emphasis placed on the strategies to increase appropriate behaviour. This is because as many preventative strategies as possible will be put in place with the intention of preventing the behaviour. Consequently, the strategies to decrease behaviours will be the

responses and antecedent changes will be used to decrease the likelihood of the behaviour happening again.

The Behaviour Support Plans clearly state agreements about how to manage challenging and inappropriate behaviours which are identified within a behaviour risk assessment. Pupil behaviour is identified and the consequential staff action and language is stated. Guidance about specific support structures (e.g. individual work stations), rewards and choices (e.g. choosing time or personal organisation checklist), requirements for possible time out of class and physical intervention is clearly stated.

The Behaviour Intervention Plan is developed in conjunction with Clinicians and is discussed and reviewed with parents at the pupil's PPP/IEP meeting, PPP/IEP review meeting and annual Parent/teacher meeting and is agreed and signed by the parent, teacher and school principal.

In the absence of input from Clinicians, a provisional Behaviour Management Plan will be developed to provide for the health and safety needs of the pupil, other pupils and staff. Parents and staff are advised that this provisional behaviour plan is aimed at providing a safe and secure school environment for all pupils and staff and does not constitute a behaviour intervention plan aimed at the modification of the pupil's behaviour. The provisional behaviour plan will be in place pending input from Clinical services.

Parents and staff are also advised that, in devising the behaviour intervention plan, the teacher is required to always consult with the clinician regarding the content of this plan and assist in its implementation so that the pupil may be assisted in accessing the national school curriculum, however, it is not within the role, training or expertise of a teacher to develop a behaviour intervention plan without the input from a clinician.

PROCESS OF WRITING BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLANS (BMPs)

- Challenging behaviours are identified and a functional assessment is carried out to establish any triggers and cause of the behaviour. There are a variety of tools available to compile functional analysis of the behaviour and the behaviour plan and agreed whole school templates may be referred to in appendices 5 and 6.
- Consultation with class team, school principal and psychologist, clinical services.
- BIP is written by the class teacher and clinician following the above consultation.
- A risk assessment may need to accompany the BIP.
- A Personal Handling Plan may need to be incorporated if the behaviour requires physical intervention as a final strategy. Not all BIPs require this. Details regarding physical interventions that have been approved by the Board of Management/Interim School Manager are contained in a later section and are the only physical interventions that staff are permitted to be used as a final strategy.
- This plan will be agreed and signed by parent(s)/guardian(s), the class team working with the pupil concerned and the school principal. In the event that the parent(s)/guardian(s) refuse to agree and sign either the behaviour intervention

plan or the provisional behaviour plan, then the school principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management/Interim School Manager.

- A behaviour plan checklist will be completed by the class teacher.
- A behaviour monitoring process will follow and the BIP will be reviewed regularly and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of progress as part of the usual informal methods of parent/school communication used by the school.

7.5 DEFINITIONS OF TYPES OF INTERVENTIONS (under a BIP)

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Physical intervention is defined by this policy as a personal restriction that immobilises or reduces the ability of a student to move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head freely. The term physical intervention does not include a physical escort.

PHYSICAL ESCORT

Physical escort means a temporary touching or holding of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is acting out to walk to a safe location.

SECLUSION

Seclusion is the involuntary confinement of a pupil alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. This is only permissible during an ongoing physically challenging incident that is considered to have a high level of health and safety risk to the pupil and/or others. The pupil must always remain visible to staff and must remain supervised at all times. This is a response that occurs only when two or more staff are present and the School Principal must be informed immediately such action has been taken. The School Principal will then inform the parents of the pupil concerned of the details of the incident.

Such action does not include the monitored separation of a pupil in a non-locked setting which has been arranged due to health and safety considerations triggered by physical inclusion in the main classroom with peers. An arrangement such as this is put in place to meet the needs of a pupil who finds the classroom environment too much to cope with and who will benefit from having structured, purposeful time in small chunks timetabled for activities both in and out of the main classroom. The aim of this programme is always to work towards meaningful inclusion in the main classroom through the scheduling of short tasks in the main classroom. If the pupil responds positively to this type of structured programme, and the pupil focuses and engages in constructive tasks, then the intention is that inclusion can gradually be extended over time. Additional description of this arrangement is discussed in the later section detailing the school procedures for sanctions, under internal suspension.

TIME OUT

Time out involves restricting the pupil's access to all positive reinforcement as part of the behavioural programme.

WITHDRAWAL

Withdrawal involves removing a pupil from a situation which causes anxiety or distress where they can be continuously observed and supported until they are ready to resume

their usual activities. This will often involve escorting the pupil on a walk in the school grounds, but will always involve taking the pupil to a communal area, i.e. school playground, courtyards, playrooms, etc. Where a pupil is withdrawn, he or she must always be accompanied by two members of staff.

7.6 CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES, APPROACHES AND INTERVENTIONS WHEN HIGH LEVEL PHYSICALLY CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

At BMSS, we actively work towards creating a safe, positive environment where all members of the school community are valued and respected. Our school policy on positive behaviour management acknowledges that our pupils with autism need to be supported in a very structured, consistent manner as they develop positive self-management skills. However, there are times when our pupils do not have the necessary self-control to maintain a safe, positive environment and management and staff need to be prepared to intervene and take temporary control for them. The ways in which staff take control have been designed to be effective, respectful and safe and as non-intrusive as we can make them. BMSS does not punish inappropriate behaviour or challenging behaviour. Instead, staff seek to reinforce positive behaviour.

Non-aversive strategies for decreasing challenging behaviour can be used to decrease target behaviours. These strategies include planned ignoring, contingent observation and time out from positive reinforcement. If such an intervention is used, it is included in the pupil's behaviour intervention plan and in implementation, staff must strictly adhere to the guidelines for implementation contained in this policy.

STAFF INTERACTION

Staff should not personalise abuse or aggression in these situations. If a member of staff feels that he or she is being emotionally affected by the challenging behaviour being displayed, then the pupil is likely to be at greater risk. In these circumstances the staff member must hand over to another member of staff and withdraw.

A second member of staff must be present at all times and the Class teacher is responsible for ensuring that this is the case. In the event of a staff shortage, the Class teacher must ensure that the school principal or deputy principal are promptly informed.

Both staff members who are present are responsible for monitoring the event and ensuring that the pupil's rights are being preserved as well as being safeguarded for advice and support for each other. Team work is considered to be essential when managing an incident of challenging behaviour.

Staff should:

- Listen to what the pupil says and pay close attention to his or her mood, facial expressions and body language.
- Do not ignore or accept any further verbal challenges.
- Try to divert the pupil's attention into a distraction of more positive behaviour.

- If a pupil makes a threat, divert the threat.
- Do not leave the pupil in the position where staff have not offered an alternative.

Challenging behaviour involves the pupil AND the respondent. Staff will ensure that their own behaviour or use of language does not provoke the pupil or escalate the situation. Staff should be prepared for an intervention to continue for a long time and should not allow themselves to become emotionally involved.

The following steps have been sanctioned by the Board of Management/Interim School Manager and therefore, can be followed when an incident of challenging behaviour is occurring.

1. EXTINCTION (planned ignoring)

There are occasions when behaviour is ignored in order to de-escalate a situation. These behaviours could include:

- Self-stimulation by flapping, shouting, screaming and masturbating
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Threatened self-injury

Situations are not ignored when another pupil or a staff member is involved. The other pupil is moved, if possible, rather than the pupil who is behaving inappropriately. This is done to re-direct the attention from the escalating behaviour. Pupils may be given verbal prompts, such as 'hands down' and 'stop flapping', to re-direct them back to task;

2. DEALING WITH A SITUATION

Whenever possible the staff who initially dealt with the behaviour remain with the pupil until they are settled. In some circumstances another staff member may take over, simply as a new face, as this can sometimes break a pattern of behaviour;

3. AFTER A SITUATION

It is important after dealing with an incident that it is then 'finished'. Incidents are not dwelt on or re-visited after the event. Each incident is treated as a new and different incident. This helps to prevent the feeling of failure and does not reinforce any negativity;

7.6.1 PHYSICAL INTERVENTION – OUR APPROACHES TO BEST PRACTICE

BMSS recognises that there is a need, reflected in common and statute law, to intervene when there is an obvious risk of safety to its pupils, staff and property.

BMSS is committed to ensuring that all staff and adults with responsibility for children's safety and welfare will deal professionally with all incidents involving aggressive or reckless behaviour, and only use physical intervention as a last resort, in the interest of safety and it will be in the context of a respectful, supportive relationship with the pupil. We will always aim to ensure minimal risk of injury to pupils and staff.

This policy applies to all staff who are authorised to use physical intervention.

The best practice regarding physical intervention outlined below should be considered alongside other relevant policies in the school, specifically those policies involving behaviour, bullying and health and safety.

In the following situations staff must judge whether or not physical intervention would be reasonable or appropriate. In general, physical intervention will only be appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Where there is risk to their own safety and/or the safety of other pupils, staff or visitors; or
- Where there is risk of serious damage to property; or
- Where a pupil's behaviour is seriously prejudicial to good order and discipline; or
- Where a pupil is committing a criminal offence.

In assessing whether physical intervention is appropriate, staff shall take into account all the circumstances of the incident including the following:

- severity of the potential consequences,
- likelihood of those consequences,
- effect of physical intervention on the child in question and the likely effectiveness of physical intervention in reducing risk.

All staff should be aware that the use of physical intervention in response to a clear or developing danger of injury will always be more justifiable than the use of force to prevent damage or misbehaviour.

7.6.2 POSITIVE STRATEGIES, POSITIVE HANDLING AND PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

The underpinning principles of using restrictive physical interventions in BMSS are as follows:

- The use of force should, wherever possible, be avoided.
- There are occasions when the use of force is appropriate
- When force is necessary, it must be used in ways that maintain the safety and dignity of all concerned

The use of reasonable and appropriate force is likely to be defensible when it is required to prevent:

- Self-harming
- Injury to other pupils, teachers or staff
- Damage to property
- An offence is being committed
- Any behaviour prejudicial to the maintenance of good order and discipline within the school or among any of its pupils

The scale and nature of any physical intervention must be proportionate to both the behaviour of the individual to be controlled, and the nature of the harm they might cause. All physical interventions must be in line with MAPA training, as provided by the Board of Management/Interim School Manager.

Staff will view physical intervention or restraint of pupils as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment. If pupils are behaving disruptively or anti-socially, every effort will be made to manage behaviour positively to prevent a deterioration of the situation.

Staff will understand the importance of listening to and respecting children to create an environment which is generally calm and supportive especially when dealing with pupils who may have emotional and behavioural needs which may increase their despair and aggression.

All staff must understand the importance of responding to the feelings of the child, which lie beneath the behaviour as well as to the behaviour itself.

A Personal Handling Plan forms part of the Behaviour Intervention Plan and is implemented in BMSS to manage highly challenging pupil behaviour of a nature that poses a significant risk to the child concerned or others with strategies that are known to all involved, both in and out of school.

The Personal Handling Plan behaviour programme gives continuity to the child, as those that deal with them use the same responses when managing behaviour. It is produced under consultation with the involved professionals and the child's parents.

Planning the Personal Handling Plan could involve the following:

- Prevention strategies to alleviate conflict
- Physical intervention methods
- Identification of the triggers
- Description of behaviours displayed
- Risk assessment (refer to BMSS Health and Safety Statement)

Personal Handling Plans are implemented after using 'ABC' recording charts, recording observations at specific intervals. All incidents are recorded on the relevant school forms and these forms are kept on file in the School Principal's Office. All staff are individually responsible for ensuring that incident report forms are completed accurately and in a timely manner, i.e. within 48 hours of the incident occurring.

Staff are advised that failure to complete school incident report forms will be regarded by the Board of Management/Interim School Manager as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with under the appropriate DES circular (Circular 72/2011 for SNAs and Circular 60/2009 for teachers).

These documents are the property of the school and **must not be copied or removed from the school** by staff for any purpose. Incident Report Forms set out the basis for the need to write and implement a behaviour programme and also to apply for extra resources/support staff for the individual pupil. Together these documents will build up a profile of the pupil, identifying different methodologies, strategies, behaviours and triggers. A baseline, identifying pupils' strengths and needs, is established using this profile and this becomes part of the completed behaviour programme and also forms part of the Individual Education Plan of the pupil concerned.

In situations where physical intervention has been necessary, pupils will always be encouraged to complete a task that was not completed as a result of an outburst. This may be with support, or in some cases, independently.

There will be occasions when staff may have to act using their own initiative. This is because it is not always possible to identify and/or predict every situation that could result in an outburst. Ad hoc situations will follow the general guidelines that have been set out in this policy, summarised as follows:

- Physical intervention is a last resort
- All incidents are recorded
- Force is minimal
- Physical intervention methods used are only those that are outlined within this policy

Behaviour programmes are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are relevant and effective. Parents sign the programme as part of the pupil's individual education programme to ensure that they are aware of what is happening in school and agree with the programme being implemented.

Parents are advised that if the programme is not signed then, following referral of the matter to the Board of Management/Interim School Manager by the school principal, it is the policy of the Board of Management/Interim School Manager to not allow that pupil to attend BMSS until some form of agreement is reached. This is to ensure that staff are not placed in a position of liability in the event of an accident or incident.

Parents are informed of a behavioural incident through the usual method of home/school communication (for details refer to the BMSS Parent/School Communication Policy). Copies of School Incident Report Forms will be provided to parents on request.

7.6.3 PHYSICAL INTERVENTION/RESTRAINT APPROACHES WHICH CAN BE REGARDED AS REASONABLE IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES

The following approaches are regarded as reasonable in appropriate circumstances. However, all approaches listed below must be followed in accordance with MAPA training.

Where a staff member has not undergone the MAPA training, they may not undertake the following actions unless there is a serious risk to the life or personal safety of a staff member or pupil.

- Physically interposing between pupils
- Blocking a pupil's path
- Pushing, if restricted to situations where reasonable force is used to resist a pupil's movement, rather than a forceful push that might cause the pupil to fall over
- Leading a pupil by the hand or arm
- Escorting a pupil away by placing a hand in the centre of the back
- In extreme cases using restrictive holds and lifting where possible

In the event that a child strongly resists safe physical intervention, staff will withdraw physical intervention and wait until the child is ready to comply and it is safe for further support to be provided for the child.

Holds to be avoided except for the most extreme circumstances:

The following holds should **not** generally be used other than in the most extreme emergency. This is when emergency action is needed to prevent the risk of **serious** injury or loss of life (e.g. to prevent a pupil running into a busy road or to stop an extremely violent assault on one pupil by another pupil). The use of such holds in a situation which does not warrant it may result in disciplinary action or possibly criminal prosecution.

- Holding a pupil around the neck, or by the collar, or in any other way that might restrict a pupil's ability to breathe
- Slapping, punching or kicking a pupil
- Twisting or forcing limbs against a joint
- Tripping a pupil
- Holding a pupil by the hair or ear
- Holding a pupil face down on the ground

7.6.4 STAFF AUTHORISATION AND GOOD PRACTICE IN RELATION TO PHYSICAL INTERVENTION

Board of Management/Interim School Manager Authorisation of Staff to Use Physical Intervention

We recognise that most of the time physical intervention will be used infrequently, that is, as a last resort to maintaining a safe environment.

All teachers and special needs assistants are, by the nature of their roles, authorised to use physical intervention as appropriate.

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager will be informed of the high-level challenging behaviour incidents level 2 that require physical interventions at each Board of Management/Interim School Manager meeting.

7.7 SCHOOL PRACTICE REGARDING SPECIFIC INCIDENTS

Staff intervening with children will seek assistance from other members of staff at as early a stage as possible since single-handed intervention increases the risks of injury to both parties and does not provide a witness.

The School Principal and/or Deputy Principal must be informed of each incident involving a high level of challenging behaviour within 10 minutes or as close to 10 minutes from the beginning of the incident. The responsibility is on all staff equally who are present during the incident to ensure that this requirement is met.

All staff who become aware that another member of staff is intervening physically with a pupil will have a responsibility to provide a presence, and to offer support and assistance should this be required.

Before intervening in a non-emergency, consideration must be given to whether or not other staff are available to assist.

Where possible, staff who have not been involved in the initial confrontation leading up to an incident, may be in a better position to intervene or restrain the pupil if this proves necessary.

A pupil's behaviour may be adversely affected by the presence of an audience. Wherever possible, the audience will be removed, or if this is not possible, the pupil will be removed from the audience. The pupil and member(s) of staff will withdraw to a quiet, but not completely private, place (e.g. two members of staff should be present or a door left open so that others are aware of the situation).

In the event of the pupil's behaviour posing a serious health and safety risk to others, the door will be closed and, in extreme circumstances, the door may be locked whilst the pupil is constantly observed by staff through the window in the door. Such extreme circumstances that may require this action involve the following behaviour:

- Attempted absconion
- Attempted physical assault
- Actual physical assault
- Attempted and extensive destruction of property
- Actual extensive destruction of property

Staff will be aware of the need to tell the pupil being restrained, in a calm and gentle manner that the reason for the intervention is to keep the pupil and others safe. Staff will explain that as soon as the pupil calms down, she/he will be released.

All staff are aware that we operate a back-up system to enable staff to call for help in emergencies by using the internal telephone network.

7.8 EMERGENCY OR UNPLANNED INTERVENTION

Unplanned or emergency intervention may be necessary when a pupil behaves in an unexpected way. In such circumstances, members of staff retain their duty of care to the

pupil and any response must be proportionate to the circumstances. Staff should use the minimum force necessary to prevent injury and maintain safety consistent with the appropriate training that they have received.

REMEMBER:

- Get to know the pupil well
 - A strong relationship based on trust and respect is one of the best preventative measures
- Involve the pupils in decisions
 - Discuss with the pupil reasonable limits, appropriate to their age and understanding
- Teach by example
 - Model respect for the pupils and for each other in all of your work.
- Encourage good behaviour
 - Notice and respond when pupils are behaving well, or are being helpful and co-operative, or just being quiet and friendly
- Be consistent in your own behaviour
 - Encourage consistency in the team in which you work

Also,

- Understand the communication needs of the pupil
- Objectives (long-term and short-term) should be set at the right level for each pupil
- Make sure that the pupils understand exactly what is expected of them
- Pupils should be attending to you before they are given instructions and instruction should be set at the right level with clear antecedents

The following guiding principles will be followed by staff in relation to physical interventions:

- Physical intervention, physical escort and seclusion will always consider the rights and needs of the pupil first;
- Pupils will always be encouraged to regain control without the need of physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion;
- At no time during physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion will pain be intentionally inflicted;
- Physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion will only be used if it is in the best interest of the pupil and pupils must remain under direct adult supervision at all times (refer to BMSS Supervision Policy).

- Every effort should be made by staff to prevent the need for use of physical intervention, physical escort and the use of seclusion in a separate area.
- Physical intervention or seclusion will never be used except in situations where the child's behaviour poses imminent danger of serious physical harm to self and/or others and other interventions are ineffective and should be discontinued as soon as imminent danger of serious physical harm to self or others has dissipated.
- Any behavioural intervention must be consistent with the child's rights with their dignity as a person and with their bodily integrity.
- Physical intervention, physical escort and seclusion should never be used as punishment or discipline (e.g. placing a pupil in seclusion for minor incidents of behaviour), as a means of coercion or retaliation, or as a convenience.
- Physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion should never be used in a manner that restricts a child's breathing or harms the child.
- The use of physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion, particularly when there is repeated use for an individual child, multiple uses within the same classroom, or multiple uses by the same individual, should trigger a review and, if appropriate, revision of strategies currently in place to address dangerous behaviour. If positive behavioural strategies are not in place, staff should consider developing them. In the event that this process has already been undertaken, then the school principal will refer the matter to the Board of Management/Interim School Manager for further review.
- Behavioural strategies to address dangerous behaviour that results in the use of physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion should address the underlying cause or purpose of the dangerous behaviour.
- Parents will be notified as soon as possible following each instance in which physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion is used with their child.
- Policies regarding the use of physical intervention, physical escort and seclusion should be reviewed regularly and updated as appropriate.
- Policies regarding the use of physical intervention, physical escort and seclusion should provide that each incident involving the use of physical intervention, physical escort or seclusion should be documented in writing and provide for the collection of specific data that would enable teachers, staff and other personnel to understand and implement the preceding principles.

7.9 MANAGEMENT OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL AGGRESSION (MAPA) - A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR MANAGING AGGRESSIVE AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

Managing aggressive and violent behaviour is an essential skill pertinent to all school staff. The Board of Management/Interim School Manager recognises the need for safe, effective behaviour management training designed to maintain the care, safety, welfare and security of all involved in the intervention process.

This policy formally adopts the approach of MAPA as a safe, non-harmful behaviour management system to be used in BMSS by all school staff. The MAPA programme is designed to aid school staff in the management of disruptive and assaultive pupils, even during the most violent moments. It has been developed and taught by the Crisis Prevention Institute, a training organisation dedicated to training staff in the safe management of potentially violent pupils.

The programme has several primary objectives:

- To train staff in those techniques that are most effective in approaching and reducing the tension of an agitated pupil
- To focus on the alternatives if a pupil loses control and becomes violent
- To instruct staff members in techniques to control their own anxieties during interventions and maintain the best possible professional attitude
- To provide non-verbal, paraverbal, verbal, and physical intervention skills to allow the staff member to maintain the best possible care and welfare, as well as safety and security, for all involved - even during the most violent moments

An outline of the key points of the MAPA training programme may be referred to in Appendix 3.

In addition, please refer to the BMSS Positive Handling & Contact Policy for further information on School Management approved physical contact, including the use of physical interventions.

SECTION 8: BEHAVIOUR GUIDELINES AND RISK ASSESSMENT

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The behaviour guidelines outlined in this policy are written for all pupils to ensure a consistent approach. A full risk assessment is completed and data are collected to determine the efficacy of these behaviour strategies. Risk assessments are conducted using the BMSS Risk Assessment Form, which may be referred to in appendix 10 and will also be contained within the reviewed Health and Safety Statement.

8.2 RECORDING OF THE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PUPILS

Preventative strategies are used on a collective basis throughout the school and on an individual basis for each pupil. Behaviour management of pupils is continuously monitored, recorded and evaluated with all staff involved with the child.

The preventative strategies and behavioural interventions required for the positive management of each child are contained in the section containing the Behavioural Intervention Plan attached to each child's Personal Pupil Plan (IEP). This serves as a record of the strategies and interventions that are necessary in the positive behaviour management of each pupil and will be available on the school network to enable the transfer of this very necessary information between school staff from year to year and in each Pupil's Education File.

In an instance where a referral is made to clinical services and subsequently, the school receives recommendations from a psychologist or therapist, those recommendations must be received in the first instance by the School Principal. The school will then make a copy of such recommendations and distribute this to the relevant Class teacher. This document is to be placed in the child's Pupil Education File that is located in each classroom. The original document will be filed in the child's Pupil Personal Record File located in the Principal's office.

8.3 RECORDING OF INCIDENTS

It is not always possible to immediately identify reasons why a pupil behaves in a particular way. For this reason, it is important to carefully monitor and record patterns of behaviour throughout the day over a period of time, evaluate this information and then incorporate different types of prevention, as appropriate. In this way staff are able to see whether the strategies on the BIP are working effectively to reduce the occurrence of challenging behaviours.

It is essential that the same procedures are consistently followed by all staff. It is the responsibility of the class team to ensure that behaviours are monitored and all school record forms are fully completed.

Staff are advised that failure to complete school record forms will be addressed initially by the school principal and that in the event of continued failure to complete school record forms, the school principal is required to report the matter to the Board of

Management/Interim School Manager for review. Staff are further advised that this matter will be regarded by the Board of Management/Interim School Manager as a disciplinary matter.

The School Incident Record Forms are completed for each incident that involves physical contact between one pupil and another pupil(s) and/or staff. For incidents involving two or more pupils, individual forms for each pupil must be completed for reasons of confidentiality. School Incident Record Forms are kept in the School Office and once completed are handed to the school principal. These reports are kept in the School Behaviour Incident File, which is kept securely in the Principal's office and at the end of each academic year all incident record forms are stored in the School Incident Report File, which is also located in the School Principal's office.

Parents will have access to these record forms, in accordance with the BMSS Parent/School Communication Policy. In addition, the Board of Management/Interim School Manager receives an update at each meeting in relation to major behaviour incidents and relating School Incident Record Forms may be reviewed at this time. These record forms are also made available to the Special Education Needs Organiser (SENO), when applications are made for additional supports for our pupils. Parental permissions must always be sought prior to the school making an application for resources.

8.4 PARENT/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

A high level of co-operation and open communication is seen as an important factor when encouraging positive behaviour in the school. Structures and channels designed to maintain a high level of communication among staff and between staff, pupils and parents have been established and are reviewed regularly.

The methods of communication used within the school are outlined in detail in the BMSS Parent/School Communication Policy.

Arrangements for Informing Parents of behaviour incidents are outlined below:

Parents will be informed of the school's policy regarding physical intervention in the following ways:

- At the outset of the introduction of this policy, all parents/guardians will be informed about the policy
- Staff working with particular children with a high level of behavioural needs may need to use specific techniques routinely to manage challenging behaviour. Such arrangements will be discussed with parents/guardians in advance on an individual basis. All interventions will be routinely recorded on the School Incident Report Form.
- Parents will be informed via the arrangements outlined in the Parent/School Communication Policy after a non-routine incident where physical intervention is used with their child.

8.5 DEBRIEFING

How each debrief is undertaken will depend on the nature of the incident and the number of people involved. The following is the process that must be followed in cases where a serious behaviour incident has occurred.

- Immediately following an incident, the staff involved must take time away from the situation. Debriefing may continue as is necessary for staff to feel ready to return to work.
- If any injuries have occurred appropriate action must be taken and at a minimum a first aider will be involved. In the event of a serious injury the Health and Safety Officer/First Aider will attend the injured person and may refer the need for further medical attention to the School Principal.
- The school principal will ensure that all staff involved have the opportunity to speak about the incident. As soon as is feasible (within a week) following an incident, all parties involved meet to formally debrief and actions that arise from it. It is the school principal's responsibility to organise the meeting. This meeting will only concern the well-being of staff and pupil behaviour will not be discussed.
- Actions from debrief must be recorded on the School Incident Record Form.

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager will be informed by the school principal of all incidents that require a debriefing meeting.

Staff will be provided with the contact details of the Medmark Occupational Health Service at the start of each school year and following any incident.

SECTION 9: SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING SANCTIONS

9.1 INTRODUCTION

In every aspect of school life BMSS seeks to promote positive behaviour. However, in instances of negative behaviour, the focus is on encouraging a pupil to change that behaviour to a more useful one by:

- helping pupils to learn that their behaviour is undesirable
- helping pupils to recognise the effect of their actions and behaviour on others
- helping pupils, in ways that are appropriate to their age and level of cognitive functioning, to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences
- help pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour

If however, the pupil does not respond, there are a series of consequences that can be used, depending on the pupil's needs and the situation. An effective consequence is one that most often reduces or stops the negative behaviour. It is the objective of the school to use sanctions such as expulsion or suspension as a measure of last resort only. It is hoped that in the vast majority of cases, positive behaviour management strategies will obviate any need

for such punishments. In rare cases the Board recognises that it may have no alternative but to suspend (whether internally or externally) a pupil or in extreme cases to expel a pupil.

This child's level of cognitive functioning will always inform the decision-making in relation to the use of sanctions.

A sanction may also:

- reinforce boundaries set out in the code of behaviour
- signal to other pupils and to staff that their well-being is being protected

9.2 STAGES OF PROCEDURES

Before serious sanctions such as suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilised and the following procedures will be followed.

It should be noted that in certain cases, the School may invoke sanctions for behaviour which occurs off school grounds or outside school hours which endangers or harms school pupils, staff or property, involves illegal substances or illegal activity.

Stage 1 – Parent/School Meeting

The school principal will arrange a meeting with the parents of the pupil concerned and the deputy principal and class teacher will attend this meeting along with special needs assistant(s) who are working directly with the child. A clinician may also be invited to attend this meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to inform parents of the nature and level of their child's behaviours and to either create or review the child's Behaviour Intervention Plan. This meeting will be minuted.

Stage 2 – Internal Suspension

Internal suspension will be implemented by removing the child from the main classroom and placing him or her in a separate classroom. The decision to remove the child from the main classroom will be taken on health and safety grounds and also on the grounds of the school's responsibility to deliver a relatively disruption-free learning environment to all pupils equally. This arrangement may be temporary, but in any case, it will be reviewed to ensure that the child's needs are continuing to be met. In the event that clinical recommendations and behavioural support are made available to the school, the ensuing behavioural plan will be planned in line with the arrangements outlined above.

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager instructs all staff to make every attempt to support the child towards increased inclusion whilst ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all pupils and staff.

The pupil will be provided with a scheduled day and where possible, will be allocated two special needs assistants to oversee the school day while working under the direction of the class teacher. This is in line with the BMSS Child Protection Policy. On occasions when staffing levels are reduced, staff must inform the school principal or deputy principal that another member of staff is required. It may be necessary, on occasion, for staff to maintain a supervision presence outside the classroom, with the classroom door remaining open, while additional staff become available.

The pupil will receive daily teaching time with the class teacher, as scheduled and this may take place in a separate classroom or the pupil may be integrated into the main classroom for short periods for specific tasks. In the event that the pupil is able to cope with short periods in the main classroom, this time may be gradually extended in accordance with the pupil's individual needs when balanced equally with the needs of the other pupils in the class. The main aim of this approach towards inclusion for pupils with high levels of challenging behaviour is to support children in modifying their behaviour through a highly controlled education programme. Pupils are supported in coping with the demands of the main classroom by controlling the length of time they spend in this more demanding environment and by ensuring that this time is spent purposefully and disruption-free for all pupils.

Staff and parents are advised that a change in classroom may also involve a change in class placement and this will be dependent on ensuring a balance of needs in all classes. Any such change will be guided by the BMSS Class Placements policy.

The School Principal will arrange a meeting with parents to inform them of the reasons for the change in classroom for their child and to discuss how the child's education programme will proceed. This meeting will also be attended by the Deputy Principal, Class Teacher and the Special Needs Assistant(s) working directly with the child and the meeting will be minuted.

Please note that all children for whom a scheduled day in a separate classroom or a partially integrated day applies are allocated 1.1 teaching session(s) each day and are always supervised by two members of the school staff. All special needs assistants work under the direction of their allocated class teacher at all times. Details of Class placement and integration is contained in each pupil's Personal Pupil Plan.

Stage 2 – Case Studies

The following case studies provide a description of situations when a child's needs are best met by the school providing a scheduled day for an individual pupil. Please note that the pupil's names are fictitious.

- John was a new infant pupil to BMSS. On arriving for his first day in school he found it too difficult to enter the classroom and went towards the walls and corners on the corridor. He had trauma in his early childhood and found new situations very frightening and would become emotionally distressed, crying and screaming. John was diagnosed with autism with an average intellectual level. John was a very physical child who benefited greatly from many opportunities to engage in physical activity. School staff addressed his needs by firstly, establishing a programme that allowed John to spend regular daily intervals outside the main classroom. His day was scheduled and regular movement breaks were included. He was always accompanied by two special needs assistants when not in the main classroom and activities were provided for him to help him relax and settle into school life. Individual teaching sessions were included in his daily schedule and these began with small sessions lasting a few minutes, which was the length of time that he could cope with in the main classroom. Gradually, over a period of time, (the first two terms in the school, he extended this time and then, in his second year in the school, he became fully integrated into the main classroom and has formed friendships with other children.

- Harry was a senior pupil in BMSS. In addition to his diagnosis of autism he had significant cognitive difficulties in the moderate to severe range. His anxiety levels were very high when present in the mainstream class and he would reach a level that resulted in him punching and smacking other pupils and staff. He would also overthrow cupboards and tables. Harry's needs, and the health and safety of other pupils, were addressed by allocating him a classroom adjacent to his main classroom, allocating him two special needs assistants and integrating him into the daily routine of his class when School staff assessed that he would be able to cope with the increased demands of the main classroom. Harry's day was scheduled, but flexibility was included to allow for his mood changes and to optimise times when he was better able to cope with greater demands.
- Finbar had been in the school for three years and had made some progress, but was beginning to find the main classroom too challenging. He was diagnosed with significant cognitive difficulties in the moderate range. His behaviour posed a significant health and safety risk to other pupils as he would routinely hit, scratch, spit and punch other children with whom he came in contact. In order to address these issues, he was allocated two special needs assistants and school staff devised a scheduled day for him so that he could begin to calm and understand appropriate behaviour. He required a highly structured day and staff divided his day into 15 minute intervals that required him engage with activities which involved various levels of demands. Gradually, over the following three years, he became able to join his class in the main classroom for 1.1 teaching sessions that lasted for gradually extended periods.
- Conor had been in the school for four years and along with a diagnosis of autism, was functioning at a mild to moderate intellectual level. He had been able to cope with the demands of the main classroom, but had now reached a point at which he was unable to manage his anger and had begun to punch and kick other pupils and staff. He was also engaging in self-harm and his behaviour was assessed as providing a significant health and safety risk to others in his vicinity. His behaviour outbursts were unpredictable and when they occurred, were of a very high level. He was allocated a separate classroom adjacent to his main classroom and a highly scheduled day was provided which incorporated 1.1 teaching sessions.
- Darren was a young boy who had been in BMSS for three years and who was finding the sensory demands of the main classroom to be too great for him to cope with. Darren was assessed with autism and was functioning in the moderate intellectual range. He was very loud in the classroom and his noise level was causing significant levels of emotional distress for the other children in his class. Darren was provided with a separate classroom and two special needs assistants and a scheduled day was established with activities that provided him with opportunities for success. Gradually, over time, he was included in group activities, such as circle time, etc. for a few minutes and then eventually, he was able to engage with the class by playing in parallel. He was, subsequently, able to spend increasing amounts of time in the classroom and experience success.

Stage 3 – Suspension

This stage of the school procedure for implementing sanctions is used on health and safety grounds on the occurrence of serious behaviour that poses a risk to the pupil concerned or to other pupils and/or staff.

If Stages 1 and 2 are exhausted, or if there is a single incident of highly dangerous behaviour, the school principal will request a meeting with the parents of the child in question. This meeting will also be attended by the Principal and Deputy Principal. This meeting will be minuted.

If considered warranted, the school principal reserves the right to suspend the pupil for 3 days initially. In the event that a pupil is to be suspended for 3 days, the school principal will also inform parents in writing of this decision. In the event that parents do not attend this meeting, the school principal will write to parents to inform them of the suspension.

The power of suspension is delegated to the school principal by the BMSS Board of Management/Interim School Manager.

In certain circumstances, e.g. where it is not possible to call a Board of Management/Interim School Manager meeting in a timely fashion, the school principal with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board of Management/Interim School Manager, may suspend a pupil for 5 school days.

Suspension may also be implemented on health and safety grounds pending clinical recommendations and behavioural support from the relevant clinicians. Implementing such a sanction on health and safety grounds on the occurrence of serious behaviour that poses a risk to the pupil concerned or to other pupils and/or staff may happen in the absence of clinical recommendations and behavioural support to assist the school in the modification of the pupil's behaviour.

Suspension may also be invoked in order to direct a pupil to absent themselves from school premises for a particular period for reasons including, but not limited to, health and safety concerns for other members of the school community or for administration reasons pending the investigation of the particular issue.

The Board/Interim School Manager may also decide that suspension is necessary where a child's parents have withheld occur parental permission for a referral to be made by the school for clinical services.

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager may authorise further suspension up to a maximum of 10 days. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Removal of suspension (reinstatement)

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s) may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The school principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff.

In the event that the School Principal is not satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupil's or staff, the parents(s) application to have the pupil reinstated to the school may be referred by the School Principal to the Board of Management/Interim School Manager.

In the event that the pupil is reinstated a revised Behaviour Intervention Plan for the pupil will be required prior to re-admitting the pupil formally to the class. The school will require that this Behaviour Intervention Plan is supplied by the relevant clinical services to the School Principal.

Appeal

Parents of a pupil who has been suspended for 20 school days or more are entitled under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 to appeal such a suspension.

Stage 4 – Expulsion

This procedure may be considered used in an extreme case, in accordance with the principles set out below and with Section 23 of the Education Welfare Act 2000.

Grounds for expulsion:

- The pupil's behaviour is a consistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process.
- Continued presence of the pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to the pupil's own safety and well-being.
- Continued presence of the pupil constitutes a real and significant threat to the safety and well-being of others.

Automatic expulsion:

The Board of Management/Interim School Manager may sanction automatic expulsion for certain prescribed behaviours:

- Sexual assault
- Possession of and/or supplying illegal drugs
- Actual violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff
- Attempted violence or physical assault against another pupil or member of staff
- Attempted self-harm resulting in the occurrence of potentially serious physical injury where the school judges that it can no longer meet the pupil's needs by adequately providing for the pupil's health, safety and well-being when at school
- Actual self-harm resulting in the occurrence of serious physical injury where the school judges that it can no longer meet the pupil's needs by adequately providing for the pupil's health, safety and well-being when at school

Procedures in respect of expulsion:

- Detailed investigation of incident(s) by school principal including interviews with all relevant parties, witnesses and the alleged wrongdoer.
- Provision of a written report by the Principal to the Board of Management/Interim School Manager outlining the facts of the matter as ascertained by the Principal and the Principal's recommendations for the range of appropriate sanctions or recommendation for a particular sanction.
- The Principal's report should be furnished to the parents of the pupil at least 5 working days before the hearing referred to below or at any rate sufficient time must be allowed to them to review the report and be aware of what allegations are being investigated as part of this process. If statements have been taken as part of the investigation or evidence gathered, the parents are entitled to copies of such statements (unless the statement has been given in confidence and on the understanding that it will not be shared with the pupil and/or their parents) and details about the evidence.
- Board of Management/Interim School Manager considers the school principal's report and recommendation and holds a hearing at which the child's parents can make submissions.
- Board of Management/Interim School Manager considers if the expulsion is appropriate in light of the following factors:
 - The nature of the behaviour in question
 - The effect of the behaviour on the school community (staff and pupils)
 - The previous behaviour and conduct of the pupil
 - Any contrition or attempts by the pupil to reform their behaviour
 - Attempts (short of expulsion) made by the Principal and staff to divert, correct or check the behaviour and the effectiveness of those attempts
 - The duty of the school to provide an education for its pupils and whether the continued enrolment of the pupil affects or limits the Board's ability to discharge this duty.
 - The duty of care owed by the school to its employees, pupils and to visitors to the school and whether the continued enrolment of the pupil affects or limits the Board's ability to meet this duty of care.

Based on the foregoing considerations, the Board then makes a decision as to whether or not to exclude the pupil.

If the Board of Management/Interim School Manager recommends expulsion, the Board of Management/Interim School Manager will propose a date which will allow a 20-day cooling off period from the date on which the Education Welfare Officer is notified of the proposed expulsion the proposed expulsion.

Education Welfare Officer is informed of the proposal to expel the pupil and the effective date of that proposal.

Parents of the pupil are informed of their rights to invoke a Section 29 appeal under the Education Act 1998.

The Education Welfare Officer arranges consultations with the appropriate parties.

Confirmation of the decision of the Board of Management/Interim School Manager (and the effective date of expulsion) is sent in writing by registered post or a recorded delivery method to parents of the pupil.

SECTION 10: OTHER ISSUES

10.1 PROCEDURE FOR NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Each parent must notify the school of their child's absence and the reason for this absence. At the start of each school year, parents will receive the School Reason for Absence Forms to use during the school year, should their child be absent for any reason.

Parents are asked to indicate the reason for the absence by selecting from categories and also by giving the specific reason. This School Reason for Absence Form will be returned to the Class Teacher who will then store it in the child's Pupil Folder in the classroom. The Class Teacher will also record the reason for absence on the online Pupil Attendance software package, 'Aladdin', as per the procedures outlined in the BMSS Attendance Strategy.

Parents are advised that In the event of a pupil's absences exceeding 20 days, the school is legally obliged to report such absences to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency).

10.2 GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH ABSCONDING PUPILS

Parents are advised that, although the school will endeavour to provide appropriate and adequate supervision at all times, it may be the case that a child may abscond, despite the best efforts of staff.

In the event that a pupil leaves the school building without permission, a search will be instigated of the school and grounds. Should the pupil remain missing, the School Principal will telephone the pupil's parents and, when necessary, the pupil's emergency contact number.

Any decision on whether to involve outside parties, such as the Gardai, will be taken jointly by the School Principal and the Chairperson/Interim School Manager or a member of the Board of Management. In the event that the Chairperson/Interim School Manager or another member of the Board of Management is unavailable, and the School Principal considers it necessary, the Gardai will be contacted.

Following an incident, parents will be informed through the existing parent/school communication arrangements, as outlined in the BMSS Parent/School Communication Policy. Where a pupil has absconded once, the school will assess the ability of the school to protect the child in the context of trips outside the school, etc. Parents are advised that absconding will affect the various plans and types of education the school can put in place for that child.

10.3 LINKAGE WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection Policy
- Admissions and Participation Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Attendance Strategy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Curriculum Policy
- Parent School Communication Policy
- Data Protection and Record-keeping Policy

10.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY:

All staff, under the guidance of the Principal participate in and contribute to the implementation of an effective and equitable Code of Behaviour Policy for pupils attending BMSS.

10.5 SUCCESS CRITERIA:

The school evaluates the success of the policy through;

- Participation of all staff in the policy
- Feedback from all staff
- Staff satisfaction
- Parental satisfaction

10.6 TIMETABLE FOR REVIEW:

A review will be conducted based on the success criteria outlined, and also on an annual basis.

10.7 RATIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management/Interim School Manager on Thursday 17th January 2019 and copies are available on request to all parents from the school office. It is also available to staff on the school server.

New parents will receive copies in their School Place Letter of Offer and school places will be offered conditional on parents signing the School Code of Behaviour Policy Acceptance Form.



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL (BMSS)

APPENDIX 1 BMSS SCHOOL RULES



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL (BMSS)

SCHOOL RULES

The following school rules have been agreed by the school community for use throughout the school. Individual class rules and pupil rules are derived from the list below:

- **Be a good listener**
- **Follow directions**
- **Be kind and respectful to others**
- **Do your best and work hard**
- **Care for our school**
- **Care for each other**
- **Choose kindness**
- **Care for your classroom**
- **Care for your toys**
- **Play safely**
- **Keep your hands to yourself**
- **Play fairly with others**
- **Talk calmly to others**



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL (BMSS)

APPENDIX 2: POSITIVE WAYS OF INTERVENING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

POSITIVE WAYS OF INTERVENING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

A COMPILED LIST OF TIP SHEETS INTRODUCING RESEARCHED BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION METHODS, INFORMATION AND SUGGESTIONS ON SPECIFIC BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS.

The following interventions will be outlined in this section:

1. Behaviour modification
2. Contingency contracts
3. Cueing
4. Differential reinforcement
5. Positive Programming
6. Maintenance and generalization of behaviour
7. Modelling behaviour
8. Positive classroom environment and pupil/teacher rapport
9. Positive programming
10. Positive reinforcement
11. Schedules of reinforcement
12. Shaping
13. Social contracts
14. Token economies

(1) BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION – A PROACTIVE APPROACH FOR THE CLASSROOM

WHAT IS BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION?

There are many different methods and philosophies of dealing 'inappropriate' or challenging behaviour. Behaviour modification is one of these. It is different from other methods and philosophies in that it focuses only on observable, describable, and measurable behaviours. Behaviour modification is based on behaviourist principles, operates on the following tenets:

- (1) Behaviour is controlled by antecedents, events which occur before a behaviour is exhibited
- (2) By consequences, that is, events which occur after a behaviour is exhibited.
- (3) These antecedents and consequences can be changed in order to increase or decrease the chance that a given behaviour will continue to be exhibited.
- (4) Behaviour, appropriate as well as inappropriate, is learned.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION?

Behaviour modification techniques aim to manipulate the antecedents and consequences of behaviour so that the likelihood of appropriate behaviour is increased and inappropriate behaviour is decreased.

Proactive behaviour modification, interventions which avoid the utilisation of aversive consequences, also involves teaching new and more appropriate skills (positive programming). The reason for this is the belief that all behaviour is learned. If you are trying to reduce inappropriate behaviour, an appropriate behaviour must be taught as an alternative.

WHEN SHOULD BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES BE IMPLEMENTED?

Before introducing an intervention, several things must take place. First, it must be established that there is, indeed, a behaviour problem. Factors which may influence or cause a pupil's behaviour, such as a medical condition, language difficulties, or cultural differences, must be investigated. Additionally, input from other staff and from parents is necessary in establishing which behaviour is problematic. Second, a functional analysis needs to be completed in order to establish which antecedents and consequences are supporting the behaviour (or which antecedents and consequences are needed in the case of promoting behaviour). Third, it must be determined whether target behaviour is of priority to justify intervention. For example, while pencil tapping may be an annoying behaviour, it probably does not warrant implementation of a token economy. In deciding whether a behaviour necessitates intervention, you will need to look at its frequency (how often it occurs as compared to peers), the intensity at which the behaviour is exhibited, and the rate at which the pupil is able to learn new behaviours.

After these steps have been taken and it is agreed that a problem which warrants intervention does exist, behaviour modification can be implemented.

WHAT ARE THE EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES?

Examples of behaviour modification which can be used to increase positive behaviour: praise and approval, Modelling, positive programming, shaping, token economy, self-monitoring and shaping. Methods which can be used to decrease behaviour are: extinction, reinforcing incompatible behaviour, relaxation, self-monitoring and shaping.

WHAT ARE THE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT WHEN IMPLEMENTING A BEHVAIOUR MODIFICATION INTERVENTION?

When deciding on an intervention, the least intrusive and restrictive intervention deemed likely to be effective should be chosen.

It is also important to include positive programming as part of any type of behavioural intervention. For many pupils, inappropriate behaviour may be the only behaviour in a pupil's repertoire which has been effective in meeting his or her needs. Positive programming serves to increase the options in a pupil's repertoire and provide more choices for the pupil.

Finally, it is important to remember that it is the behaviour which is troublesome, not the pupil. It is important to make this distinction even though in some cases a pupil may seem to continually try your patience. Separating the pupil from his or her behaviour may make the intervention more effective.

(2) CONTINGENCY CONTRACTS – A PROACTIVE INTERVENTION FOR THE CLASSROOM

A contingency contract is an agreement between a pupil and a teacher which states behavioural or academic goals for the pupil and reinforcers or rewards that the pupil will receive contingent upon achievement of these goals.

WHAT KIND OF GOALS CAN BE INCLUDED IN A CONTRACT?

Behavioural or academic improvement goals can be a part of a contract. A contract should have only one stated goal. They are not appropriate for behaviours that are dangerous to the pupil or others, such as physical aggression or self-injurious behaviour.

HOW DO I DEFINE THE CONTRACT GOAL?

You must first assess the present level of performance by establishing to what degree this behaviour is exhibited. This is the baseline level of performance and should be assessed over a one-week period.

HOW DO I PROCEED AFTER ESTABLISHING THE BASELINE PERFORMANCE?

At this point, you turn the goal into a specific objective by defining and clarifying it. The pupil now becomes involved in drawing up the contract. Negotiate with the pupil in defining the objective in measurable and observable language, i.e. a SMART target.

BESIDES THE GOAL, WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE CONTRACT?

While the target behaviour is the bulk of the contract, there are several other components which are vital:

Contract conditions: With the pupil, decide under what conditions the contract will be in effect (the times, classes and activities).

Contract completion criteria: The criteria describe the level of performance for completion. Does the behaviour need only be achieved once or will it need to be maintained for a period of time (i.e., pupil will complete 60% of task for 8 days in a 10 consecutive day period”).

Reinforcers: The contract should include a reinforcer or reward that the pupil will earn upon contract completion. This should be something the student chooses, within reason. Edibles, small toys, free time examples of reinforcers which could be effective. Positive consequences (i.e. rewards) should be delivered immediately upon contract completion.

Review and renegotiation: Include dates on which progress will be reviewed with the pupil. You may choose to review the contract weekly with the pupil to help keep him or her on track and to evaluate progress. If no progress is observed after a couple of reviews, it may be necessary to renegotiate the contract. Goals may be unreasonable and reinforcers may be inappropriate. It is also appropriate to state a goal date for contract completion.

Language and signatures: The contract should be written in simple, clear language that the pupil can understand. For example, ‘reward’ should be used instead of ‘reinforcer’. This will make the contract more relevant to the pupil.

WHAT ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONTINGENCY CONTRACTS?

- Deliver positive consequences immediately upon contract completion.
- Contract goals are best stated in positive ways.
- If progress toward completion is not made, the contract needs to be modified or rewritten without placing blame on the pupil. Include parents in contingency contracts whenever possible.
- Contracts can have either short or long-term objectives. These can be stated to be achieved in two or three days, after which a new contract will be written. Also, short-term contracts can be devised as steps leading to achievement of the long-term contracts goals.

(3) CUEING

A cue is a signal that stimulates a person to exhibit a previously learned voluntary behaviour pattern. Cueing, also referred to as prompting, is an intervention which stops disruptive behaviour before it starts by drawing attention away from inappropriate behaviour and redirecting attention to appropriate behaviour.

WITH WHAT KINDS OF BEHAVIOUR IS CUEING USEFUL?

Cueing is beneficial in modifying behaviours which are being displayed by a whole classroom, such as noise level and behaviours exhibited by one or few individuals (e.g. on-task behaviour and hand-raising). Once you are able to recognize the warning signs of inappropriate behaviour, you can begin to use cueing to help the student prevent his or her behaviour from escalating. However, if a behaviour has escalated to the level where there is conflict and the pupil is defensive, cueing is no longer an effective intervention.

WHAT KINDS OF CUES ARE THERE?

- Four general categories of cueing are visual, verbal, gestural and physical.
- Visual cues are unobtrusive, can be used with little effort, and are useful with groups of students. Posting classroom rules and daily schedules are two examples. When a rule is not being followed, the cue can be strengthened by pointing to the rule or asking the pupils which rule is not being followed.
- Pupils can implement cueing systems for teachers too. A pupil could use a 'mood indicator' to let the teacher know how things are going in the form of a picture card.
- Verbal cues are commonly used by teacher. These remind pupils of the task at hand, giving instructions and encouraging good behaviour. Verbal cues are very powerful because even if directed only at one student, they can affect an entire classroom's behaviour.
- Gestural cues involve a gesture or movement which is understood by pupils as indicating a desired behaviour. Putting a finger to one's lips for silence, raising one's hand before asking pupils to remind them to raise their hands before answering and pointing to a class rule on a chart are common gestural cues.
- Physical cues physically direct pupils' behaviour. This is covered in significant detail in the section on MAPA.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE CUES?

In order to be effective, cues should be non-intrusive, discrete, non-hostile and understood by the pupil. Making sure that the pupil understands the cue is easy to overlook if you assume that the pupil is aware of his or her behaviour. The teacher must communicate with the pupil what is going on.

Finally, it is important that you do not let any frustration or anger come through when cueing. If you are hostile (or even if the pupil perceives there to be hostility), the intervention will not be effective.

HOW DO I PREPARE TO USE CUEING?

- (1) consider pupil capabilities
- (2) prioritise behaviours to be changed
- (3) Involve pupils in preparing for implementation. This can begin with a discussion of what a cue is and examples of everyday cues: fire alarms, alarm clocks, ambulance sirens, etc. Discussion of what these cues indicate and how people respond should help pupils put classroom cueing into context.
- (4) Clearly convey your expectations and the methods you will use to cue pupils. Role-playing and Modelling are useful to clearly demonstrate cues to pupils.

HOW DO I FADE A CUE?

When the desired, consistent level of response, you are ready to begin fading it. Gradually design the cue to be less intrusive, maintaining the level of response until the cue is no longer necessary.

(4) DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT – A PROACTIVE INTERVENTION FOR THE CLASSROOM

The importance of consequences in shaping behaviour was voiced by B. F. Skinner in the early years of this century. Research since then continues to show that reinforcement is a key component of helping facilitate changes in student behaviour. The method of reinforcement delivery also plays an important role in the effectiveness of the reinforcement. Below is a description of differential reinforcement and the different types of delivery methods of reinforcement.

WHAT IS DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT?

There are two kinds of differential reinforcement. The first is used to decrease inappropriate behaviour by ignoring it and providing reinforcement for appropriate behaviour. The second is used to bring behaviour under the control of a specific stimulus.

The word 'differential' means that students are taught to differentiate between positive and negative behaviours by learning that specific behaviours will or will not be reinforced and that behaviours are appropriate only when exhibited in certain situations, i.e. after certain discriminative stimuli.

HOW IS DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT DELIVERED?

Differential reinforcement is delivered in the same way as positive reinforcement distinguishes themselves. Each type of differential reinforcement will be defined, an example will be given, its purpose will be explained, and schedules and cautions will be outlined.

DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF OTHER BEHAVIOURS (DRO)

DRO is reinforcement delivered when the targeted inappropriate behaviour is not exhibited. For example, if the targeted behaviour is interrupting, the teacher will reinforce a pupil for not interrupting, even if other inappropriate behaviours are occurring, because these behaviours are not being targeted. DRO can be used to reinforce a pupil after a specific interval of time during which a targeted inappropriate behaviour was not exhibited. A DRO-reset schedule is one which starts the interval over immediately after the pupil exhibits the targeted behaviour. One may also use fixed interval schedules in which a timer is not reset until the time runs out.

Three cautions when considering using DRO:

- (1) Reinforcement is provided as a result of the nonoccurrence of a targeted inappropriate behaviour, therefore, a specific appropriate behaviour is not reinforced.
- (2) Provision of reinforcement contingent on nonoccurrence of a targeted inappropriate behaviour may lead to inadvertent reinforcement of other inappropriate behaviours as well as appropriate behaviours.
- (3) Under a DRO-reset schedule, the child may learn to exhibit the inappropriate behaviour immediately after the timer is set and, after the timer is reset, still receive reinforcement at the end of each interval, even if the inappropriate behaviour occurred.

DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF ALTERNATIVE BEHAVIOUR (DRA)

DRA is the reinforcement of any behaviour which makes it impossible for the targeted inappropriate behaviour to occur. For example, a pupil who draws on her desk when bored may be reinforced for drawing on paper, playing a game, and helping classmates on seat work, since these behaviours cannot be going on if the pupil is doodling on her desk as they are incompatible with doodling.

DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF LOWER RATES OF BEHAVIOUR (DRL)

DRL is the reinforcement of a behaviour when exhibited at a lower frequency. Unlike DRP, DRA and DRI, behaviour reinforced via DRL is not in itself inappropriate; rather, the frequency at which it is occurring is inappropriate. For example, it would be inappropriate for a pupil to ask to use the toilet every 15 minutes, however, this is not a behaviour you would wish to cease. Instead, DRL is used to reinforce the behavior when it occurs, for example, once every hour.

DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF HIGHER RATES OF BEHAVIOUR (DRH)

DRH is the reinforcement of a desired behaviour as its occurrence increases. For example, pro-social comments such as “please” and “thank you” might be something the student knows but uses infrequently. With DRH, you reinforce the pupil for using these comments at a higher rate.

HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH SCHEDULE OF REINFORCEMENT TO IMPLEMENT?

You must look at each pupil’s individual abilities and desire to change, as well as the severity of the target behaviour. If a pupil lashes out and hits people when angry, DRL would be an inappropriate schedule. The hitting must stop, and it is better to reinforce any other behaviour which does not result in other individuals being injured. However, with a behaviour like constant questioning, you do not want a pupil to stop asking questions but you would like the pupil to not ask so many questions. In this case, DRL would be very appropriate, while DRA would be less appropriate since this schedule is designed to bring about cessation of behaviour.

Most importantly, with any change, it is critical that positive programming is coupled with behaviour modification. This is necessary in order to teach the pupil new, appropriate behaviours.

(5) POSITIVE PROGRAMMING – TEACHING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

All behaviours that people exhibit are learned. When working with pupils who exhibit inappropriate behaviour, the most vital component of any intervention is to teach appropriate behaviour skills- skills which may not yet be possessed by the pupils. This process is referred to as positive programming.

WHAT IS POSITIVE PROGRAMMING AND HOW IT IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTION?

Positive programming is a gradual educational process for behaviour change involving systematic instruction in more effective ways of behaving. Positive programming teaches new behaviour over time and is based on full functional analysis. Although it does serve to change a pupil's behaviour, it is different from traditional behaviour modification procedures in several ways. First, it is very gradual in bringing about a change in behaviour. Secondly, it is mandatory that instructions be systematically planned. Thirdly, unlike many other behavioural interventions, positive programming is continuous. It is not "on" at some times and "off" during others. Contingent use of rewards is an example of an intervention which is "on/off". It applies only to certain behaviours and is not active if appropriate behaviour is not being exhibited. For clarity, the following framework provides a framework of four variations of the basic positive programming themes:

- (1) Teaching a new behaviour or class of behaviours, for example, social skills.
- (2) Substitute the means of communication, for example, a pupil might be exhibiting an inappropriate behaviour to communicate and needs to be taught an appropriate behaviour which will more effectively communicate his or her needs and will substitute the inappropriate behaviour.
- (3) Substitute a more socially appropriate behaviour, for example teaching a substitutable behaviour when an inappropriate behaviour is not necessarily serving a communicative purpose (i.e. self-stimulatory behaviour).
- (4) Assign meaning, for example, when a pupil displays appropriate behaviour but not necessarily in the correct situation (such as continuously asking questions), you want to bring behaviour under stimulus control so that it will be predictably displayed only in the appropriate situation.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF POSITIVE PROGRAMMING?

Positive programming is an approach which increases the learner's repertoire of appropriate behaviour. It is generalisable because it teaches skills that will serve the learner in many situations. Secondly, research shows its effects are long-lasting. Thirdly, it prevents future problems for the learner by increasing the amount of time spent in positive social interaction and teaching how to effectively have needs met. Fourthly, it is more efficient than interventions aimed at reducing behaviour because it replaces undesirable behavior with desirable behaviour as the pupil becomes proficient in and has a larger repertoire of appropriate behaviours. Finally, it is ethical, socially valid, and enhances the learner's human dignity.

WHAT ARE THE PREREQUISITES TO IMPLEMENTATION OF POSITIVE PROGRAMMING INTERVENTIONS?

First and foremost, a through functional analysis must be carried out to establish the purpose of undesirable behaviour or to establish appropriate behaviours which are deficient in the pupil.

You must also be careful to identify appropriate instructional goals. This involves prioritizing which behaviours are most necessary and would be most beneficial to the pupil socially and academically, and choosing behaviours which are age-appropriate. For example, while it might be beneficial to the pupil, teaching a five-year-old to take detailed phone messages is a behaviour that would not be age-appropriate. This is a behaviour which would be more suitably targeted at an 11 or 12 year old.

Finally, your intervention must be carefully and systematically designed and the instructional sequence must be longitudinal. This involves breaking the target behaviour into steps which can be achieved one at a time and which build on each other. It also involves viewing the intervention as a long-term programme that is part of the pupil's general education programme, and not as something which will be terminated after a month or two. For example, when a pupil masters the behaviour of taking self-directed "time-out" when needed, you can then go on to teach him or her other techniques of handling anger: writing down his or her feelings, talking to an adult, telling another person how they feel, etc. This way, the pupil will learn many appropriate behaviour, as in this example, change in the pupil (like the nature of intervention) will be gradual and longitudinal in nature.

WHAT SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THE CATEGORY OF POSITIVE PROGRAMMING?

Positive programming techniques can include shaping, chaining, fading and Modelling. Teaching coping skills like relaxation training is beneficial with pupils who have low frustration or anger thresholds.

In summary, positive programming as an intervention can vary in degree of structure. You are probably already using it in attempting to teach pupils skills such as sharing, taking turns and communicating effectively.

It is often overlooked as a useful intervention with more significant behaviours, usually because no functional analysis has been done. Performing a thorough functional analysis creates many more opportunities for positive programming to be effective and can preclude the need for implementation of more intrusive interventions.

(6) MAINTENANCE AND GENERALISATION OF BEHAVIOUR – BEHAVIOUR MODIFICATION BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Behaviour modification aims to change the antecedents and consequences of behaviour to increase the likelihood of appropriate behaviour and decrease inappropriate behaviour. The ultimate goal of behaviour modification is that changes in behaviour persist after the intervention is terminated and that behaviour change occurs outside of the environment within which behaviour modification interventions are being carried out. These characteristics of a behaviour intervention plan are referred to as maintenance and generalisation, respectively.

WHY DO MAINTENANCE AND GENERALISATION NEED TO BE PROGRAMMED INTO AN INTERVENTION PLAN?

Very often, changes in behaviour achieved through behaviour modification techniques are not maintained after the intervention has ended. This is often because there has been no deliberate planning for how to end the initial intervention and still maintain the behaviour. For example, a pupil who is reinforced with sweets for keeping his desk neat may stop cleaning his desk when sweets are withdrawn as a reinforcer.

Generalisation is the degree to which a change in behaviour will transfer to another setting or situation or the degree to which a behaviour change programme influences behaviours other than the target behaviour. Generalisation rarely happens spontaneously. For example, if you are teaching a pupil to raise her hand before speaking, you would like the pupil to display this behaviour in appropriate situations other than your classroom. For this reason, generalization must be planned as part of the intervention.

HOW DO I BEGIN TO INCORPORATE GOALS OF MAINTENANCE AND GENERALISATION INTO MY INTERVENTION PLAN?

The following guidelines may be considered when implementing maintenance and generalization:

- (1) Teach desired behaviours, whether they are social or academic, within the natural setting where they should occur.
- (2) Employ a variety of caregivers for training (for example, several teachers, parents, peers). This decreases the probability that the behaviours will become situation-specific.
- (3) Train in a variety of settings. If you must use a pull-out setting, establish some training within the setting in which you want the behaviour to occur.
- (4) Shift from artificial means of controlling the behaviour (for example, tokens, prompts or cues) to natural controls (praise, more classroom privileges). This can be accomplished by pairing natural with artificial controls and gradually decreasing (fading) the artificial controls as soon as possible.
- (5) Shift from continuous to intermittent and from fixed to variable schedules of reinforcement.
- (6) Gradually introduce delays in the delivery of reinforcement in accordance with delays occurring in the natural environment. For example, increase the amount of time between the intervals at which a pupil can exchange tokens. (Make sure the pupil knows when he or she will receive the reinforcement).
- (7) Reinforce pupils when you see them maintaining and generalizing appropriate behaviour.
- (8) Teach behaviours that are likely to be naturally reinforced, i.e. social skills which are likely to elicit positive reinforcement from peers.

- (9) Make sure the pupil becomes proficient at the skill or behaviour; otherwise, reinforcement will be inconsistent and the skill is not likely to be maintained.
- (10) Modify environments that support maladaptive behaviour.

WITH THESE GUIDELINES, WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DESIGNING BEHAVIOURAL MAINTENANCE AND GENERALISATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

Always consider the following when developing behavioural goals and objectives:

- (1) Will desired behavior changes persist when pupils leave the structured, highly controlled training settings?
- (2) Will pupils exhibit newly learned behaviours in non-training settings in the presence of other teachers or peers, and over time?
- (3) Will learning new skills facilitate the acquisition of similar behaviours which were not targeted for training in the original setting? For example, learning to wait in line for one's turn may help facilitate the pupil in learning to wait to be called on when raising his or her hand.

When the goals of maintenance and generalisation are systematically included in behavioural interventions, the probability of success is increased. The questions listed above, while not a template for intervention design, should always be considered.

Finally, after an intervention is concluded, follow-up assessment is necessary in order to make a determination about whether a behaviour is being maintained and generalised. Such assessment can include the use of behavioural rating scales and interviews with parents. If a behaviour is not maintained or generalised, it may be necessary to provide some additional reinforcement.

(7) MODELLING – A PROACTIVE INTERVENTION FOR THE CLASSROOM

Role models are important to human development. When a person consciously exhibits specific behaviour in the hope that it will be imitated, this is referred to as “Modelling”. The following explains the principles of Modelling and the conditions under which it can be expected to be an effective intervention.

WHAT IS THE FOUNDATION OF MODELLING?

Behaviour is strengthened, weakened or maintained by the Modelling of the behaviour of others. When a person imitates the behaviour of another, Modelling has taken place. It is a kind of vicarious learning by which direct instruction does not necessarily occur (although it may be part of the process).

WHO WILL SERVE AS AN EFFECTIVE MODEL?

The two most important factors which contribute to model effectiveness are the importance or prestige of the model and the model’s similarity to the pupil. AS a teacher you have much prestige in the classroom and you will serve as a model, whether or not this is conscious on your part. Peers also serve as effective models due to similarity. Depending on their prestige in the classroom, peer models can be very powerful.

Models do not have to be “live”. People on television, puppets and cartoon characters, can and do, serve as models. Pro-social T.V. shows such as Sesame Street and Mister Rogers all serve to model appropriate behaviour, just as violent shows are often cited as models for inappropriate behaviour.

WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOURS CAN BE MODELLED?

Just about any type of behaviour can be modeled. Modelling has been shown to be especially effective in the development of social skills (i.e., saying “please” and “thank you”, helping others, etc.). appropriate classroom behaviour (i.e. staying on task, working quietly), and work skills (i.e. punctuality, taking initiative).

Remember that inappropriate behaviour can also be modeled. Peers often serve as such models. Adults, too, often serve as models for inappropriate or undesirable behaviour. For this reason, it is very important that you view yourself as a model whenever you are around pupils, whether or not Modelling is your intent.

Some examples of Modelling are:

- Keeping your desk neat as a model for your pupils
- Not interrupting pupils or adults
- Apologizing when not appropriate
- Giving visual instruction to pupils
- Making “I” statements

There is an unlimited number of examples of Modelling: these are just a few common examples.

WHAT MAKES MODELLING AN EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION?

As already stated, the prestige and similarity of the model are what makes him or her potentially effective. What serves most to make it effective, however, is reinforcement. This can occur in one of two ways. First, a pupil can be directly reinforced for modelling appropriate behaviour. When you observe a pupil imitating another's desired behaviour and reinforce this, you increase the likelihood that the behaviour will be repeated. Similarly, you must be careful not to reinforce imitation of undesirable behaviour.

The second way reinforcement can be delivered is vicariously. For example, when a teacher says, "You are working hard today. Your work is very good." Not only is the pupil being reinforced, but other pupils, for whom praise is reinforcing, are likely to imitate this behaviour in order to receive reinforcement themselves.

In the same vein, modelling can decrease behaviours. When you redirect a pupil from an inappropriate to an appropriate behaviour, other pupils learn through their peer model what is unacceptable behaviour.

HOW DO I MAKE A BIG IMPACT AND ACHIEVE LONG-LASTING EFFECTS WITH MODELLING?

Modelling is easy to use, is widespread, and is one of the oldest methods of changing behaviour. However, modelling alone has not been shown to have a big impact or to have long-lasting effects. It can be made a much more effective intervention if used in conjunction with an other behavioural intervention.

Reinforcement is one way which has been shown to make modelling a successful reinforcement and other interventions which can be successfully be paired with modelling are shaping, cueing and token economies.

Most importantly, though, the teacher always serves as a model. Pupils watch how their teacher behaves and what they observe shapes their understanding of what is and is not acceptable. They observe how you interact with others, how you deal with conflict, and how you deal with making mistakes and apologies. These are perhaps the most important things that you model to your pupils, as they are ongoing behaviours and are not always consciously exhibited.

(8) POSITIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT AND PUPIL/TEACHER RAPPORT – PREVENTING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM

Establishing positive rapport with pupils involves showing them that you respect and care about them. Three vital components are involved in achieving this; communication, the teacher as a model and positive expectations.

COMMUNICATION – HOW DOES IT AFFECT RAPPORT WITH PUPILS?

Every communicator plays two roles: sender and receiver. How you say things to people affects how they respond to you. A tone dripping with sarcasm or belting out a command will cause the receiver to respond much differently than a tone which conveys empathy and sincerity. These are qualities of “sending”.

“Receiving” refers to how we respond to someone who is attempting to transmit information. These skills will determine how open lines of communication remain.

HOW DO I DEVELOP EFFECTIVE SENDING SKILLS?

You will be most effective with pupils if you first begin by dealing with the present. While it is important to document patterns and to give specifics of behaviour, bringing up events from the past when dealing with a potential conflict will only cause pupils to become defensive.

It is also important to talk directly to the pupil. This shows respect and helps the pupil to take responsibility for behaviour, whether it is inappropriate behaviour or positive progress.

Being courteous is also very important. This includes giving pupils your full attention when you are talking or listening to them as well as saying “please”, “thank you”, “excuse me” and so forth.

Using “I” statements is very important in communicating effectively with pupils. “I” statements convey how the consequences of a pupil’s behaviour make you feel. They put emphasis on the pupil’s behaviour rather than on the pupil.

Feedback also helps cultivate positive rapport. Specific, non-judgemental comments about pupil behaviour, both appropriate behaviour and inappropriate, communicate to pupils that they are responsible for and in control of their behaviour. Avoid comparing pupils. Feedback must be contingent upon behaviour, which means it is dependent upon and immediately following it. It should also specifically describe the behaviour being evaluated.

Judging when to use questions versus statements is also important. There are many situations when it is tempting to use statements when a question may be more appropriate. At other times, statements might be more appropriate. Finally, making positive statements is very important. Research shows that an increase in positive statements can lead to a decrease in negative behaviour. Again, it is important that these comments are contingent upon positive behaviour and are specific and credible.

HOW DO I BECOME A SKILLED RECEIVER?

Being a skilled receiver means being an active listener. First and foremost, you need to practice being an empathic, non-judgemental listener. This is very important in keeping lines of communication open. Even if you do not agree with or approve of what a pupil is telling

you, the important thing is that they are communicating with you. You do not want to discourage this communication.

By giving the pupil your full attention, nodding, saying “M-hm”, “Yes”, paraphrasing, and asking questions, you let a pupil know that it is ok to talk about feelings which may be uncomfortable. Also, you give the pupil an opportunity to reexamine and clarify their options for dealing with the situation.

MY ROLE AS A MODEL: HOW CAN IT AFFECT MY RAPPORT WITH PUPILS?

First, by improving your communication skills in the ways listed above, you serve as a very important model for pupils who are developing their own methods of communication.

By modelling behaviour you want pupils to imitate you as you portray yourself as caring, competent and possessed of clear expectations for your pupils. This can make the first few days of school more settled and comfortable for your pupils. Taking time to explain classroom expectations and to get to know them a little can make their transition much smoother.

EXPECTATIONS: HOW CAN THEY HELP DEVELOPING POSITIVE RAPPORT?

Having positive expectations for all pupils is very important. Teacher expectations and evaluations are directly linked to achievement. No matter the skill level or natural ability of the pupil, all pupils have the ability and desire to succeed. Despite different expectations for different pupils, all pupils are entitled to your help.

Giving pupils cues, prompting and giving time to think of an answer are all signals to the pupil that you have positive expectations for them. Encourage non-participants by asking them questions you know they can answer. These teacher behaviours communicate to pupils that each and every one of them is valuable and can succeed.

WHAT ACTIVITIES CAN HELP ESTABLISH POSITIVE RAPPORT WITH MY PUPILS?

The following is a list of activities that may help in developing a positive rapport with pupils:

- Eating lunch with pupils
- Joining in playing games with pupils
- Making birthday cards
- Discussing the work that pupils produce

Questions to ask when evaluating your classroom environment and pupil rapport:

- Do I speak hastily, calmly, clearly? Do I nag? How would my pupils describe me most of the time?
- Do I have clear rules and procedures that are known and reinforced?
- Am I aware of what my pupils are doing? Do I encourage them, listen to them, notice their positive cooperative behaviours as well as their off-task, disruptive behaviours?
- Do I plan to cater for individual needs with variety in my approach?
- How positive is my discipline? Do I proactively plan ahead for disruptions?
- Do I respect all of my pupils? Am I consistent in my discipline?

Creating a positive classroom environment and positive rapport with your pupils is a cooperative endeavour. It requires evaluation and modification of both pupil and teacher behaviour. Committing to it at the beginning of the school year will pay off greatly in the long run.

(9) POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT – A PROACTIVE INTERVENTION FOR THE CLASSROOM

Reinforcement is a stimulus which follows and is contingent upon a behaviour and increases the probability of a behaviour being repeated. Positive reinforcement can increase the probability of not only desirable behaviour but also undesirable behaviour. For example, if a pupil whines in order to get attention and is successful in getting it, the attention serves as positive reinforcement which increases the likelihood that the pupil will continue to whine.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF REINFORCERS?

Natural and direct reinforcement: This type of reinforcement results directly from the appropriate behaviour. For example, interacting appropriately with peers in group activities will lead to more invitations to join such activities.

The natural reinforcement for appropriate bids for attention, help, participation, etc. is providing the attention, help and opportunity to participate. The goal should always be to move the pupil to natural and intrinsic reinforcement.

Social reinforcers: These are reinforcers which are socially mediated by teachers, parents, other adults and peers, who express approval and praise for appropriate behaviour. Comments (“good work”, “I can tell you are working very hard”), written approval (“Super”), and expressions of approval (nodding your head, smiling, clapping) are all effective reinforcers.

Activity reinforcers: Activity reinforcers are very effective and positive for pupils. Allowing pupils to participate in preferred activities (such as games, computer time, etc.) is very powerful, especially if part of the reinforcement is being allowed to choose a classmate with whom to participate in the activity. This also provides social reinforcement from the partner.

Tangible reinforcers: This category includes edibles, toys, balloons, stickers and awards. Edibles and toys should be used with caution. Parents may have reason to object to edibles as reinforcement (for example, if a pupil has a weight problem) and toys can make other pupils envious.

Token reinforcement: Token reinforcement involves awarding points or tokens for appropriate behaviour. These awards have little value in themselves but can be exchanged for something of value.

ISN'T GIVING REINFORCEMENT LIKE BRIBING A PUPIL?

Planned positive reinforcement is very effective in promoting desirable change in pupil behaviour. Some teachers question whether reinforcing or rewarding pupils for improving their behaviour is really just bribing them to do what is desired. This is not the case. A bribe is something which is unacceptable or inappropriate. Reinforcement is given to bring about desirable change and to teach pupils to take responsibility for behaviour.

HOW SHOULD I CHOOSE A REINFORCER?

Reinforcers must be valued, preferred and individualised. What may be extremely motivating for one pupil may be entirely useless for another. Use the following guidelines in choosing a reinforcer:

Observe the pupil: What kinds of activities does he or she seek out? What objects or events are presently serving to reinforce his or her behaviour?

Ask the pupil: When designing a plan to modify behaviour give the student a list of choices and ask what he or she would like to try to earn. For example, if setting up a token economy for work completed, let the pupil choose from a list of activities to find out which he or she is interested in earning.

Monitor and evaluate: Periodically review by observation and discussion whether the reinforcer remains preferred or whether a new reinforcer is necessary.

HOW SHOULD REINFORCEMENT BE DELIVERED?

In order to make positive reinforcement, an effective intervention use the following guidelines:

- (1) Reinforcement must be consistently delivered, according to a planned reinforcement schedule. If it is not, no connection will develop between appropriate behaviour and the reinforcement and the behaviour will not change.
- (2) Reinforcement must be delivered immediately. Pupils should know when they can expect reinforcement. If you wait until the end of the day to reinforce a pupil for remaining in their seat during the morning, the effect of the reinforcement is reduced, if not lost. If it is impossible to deliver reinforcement immediately, verbal reinforcement should be given and the pupil should be told when he or she can expect to receive other reinforcement. In this way, a contingency between behaviour and reinforcement will be strengthened or maintained.
- (3) Improvement should be reinforce. Do not wait until the pupil's behaviour is perfect to deliver reinforcement. You should recognize improvement and let the pupil know that you recognize the effort.
- (4) Do not give reinforcement because you feel sorry for a pupil. If a pupil does not achieve the required criterion, delivering reinforcement will only teach the pupil that rewards are readily available regardless of behaviour and may even lead to an escalation of the behaviour. Rather, recognize that you know the pupil is disappointed but that they will have the opportunity to try again tomorrow. Reinforcement must be contingent on behaviour.
- (5) Whenever possible, pair any reinforcement with social reinforcement. If your reinforcement plan is letting pupils participate in preferred activities, make sure to give some sort of social reinforcement, such as telling the pupil, "You really did an excellent job today. You should be really proud of yourself" or let the pupil choose another pupil for the activity.
- (6) Make sure that social reinforcers are not ambiguous. They should be sincere, clear and identify the specific behaviour for which they are being delivered.
- (7) Reinforcement should be age-appropriate.

WHAT IS NEGATIVE REINFORCEMENT?

Negative reinforcement is often, mistakenly, equated with punishment. Punishment is the application of aversive stimuli in order to reduce the chance of a behaviour being repeated. Negative reinforcement is the removal of aversive stimuli in order to increase the probability of a behaviour being repeated.

Negative reinforcement can be very effective, especially to create an environment which feels safe to a pupil. It is often more naturally occurring than, for example, tangible reinforcers. As with the other reinforcement categories, it is important to pair negative with social reinforcement.

WHAT IS SATIATION AND HOW SHOULD IT BE HANDLED?

Satiation is the term used to describe the situation of a reinforcer losing its effectiveness. For example, if a pupil is receiving sweets as reinforcement, it is likely that after a period of time he or she will tire of them and no longer find them desirable. Satiation can also occur if too much reinforcement is being delivered. Earning up to ten minutes of computer time a day may serve as reinforcement for a long period of time, while being given the opportunity to earn an hour of computer time, for example, may quickly lead to satiation.

When satiation begins, the rate at which the desired behaviour is displayed tapers off until it halts. This is very common with edible reinforcers. Reinforcement in the form of activities, social opportunities, and learning activities tend to be more immune to satiation.

The following are recommendations to prevent satiation:

- Varying the reinforcer or using a different reinforcer for each target behaviour
- Monitoring the amount of reinforcement delivered and using only enough to maintain the target behaviour
- Avoiding edible reinforcers (if you must edibles, vary and apply minimally)
- Moving from a constant to a intermittent schedule of reinforcement as soon as possible
- Moving from primary to secondary reinforcers as soon as possible

Furthermore, any type of reinforcement schedule or system should include ongoing, systematic assessment of the reinforcement effectiveness through observation. Another option is incorporating a menu of potential reinforcers and allowing the student to choose his or her reinforcement. It is likely that satiation will eventually occur with any type of reinforcement. If systematic assessment is diligently carried out, however, one can maintain the behaviour modification plan by changing reinforcers before satiation occurs and by delivering reinforcement on varying schedules.

Finally, in designing a positive reinforcement plan, it is very important to move from less natural reinforcement (tokens, tangibles) to more natural reinforcement (social reinforcement, direct and natural reinforcement).

(10) SCHEDULES OF REINFORCEMENT – PLANNING REINFORCEMENT TO IMPROVE BEHAVIOUR

A schedule of reinforcement refers to a deliberate plan which determines when and how often reinforcement is given to a pupil for appropriate behaviour. The different schedules of reinforcement are outlined here, along with when and how they are most successfully used and with what kinds of behaviours the schedules are recommended.

WHAT IS CONTINUOUS REINFORCEMENT?

When a target behaviour is reinforced each and every time it is exhibited, this is referred to as continuous reinforcement.

This schedule should be used when teaching a pupil a new behaviour not previously part of the pupil's repertoire and is especially useful with young pupils because it is very systematic. It is very effective in establishing an association between the target behaviour and the reinforcement.

While continuous reinforcement will create an association between behaviour and reinforcement, it will not produce long-term changes in behaviour. If only continuous reinforcement is used, once it is withdrawn, the desired behaviour will also cease. Also, if used too long, a pupil may learn to manipulate the intervention by behaving appropriately only when reinforcement is desired. Once an association has been established, it is time to change to one of the following schedules.

WHAT ARE RATION REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULES?

When a target behaviour is reinforced after a number of occurrences, this is referred to as a ration reinforcement schedule.

This schedule is useful after having established a contingency between the reinforcement and appropriate behaviour with the continuous reinforcement schedule. It is also a good option when continuous reinforcement would be too cumbersome.

There are two types of ratio reinforcement, each with its own benefits. Fixed ratio reinforcement is delivered, when used consistently, because it is systematic. It is also often preferred by teachers to continue reinforcement if attempting to establish the exhibition of an appropriate behaviour which the pupil already understands to be desirable as it can be much more easily managed. However, research has shown that once a fixed ration reinforcement schedule is terminated, the gains in positive behaviour will also deteriorate if the behaviour does not continue to be reinforced with some other schedule. Furthermore, a pupil can learn to manipulate this schedule if he or she figures out how often reinforcement is received. For these reasons, it is recommended that a fixed ration schedule not be used for very long.

A variable ration reinforcement schedule involves delivering reinforcement after an approximate number of times the target behaviour is exhibited. This schedule is useful for beginning maintenance of a reasonable well-established behaviour and can be used when fading out a fixed ration schedule. Since it is less systematic or consistent than either continuous or fixed reinforcement, variable reinforcement is not good for teaching a new behaviour.

WHAT ARE INTERVAL REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULES?

When a target behaviour is reinforced after a period of time, this is referred to as an interval reinforcement schedule.

This schedule is useful for behaviours which can be measured in terms of their duration, for example, in-seat behaviour, on-task behaviour, etc.

As with ratio reinforcement, there are two types of interval reinforcement. The first type is fixed interval reinforcement, which designates a specific interval of time, after which reinforcement is delivered contingent on appropriate behaviour. Delivering reinforcement after every five minutes of on-task behaviour would be an example of fixed interval reinforcement. This is a systematic and consistent schedule which is excellent for strengthening behaviour. However, as with fixed reinforcement, if reinforcement is simply stopped research shows that the gains made in behaviour will also deteriorate. Variable interval reinforcement is like variable ratio reinforcement in that reinforcement is delivered after an average length of time. This schedule is effective for already established behaviours and can be used when fading out a fixed interval schedule.

HOW DO I CHOOSE A REINFORCEMENT SCHEDULE?

Recommendations have been given about which types of behaviours tend to be best reinforced with which types of schedules. It is likely that ways can be found to modify these to make them most effective and easily delivered within the classroom and with particular pupils. What is most important, however, is that you consciously decide which type of schedule to use and if it seems not to be having an effect, reevaluate it or your functional analysis.

Choosing the wrong type of reinforcement schedule can be detrimental to improving behaviour. For example, a pupil who already possesses a desired behaviour in his or her repertoire but simply does not choose to exhibit it will not benefit from continuous reinforcement. He or she may, in fact, learn that manipulating you is possible by refusing to exhibit the behaviour unless it is known that you will deliver the desired reinforcement. For such reasons, it is very important that choosing a schedule of reinforcement be an integral aspect of your behaviour intervention plan.

Finally, it is imperative that the reinforcement delivered is appropriate for each individual pupil. If what is delivered to the pupil is not preferred by him or her, none of these schedules will work. If you are having problems with schedules of reinforcement, you may want to reevaluate the reinforcement itself. For information on selecting appropriate reinforcers, refer to earlier outline entitled 'positive reinforcement'.

(11) SHAPING – A POSITIVE INTERVENTION FOR THE CLASSROOM

Shaping is a technique by which a pupil is reinforced for exhibiting closer and closer approximations to desired behaviour. It is useful in teaching new desired behaviour and is a natural way of encouraging the pupil to increase the prevalence of desired behaviour.

WHAT KINDS OF BEHAVIOURS CAN BE MODIFIED WITH SHAPING?

Shaping is most effective for increasing positive behaviour. For example, shaping can be very effective in increasing productivity and accuracy of schoolwork, for increasing pro-social behaviour, and for encouraging shy pupils to participate.

I KNOW WHAT BEHAVIOUR I WOULD LIKE MY PUPIL TO EXHIBIT. WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP I NEED TO TAKE?

After you have defined the behavioural objective in clear and measurable terms, assess the present level of the pupil's skills. For example, if your goal is that the pupil consistently complete 90% of maths problems, first determine how many he presently consistently completes. If your goal is that a pupil be able to play without fighting, observe how long he or she usually plays before a fight begins.

HOW DO I HELP THE PUPIL GET FROM HIS OR HER PRESENT LEVEL TO THE BEHAVIOURAL OBJECTIVE?

After having determined what the gap between present and desired behaviour is, break your goal into "steps". If your pupil presently completes 10 maths problems, set a goal of 12 problems. Once he is able to consistently achieve this, raise the goal to 14, etc. In the example of the playing, if the pupil can participate for a specific time, then gradually extend this game.

HOW IS THE BEHAVIOUR 'SHAPED'?

As each step is achieved, the behaviour is taking a "shape" closer and closer to that of the goal. These approximations represent modification of the behaviour. Positive reinforcement is provided for each step toward the desired behaviour. Reinforcement is delivered naturally in the form of praise and recognition. It is the pupil's interpretation of your reinforcement which motivates him or her to change. As a pupil moves closer and closer to achieving the desired behaviour, only the new step which is being learned is reinforced. Previous steps no longer need to be specifically reinforced as they have already been achieved.

HOW DO I SHAPE A BEHAVIOUR WHICH THE PUPIL DOES NOT EXHIBIT IN ANY FORM?

Interpret any action which can be approximated as any form of the behaviour as the behaviour itself and reinforce it. For example, if your goal is that a shy pupil participate in class discussion, interpret any movement of his hand as raising his hand. "Tom, you wanted to say something? Do you agree that the Prince will win against the dragon?" Posing questions such as this make it easy for the pupil to participate as they require only a "yes" or "no" answer. After Tom answers, you can reinforce him by asking, "How many people agree with Tom? Thos gives the pupil important peer reinforcement.

Another example of shaping a new behaviour is that of in-seat behaviour. If a pupil is invariably out of their seat and reinforce her for it. "Sharisse, you've been sitting quietly in your seat. How would you like to help me hand out worksheets?"

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF SHAPING?

The biggest advantage of shaping is that it focusses your attention and the pupil's attention on positive behaviour. It recognises progress and helps the pupil to feel good about themselves. It creates the opportunity for positive interaction between the pupil and teacher, something which may not be common for a pupil who exhibits high rates of problem behaviour. Additionally, the effects of shaping are long lasting and become a solid part of the pupils repertoire. Shaping is easy to implement and, since reinforcement is natural, it does not draw undue attention to the process of behaviour modification.

ARE THERE ANY PRECAUTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED BEFORE IMPLEMENTING A SHAPING PROGRAMME?

Yes. Remember that shaping is a slow process and that achieving steps which are very small, in light of the end goal may take quite some time. Don't give up! Give the process and the pupil the time needed to change.

If change is not occurring to the degree hoped for, perhaps the steps set are too big and need to be re-evaluated or perhaps there are other behaviours which are interfering with your goals which need to be modified first.

Be sure that each situation you reinforce will be interpreted by the pupil as positive reinforcement. It is the pupil's interpretation of the reinforcement which motivates him or her to change.

(12) SOCIAL CONTRACTS

A social contract is an agreement negotiated between pupils and teacher which states classroom principles, rules and consequences for classroom behaviour. Contracts are different from traditional classroom rules in that pupils are involved in designing them, they ensure clarity of rules, include consequences and not punishments, allow for change with class needs, have safeguards to protect dignity of pupils and increase communication.

WHAT COMPONENTS SHOULD I CONSIDER INCLUDING IN A SOCIAL CONTRACT?

There is no one way to construct, but the following are components to be considered including:

Classroom principles: Principles provide a value system and guidelines for behaviour. They are general and not intended to be enforced but provide a context for classroom rules.

Effective rules: Rules clearly define which behaviours are and are not acceptable within the context of classroom principles. It is best when they describe a specific behaviour but are not so specific that they are cumbersome. Examples of such are as follows:

Too vague: Each pupil must not interfere with another pupil's learning.

Too specific: Do not poke your fingers in another pupil's eye.

Just right: Respect each other's space - keep your hands to yourself.

Be positive when possible: This gives pupils a clearer idea of how they should behave, which is more constructive than inly telling them how they should not behave. There are, however, some rules which may be difficult to express in positive terms.

Logical consequences: Consequences are essential to a social contract but can be hard to develop. Try to use the following criteria for consequences:

- Clear and specific
- Have a range of alternatives
- Not punishments
- Natural and/or logical
- Related to the rule

Consequences should also:

- Preserve the pupil's dignity
- Increase pupil motivation

Four generic consequences which work for any rule are: reminders, warnings, practice following the rule, and a written plan. Contingency contracts, conferences or meetings and practice sessions are examples of non-punitive consequences.

Threats are effective only in creating combative environments. Furthermore, many traditional consequences result only in making the pupil dislike school or aspects of it and teaches nothing.

HOW DO I DRAW UP A SOCIAL CONTRACT?

Foremost, the contract should be drawn up with the pupils. Pupil involvement makes the contract more immediate and it is ultimately more likely that pupils will follow a plan which they help to draw up.

Pupils can develop rules for each other, making sure that they are not too vague or specific, as stated previously. They can be involved in developing consequences as well. However, do not accept any rules or consequences which you would not feel comfortable enforcing.

Pupils can be allowed to vote on negotiable rules. Do not put rules which you deem absolutely necessary up to a vote. It is advisable that a vast majority of the pupils pass the rule.

Furthermore, pupils can include rules for the teacher. While you should not accept a rule you cannot live with, such rules can be quite useful. If you are caught breaking a rule, the opportunity is provided to model an appropriate response.

WHAT IF A PUPIL PLEADS IGNORANCE TO A RULE OR PRINCIPLE IN THE CONTRACT?

You can prevent this from happening by requiring each pupil to carry out a task based on the social contract. It can include short answers, true or false, and/or multiple choice questions concerning acceptable behaviour for the classroom and permitted consequences for unallowable behaviour. Go over any unanswered and incorrect questions and repeat the task again to reinforce the correct responses.

WHAT ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS IN UTILISING SOCIAL CONTRACTS?

Effectiveness: If behaviour standards are not being met, it is necessary for the class to discuss the contract, possible changes, or a completely new contract. If the contract is working for most pupils, but not specific individuals, individual contingency contracts may be helpful.

Accessibility: It is advisable that each pupil be given a copy of the contract and that it be posted somewhere in the room so that it is clearly visible.

Collaboration: It is valuable to share the contract with parents. Sharing it with parents before there are behaviour problems can aid in eliciting their cooperation.

(13) Token economies - A proactive intervention for the classroom

Token economies are programs in which pupils earn points or tokens for appropriate behaviour and, at a later time, trade them for preferred activities, objects, or privileges. One of the most positive aspects of token economies is that they are set up to reinforce appropriate behaviour and prevent inappropriate behaviour, thereby minimising the need to use reactive strategies in dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

HOW DO I SET UP A TOKEN ECONOMY?

- Set goals for your token economy.

A token economy is a tool which strives to modify inappropriate behaviour and achieve specific goals. These goals can be behavioural as well as academic. Take time to include the pupil(s) in setting and defining goals. Begin by targeting only one to three goals so that the pupil is not overwhelmed.

- Set point or token values

Give a token value to each goal. You may choose to make each goal of equal value or to weight values. In the latter case, values should be assigned with respect to the difficulty of the goal. Additionally, it is useful and appropriate to reward tokens for partial achievement of a goal. The value is in rewarding progress, avoiding pupil frustration, and keeping full attainment as the ultimate goal.

- Determine time intervals for assessment

Intervals at which goal attainment will be judged and points will be rewarded need to be determined before initiating the token economy. For some pupils, evaluation may take place every half hour and, for others, after the morning and afternoon. A good rule of thumb is, at the onset of the token economy, the interval should be half as long as the pupil is able to go without displaying the inappropriate behaviour. Gradually, time intervals should be increased. It is important that tokens are awarded contingent upon achieving the pre-specified goals. It is also good to explain to the pupil why the reinforcer is being given.

- Keep track of points or tokens earned.

Keeping track of tokens earned can be done in many different ways. This allows the pupil to see and assess his or her progress. The pupil should always be able to find out how many tokens, they are responsible for not losing them, or put a container somewhere in the room where the pupil can deposit and have access to earned tokens.

- Tokens

Give the pupil the tokens they have earned. The pupil must understand that once they are given the tokens, they are responsible for not losing them, or put in a container somewhere in the room where the pupil can have access to earned tokens.

- Points

Using a point system is very valuable when targeting more than one behaviour or goal. The pupil can see which goals they are reaching and in which areas they can still improve.

A card listing the goals and leaving space for each interval can be carried by the pupil or held by the teacher (this is very useful if a pupil goes to different classrooms). The points earned for each interval would be entered by the teacher after each interval in the appropriate space.

A chart can be posted in the room (on the pupil's desk or near the teacher's desk) in which pupils' points are tracked. In this way, a pupil can see his or her progress over time. Keeping formal records is very important. This will help prevent misunderstandings and disagreements about the rules.

HOW CAN PUPILS USE THEIR TOKENS?

When setting the token economy, it should be decided, with input from the pupil, what the pupil will be able to "buy" with his or her tokens and how often he or she will be able to cash them in. This is critical since some pupils may give up if they do not have the opportunity to earn some reward each day. For example, if it is structure the point system so that it is possible to earn enough points to trade each day. Make sure the pupil is allowed to spend his or her own tokens. Do not do this for them.

CAN A TOKEN ECONOMY BE MODIFIED?

A token economy can and should be modified throughout the year. This includes modifying goals and objectives as well as reinforcers available.

Over time, pupils should begin to consistently achieve the targeted goals. At this point, you should begin to reassess the areas in which they need improvement. You should begin working with the pupil to set new goals or longer intervals, not forgetting to give congratulations and praise for "graduating" from the original/prior programme.

Conversely, not earning enough tokens to get rewards can result in the pupil becoming frustrated or giving up. In such instances, changes such as goal modification, shortened time intervals or targeting fewer goals need to be made.

WHAT ABOUT RESPONSE COST IN A TOKEN ECONOMY?

Some people include a form of "response cost" in their token economy. This involves penalising pupils for inappropriate behaviour by taking away tokens that they have earned. The ethics of taking away what a pupil has fairly earned is questionable and is in conflict with the ethos of the positive management of behaviour contained in this policy. Also, a threat to the pupil is implicit in response cost. Response cost may lead to a pupil behaving appropriately only out of fear or anxiety of losing points or tokens. Furthermore, it may lead to power struggles that escalate and become setting events for other undesired behaviour.

HOW CAN I PHASE OUT A TOKEN ECONOMY?

One way is by changing the rewards from which pupils may choose. Focus can be moved from tangible rewards to focusing on work improvement, classroom status and providing more social reinforcement. The number of tokens earned can also be reduced, requiring the pupil to do more work for the same number of tokens.

In some cases, you may find that no matter what you do, it seems that as soon as the token economy is dropped, so is the appropriate behaviour. In this case, the token economy has become a behaviour management tool rather than a behaviour modification tool.

Finally, as with any intervention, it is very important that a token economy be carried out with consistency and given some time to have an effect before it is modified or before its usefulness is evaluated.



BALLYOWEN MEADOWS SPECIAL SCHOOL (BMSS)

APPENDIX 3 WHOLE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

MANAGEMENT OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL AGGRESSION (MAPA)

THE MANAGEMENT OF ACTUAL OR POTENTIAL AGGRESSION (MAPA)

A PRACTICAL APPROACH FOR MANAGING VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

INTRODUCTION

The MAPA programme has a number of primary objectives:

1. Identifies behaviour that indicates an escalation toward aggressive and violent behavior and take appropriate measures to avoid, decelerate and/or de-escalate crisis situations;
2. Assesses the level of risk associated with crisis behavior and take appropriate decisions related to the management of such risks;
3. Use suitable and acceptable physical interventions to reduce or manage risk behaviour;
4. Identify the impact of crisis events and describe post-crisis responses which can be used for personal and organisational support and learning;

These primary objectives will enable staff to:

- Develop effective techniques for approaching and reducing the tension of an agitated pupil;
- Focus on the alternatives if a pupil loses control and presents risk behaviour;
- Develop self-control techniques so that they can manage their own anxieties during crisis events and maintain the best possible professional attitude and approach;
- Develop a range of professional non-verbal, paraverbal, verbal and physical skills which enable them to maintain the Care, Welfare, Safety and Security of all, even in situations in which individuals present extreme-risk behavior;

COMMON PRINCIPLES

In keeping with the need that staff use a range of approaches that uphold professional expectations, the MAPA programme is based on a common set of principles that are applicable to all people in all environments and which are designed to ensure that the rights of people are maintained, and in particular, to ensure that physical interventions are not used with vulnerable people in any way that could be viewed as degrading, inhuman or abusive:

- (1) The use of physical interventions must be integrated into an overall behaviour management system which provides staff with a range of positive, proactive non-physical approaches before considering the use of any physical approach on relation to the management of crisis situations and risk behavior;

- (2) In addition to physical interventions, staff are trained in non-physical approaches which enable them to avoid, decelerate, or manage behavior before they use any physical intervention. Training includes:
- Understanding the cause and function of behavior, the range of precipitating factors that influences crisis events, issues of culture and diversity, and the different behavioural responses from pupils and staff;
 - Effective interpersonal skills including non-verbal, verbal, paraverbal; communication and empathetic listening skills;
 - Legal, professional and ethical issues associated with the use of physical interventions;
 - Behavioural risk assessment;
 - Effective critical decision making in relation to the use of physical interventions to ensure that staff act in the best interests of pupils in crisis;
 - The risks or adverse consequences of physical intervention, how to identify warning signs, and how to respond with corrective actions to minimize harm during the use of physical interventions
 - Post-crisis approaches;
- (3) The resort to and extent of any physical intervention must be proportionate to the assessed risk of harm to the pupil or others. Physical intervention must be consistently effective in achieving the aim of temporarily restricting the pupil's movement, thereby protecting them and others from harm. As such, physical interventions are a risk-management strategy and must never be used to enforce or gain compliance.
- (4) Each physical intervention must have been individually assessed to consider its safety, acceptability and effectiveness and should be authorised by the School Management to ensure that staff are trained in the safest possible interventions. Physical interventions must be straightforward to execute in practice. The assessment should include the potential margin for error of each intervention and the extent to which the risks inherent in its use are exacerbated by the intrinsic factors unique to the individual being held, the evidence base in relation to the known risks or adverse consequences of restraint, and the likely margin of error that may occur if interventions are executed incorrectly during application.
- (5) BMSS ensures that there are robust governance arrangements in place and that the specific physical interventions skills taught to staff are authorised and approved for use. This must also be supported by a suitable organisational policy which gives a clear organisational definition of and guidance on the nature, justification and use of such interventions. BMSS ensures that the BMSS Code of Behaviour provides suitable arrangements for the management of each incident, ensuring that active attention is given to monitoring the well-being of the pupil. There is a clear emphasis within the training programme and within the organisational policy that the Care,

Welfare, Safety and Security of the individual being held remains at the forefront of decisions relating to the use of physical interventions.

- (6) The School Management of BMSS authorises and approves the use of physical interventions and ensures through the BMSS Code of Behaviour and the offer of MAPA training to Parent(s)/guardian(s), that the parents of pupils who may be subject to physical interventions are provided with clear information which explains what physical interventions system is in use, the circumstances in which physical interventions are used and that the rights of the child are respected at all times. For this reason, the BMSS Parent School Communication Policy contains the Parent Complaints Procedure.
- (7) The use of physical interventions must include an adequate assessment of all physical, psychological and other risk factors which may adversely affect the health of the individual. Individual assessments must include the following dimensions of risk:
 - The specific physical interventions, including the potential for and the risks associated with the use as well as misapplications;
 - The child's specific health needs;
 - Factors relating to the context and situational elements which may arise during a crisis event in which physical interventions may be used;
 - Based on the prevailing body of evidence, any factors that are likely to increase an individual's risk of unexpected adverse consequences during the use of physical interventions including: individual with learning disabilities, individuals with a high mass body index and young people under the age of 20;
- (8) The School Management of BMSS ensures that there are suitable management arrangements in place to ensure that every crisis event involving the use of physical interventions that may arise, both those of a reactive kind and planned interventions, safeguard individuals. Such arrangements should include:
 - The specification of roles for each incident with clearly defined responsibilities. Critically, it must be clear at that times who has the authority to stop the use of any physical intervention;
 - Only staff trained are authorised to use physical interventions are involved;
 - Only authorised and approved interventions are used, and the values of Care, Welfare, Safety and Security must remain at the fore front of managing the incident at all times;
 - Physical interventions are least restrictive and proportionate to the prevailing risk behaviour and used only when necessary;

- Timely first aid or medical advice and intervention should be provided as soon as possible where there is any concern for the child's physical or psychological well-being.
- (9) Following any use of physical interventions, there must be agreed post-crisis approaches, including arrangements for:
- Ensuring that each individual incident is recorded and reported in a timely and accurate manner;
 - Support of debrief measures provided to all those involved;
 - Opportunities for individual and organisational learning.

MAPA AND STAFF

A fundamental purpose of the MAPA programme is to help everyone understand that all behaviour has a function. In other words, behaviour does not occur for no reason at all. At times, however, particularly in relation to challenging, aggressive, violent behavior or acute behavioural disturbance, it can feel like this type of behaviour is intentionally motivated with the sole aim of harming staff. In situations where individual staff members are targeted, it can feel that the individual's behaviour is very much personally motivated and directed towards staff, which can leave staff feeling isolated, vulnerable, or even angry.

When staff intervene in an attempt to defuse, decelerate or manage behavior, they must be aware that their attitude and behaviour have a significant impact on the person they are attempting to manage. In most cases, the subsequent deceleration, escalation or de-escalation of the person's behaviour is continually shaped by internal and external factors and that the recognition and management of a crisis event is an integrated process between the staff and the other people involved.

If staff allow themselves to become irrational, angry, vengeful, or unprofessional, it is likely that the intervention will not be focused on the safety and welfare of everyone, and there is a greater likelihood that physical interventions will be misused.

The Crisis Developmental Model teaches staff to recognise changes in behaviour levels and to consider their attitude and approach to the person. Meeting anxiety with anxiety and defensiveness with defensiveness is likely to accelerate, rather than decelerate, the development of the crisis and increase the chance of risky or harmful behaviour.

In an effort to maximize the chance of avoiding a crisis situation and enabling the person to remain calm and in control, it is advantageous to balance or offset the person's behaviour with therapeutic and non-threatening responses by staff. Even in the most extremes of behaviour or circumstances, staff have a clear professional to maintain a therapeutic relationship with the individual at all times.

By using safe and non-harmful interventions taught within the MAPA programme, staff are more likely to develop and maintain a therapeutic relationship at all times regardless of the person's behaviour.

BEST PRACTICE PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF PHYSICAL RESTRAINTS IN BMSS

Listed below are a range of best-practice indicators which is aimed at shaping practice and enable BMSS Staff to reduce avoidable restraint as well as minimise the risks of restraint when such measures are unavoidable.

- (1) Physical interventions should be used within BMSS as part of a wider restraint-reduction strategy to minimise avoidable restraint.
- (2) As part of a restraint-reduction strategy, physical interventions should be used only when all other non-physical interventions have failed to manage the prevailing risk. Physical interventions should never be used as a punishment, to force control, gain compliance, or enforce rules.
- (3) People who are likely to be subject to the use of physical interventions should have an individual pupil risk assessment completed in order to identify any specific contra-indications associated with the person, including any known vulnerabilities which may increase the likelihood of an adverse consequence. Where possible, specific medical advice should be sought in order to fully assess the impact physical interventions may have on the pupil concerned.
- (4) All physical interventions must be authorised and approved by the School Management of BMSS and written into an individual Behaviour Management Plan.
- (5) Where physical interventions are used reactively to manage an unforeseen risk, an individual risk assessment and Behaviour Management Plan should be undertaken as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- (6) Only staff who have received training are approved by the School Management for the use of physical intervention techniques;
- (7) Staff using physical interventions must be fully aware of the risk associated with each intervention. They must monitor the pupil's safety and well-being at all times, be able to identify signs of distress, and know how to respond to medical emergencies.
- (8) In order to maximize the care, welfare and security of everyone, physical interventions should be used within the context of the Opt-Out Sequence (see next section) in order to promote early physical de-escalation.
- (9) Staff who use physical interventions should also be trained in emergency first aid so that they can respond to medical emergencies should they occur as a result of restraint.
- (10) Physical interventions should be used only for the minimum amount of time, using the minimum amount of restriction on the basis of prevailing risk staff are attempting to manage.