

Key Stage 3

National Strategy

Behaviour and Attendance Strand

Toolkit unit 3

Dealing with consistently poor
behaviour

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Overview

Title	Dealing with consistently poor behaviour
Audience	Behaviour and attendance consultants with senior staff in school, e.g. behaviour and attendance leaders or lead behaviour professionals, mediated by behaviour and attendance consultants.
Purpose	For senior staff to adapt material as part of a flexible training programme, including self-study. The programme should ensure that staff know, understand and have access to a range of strategies for dealing with consistently poor behaviour which focus on improving behaviour and attendance and subsequently learning.
Possible use	The behaviour and attendance leader or other member of the senior leadership team (SLT) can use this toolkit unit to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider the causal factors of consistently poor behaviour; • review current policy and practice; • identify and share good practice; • consider the benefits of targeted programmes.
Impact	Impact can be measured by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the development of a common understanding across all staff of what constitutes consistently poor behaviour; • a well-documented and clear system readily understood by parents/carers; • a clear procedure understood by all staff and pupils and applied consistently; • effective use of de-escalation procedures; • reduction in serious incidents occurring; • effective reintegration of pupils into class after serious incidents; • all incidents concluded and parents/carers notified in line with school policy.
Links to other units	Toolkit units 1: Leadership and management; 2: Everyday policies: rewards, toolkit sanctions and promotion of positive behaviour; 5: Pupil support systems; 6: Classroom behaviour; 7: Out-of-class behaviour; 8: Curriculum; 9: Attendance
References to other resources	Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 1 – <i>Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy</i> (DfES 0392-2003 R) Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2 – <i>Developing effective practice across the school to promote positive behaviour and attendance</i> (DfES 0055-2004 R) Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 3 – <i>Monitoring whole-school practice to promote positive behaviour and attendance</i> (DfES 0020-2004 R) Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 4 – <i>Developing emotional health and well-being: a whole-school approach to improving behaviour and attendance</i> (DfES 0182-2005 R) DfES <i>Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy</i> (DfES 0628-2003 R) DfES <i>The behaviour and attendance audit for secondary and middle schools</i> (DfES 0392-2003 R) DfES <i>Behaviour and attendance: in-depth audit for secondary and middle schools</i> (DfES 0207-2003 R) Maslow, A. H.(1954) <i>Motivation and Personality</i> , Harper & Row, New York NHSS (2004) <i>Promoting emotional health and well-being</i> , ISBN 1-84279-263-6

National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance (NPSL–BA) Module B

O'Connor, J. and Seymour, J. (1998) *Introducing NLP: Neuro-linguistic programming*, HarperCollins, ISBN 1-85538-344-6

www.dfes.gov.uk/ibis/departmentalpublications/lisu

www.dfes.gov.uk/mentalhealth

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

Introduction

This toolkit unit is intended for use by behaviour and attendance consultants, working with behaviour and attendance leaders in school, to construct a training programme that will help the school to organise and implement improvements supporting various staff groups.

There are three sections in this toolkit unit. Each section, with its associated activities and resources, is self-contained. Schools can select the most relevant activities and accompanying texts to form the core of a targeted programme that will address key issues emerging from an audit and identified in the post-audit action plan.

Behaviour and attendance leaders in the school may want to select the most relevant activities and accompanying texts to form the core of a targeted programme to address the key issues about consistently poor behaviour emerging from the audit, and identified in the post-audit action plan.

Consistently poor behaviour may present as low-level and wearing, and may or may not escalate in intensity and seriousness. However, the persistent nature of generally poor behaviour can have a negative effect on the morale of both staff and pupils. This kind of behaviour provides barriers to learning and achievement and provides the focus for sections 1 and 2 of this toolkit unit. Section 3 provides guidance for schools in dealing with those pupils whose behaviour has escalated beyond low-level disruption.

Schools with higher rates of exclusion and absence tend to have lower levels of attainment. In such schools:

- staff may lose confidence in dealing with pupils who have consistently poor behaviour, and may feel unsupported by the school's systems;
- lack of communication between staff, pupils and parents/carers may inhibit the sharing of solutions to behaviour and attendance problems;
- staff may not have shared their understanding of what constitutes consistently poor behaviour and of the causal factors underlying that behaviour;
- staff frequently use referral for support, and that support is targeted at addressing the symptoms and not the causal factors of consistently poor behaviour.

The audit suggests schools aim for:

- a common understanding across all staff of what constitutes poor behaviour;
- a well-documented and clear system readily understood by parents/carers;
- a clear procedure understood by all staff and pupils and applied consistently;
- staff confident in the de-escalation procedures;
- good strategies for reintegrating pupils into class after serious incidents;
- pupils who know what their roles and responsibilities are, e.g. to remain 'outside' the incident and not inflame the situation, to locate senior staff when asked;
- use of appropriate language at the time of referral and re-entry;
- all incidents concluded and parents/carers notified in line with school policy.

Schools may wish to:

1. review the application of policy to ensure that staff are doing all they can to engage pupils in learning and in taking responsibility for their own behaviour and attendance (see Toolkit unit 5: Pupil support systems);
2. ensure that support and advice from partners and other agencies are of optimum benefit to pupils with challenging behaviour or low attendance, in order to reduce the disruption to teaching and learning within the school (see Toolkit unit 10: Links with partners and other agencies);
3. provide additional short-term provision as an integral part of an overall strategy for managing behaviour and attendance improvement.

In schools that are well organised to promote positive behaviour and achieve high levels of attendance, we can expect to see:

- the majority of pupils responding positively to their school's commitment to high standards and expectations;
- effective practices implementing clearly understood policies;
- a well-taught, engaging and relevant curriculum;
- clear roles and responsibilities for behaviour and attendance improvement;
- committed involvement by pupils and parents/carers;
- efficient systems for monitoring the success of all these important aspects of the school's organisation.

Despite the school's best efforts, there will always be pupils who find difficulty in achieving the high standards of behaviour and attendance expected of them. This small minority of pupils will often consume a disproportionate amount of the school's support resources. Pupils with consistently poor behaviour or attendance will require a variety of forms of support to be successful in reaching their potential. Strategies range from the least intrusive or restrictive strategies – perhaps involving support from a tutor with a daily report card – to forms of support that are both individualised and intensive. Individualised and intensive support may include a full-time or part-time referral in the school's learning support unit (LSU) as part of a well-constructed behaviour support plan designed to promote positive behaviour, regular attendance, self-esteem and a sense of achievement.

This toolkit unit will enable a school to support staff in responding more effectively to the challenge offered by this minority of pupils.

Section 1: Analysing causal factors underlying consistently poor behaviour

Activity 1.1: Causal factors (1)

Analysing the causes of poor behaviour and considering what the school can do to promote access to learning

There are many reasons why pupils behave in a manner that is consistently challenging for a school. Some see the inappropriate behaviour as a logical response to the environment in which the pupil exists, or personality traits that predispose the pupil to cope poorly with stress.

A different emphasis would suggest that inappropriate behaviour and absence occur when pupils feel or believe that their needs are not being met, or when pupils do not possess the behavioural skills which the school is expecting them to demonstrate.

Consistently poor behaviour may result from inconsistent responses from adults. It is important, therefore, that adults working with challenging pupils have a clear and agreed understanding of the underlying causes or triggers for this type of behaviour and how to respond to it. The success of a whole-school approach depends on collective understanding and application.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To analyse the long-term causes and short-term triggers of poor behaviour; to consider what schools can do to promote access to learning

Description

Participants:

1. use two sets of cards made from cutting up copies of **resource sheet 1.1a**. In groups, using the cards that give long-term causes of poor behaviour, they consider some of the underlying long-term causes and prioritise statements by placing the cards in a diamond shape, as described on resource sheet 1.1a. The groups then give feedback before repeating the exercise, this time using the second set of cards, which represent short-term triggers;
2. use **resource sheet 1.1b** while picturing a pupil who presents consistently poor behaviour and attendance. Independently, they list the types of behaviour and the apparent causal factors. Then, in small groups, they compare their lists and look for patterns between staff opinion before reaching an agreement on the commonest causal factors for specific behaviours in the school;

3. consider the following questions:
 - How frequently are the causes of absence and of inappropriate behaviour the same?
 - How frequently are there multiple causes?
4. address column 4 on resource sheet 1.1b by:
 - deciding how the school should respond to the behaviours listed;
 - exploring current inconsistencies in response. What barriers prevent staff from responding appropriately?

Summary

There are many reasons why pupils behave in a manner that is consistently challenging for a school, including:

- response to the environment;
- temperamental factors;
- their needs not being met;
- lack of behavioural skills;
- inconsistent responses from adults.

Links

The behaviour and attendance audit for secondary and middle schools
(DfES 0392-2003 R)

Activity 1.2: Causal factors (2) – Emotional health and well-being

Reviewing perceived causes of poor behaviour

The development of emotional health and well-being starts early; fostered in infancy, primarily through a child's secure attachment to their main parent/carer. A positive relationship gives a child self-esteem and resilience, and shapes the way in which he or she relates to and behaves with others. Unpredictable, frightening or abusive interactions can lead a child to view all relationships with uncertainty, fear, distance and distress.

A range of other risk and resilience factors can inhibit or promote emotional well-being, and operate within the child, family and community (see www.dfes.gov.uk/mentalhealth for a list). Many of these factors are implicitly or explicitly linked with education and the role of the school, including:

- child-based risk factors: specific learning difficulties; communication difficulties; academic failure and low self-esteem;
- child-based resilience factors: positive attitude; problem-solving approach; good communication skills; capacity to reflect;
- family-based resilience factors: support for education; clear, firm and consistent discipline;
- school-based resilience factors: high morale; positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying; strong academic and non-academic opportunities; a range of positive sport or other leisure activities.

Pupils are unlikely to be able to learn effectively if their basic needs for safety, belonging and self-esteem are not met. Action to address risk and resilience factors, and to meet an individual's basic and higher-level needs, will, in turn, enhance the person's emotional health and well-being. The school is a natural setting for much of this to occur. Positive everyday interactions between a teacher and a vulnerable pupil can develop a more positive view of relationships and build that pupil's emotional resilience.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To consider causal factors underlying poor behaviour; to measure current school provision for fostering emotional health and well-being

Description

Participants:

1. use **resource sheet 1.2**, considering the range of needs which pupils have in relation to emotional health and well-being and measuring the current provision at their own school, using a scale where 1 represents no evidence of desirable experiences and 10 represents very evident desirable experiences;
2. as a group, consider the questions:
 - To what extent is the school promoting emotional health and well-being to reduce the incidence of poor behaviour?
 - What might the next stage on the scale look like and what strategies could be developed to get to this point?

Summary

Risk and resilience factors in emotional health and well-being include:

- child-based risk factors: specific learning difficulties; communication difficulties; academic failure and low self-esteem;
- child-based resilience factors: positive attitude; problem-solving approach; good communication skills; capacity to reflect;
- family-based resilience factors: support for education; clear, firm and consistent discipline;
- school-based resilience factors: high morale; positive policies for behaviour, attitudes and anti-bullying; strong academic and non-academic opportunities; a range of positive sport and other leisure activities.

Links

Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2 – *Developing effective practice across the school to promote positive behaviour and attendance* (DfES 0055-2004 R)

Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 4 – *Developing emotional health and well-being: a whole-school approach to improving behaviour and attendance* (DfES 0182-2005)

The behaviour and attendance audit for secondary and middle schools (DfES 0392-2003 R)

NHSS (2004) *Promoting emotional health and well-being*, ISBN 1-84279-263-6

www.dfes.gov.uk/mentalhealth

Activity 1.3: Identified behaviours

Considering the effects of labelling behaviours on school action

There are a growing number of labels used to describe why some pupils behave consistently poorly. Ascribing a label to a pupil's behaviour has both pros and cons. For example, it may serve only to increase staff pessimism about what can be done to help a pupil learn behaviours for learning; or some staff may come to feel that the solution lies with experts outside the school. Alternatively, a diagnosis of a medical condition such as autism can bring some comfort to parents desperately concerned about their child's, thus far, inexplicable behaviour, and can lead, in some cases, to a form of response not available without the diagnosis.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To consider different conditions that pupils may have which affect behaviour; to consider the benefits and drawbacks of labelling pupils with these conditions.

Description

In groups, participants consider what we mean when we say:

- consistently poor behaviour;
- persistently poor behaviour;
- challenging behaviour.

Are there any key differences?

Agree, as a school, definitions for each of the above terms. This will aid management of incidents. For example, one school uses the term TOOT (talking out of turn) when referring to any pupil who has been showing persistently poor behaviour, and all staff understand the range of behaviours and appropriate sanctions which this incurs.

Ask the SENCO to provide a list of medical conditions experienced by pupils in the school which have perceived effects on behaviour and insert these into column 1 of **resource sheet 1.3**.

You may wish different groups of participants to review one condition on behalf of the school. If so, a mixed group of participants must be present. Participants may find this activity easier to complete if individual pupils' cases are considered. If this is the case, you will need at least two examples of the same condition, to allow for comparison.

In groups, participants:

1. use resource sheet 1.3 to compare the effects of different types of labels;
2. consider whether allowances for expectations of behaviour are made which are:
 - a) inconsistent;
 - b) unnecessary;
 - c) unhelpful.

Summary

- Labels carry with them the implication that behaviour is ascribable to an identifiable and hence diagnosable condition, e.g. a medical condition.
- Ascribing a label to a pupil's behaviour has advantages and disadvantages.
- It can be misleading to assume that a given condition leads to a specific level of performance or attitude in a pupil.

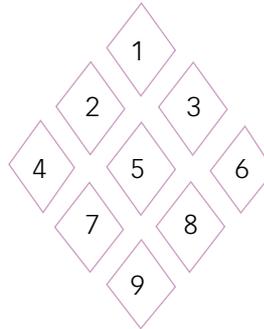
Links

Toolkit units 1: Leadership and management; 2: Everyday policies: rewards, sanctions and promotion of positive behaviour

Resource sheet 1.1a

Causes and triggers of poor behaviour

To prioritise causes and triggers place them in an agreed order, with the most common at the top of the diamond, the next two under that, then a row of three, then another two and ending with the least common cause or trigger at the bottom.



Long-term causes of poor behaviour

Lack of confidence, low self-worth	Poor cognitive ability	Poor social skills
Emotional difficulties	Poor communication skills	Poor family relationships
Physiological problems, e.g. being malnourished	Psychological problems, e.g. attention deficit disorder	Features of the pupil's neighbourhood

Short-term triggers of poor behaviour

Being shouted at	Lack of skills to complete a specific task	Perceptions of injustice
Not being listened to	Failure to understand an instruction	Having personal possessions taken or destroyed
Being distracted by others	Tiredness	Being bullied

Resource sheet 1.1b

Responding to poor behaviour

Examples of poor behaviour demonstrated by identified pupil	Long-term causal factor	Short-term trigger	Appropriate school response
Examples: persistently calling out in class; snatching other pupils' equipment; reluctance to join in with the lesson	Attention-seeking behaviour due to parental neglect	Lack of skills to complete a specific task	Individual programme of support to address behaviour and learning skills

Resource sheet 1.2

Fostering emotional health and well-being in the school setting (adapted from Maslow's hierarchy of needs)

Maslow, A. H. (1954) *Motivation and personality*, Harper & Row, New York

Range of needs	Desirable experiences:	In and around school this might include:	Current situation Not in evidence Very evident
Physiological or survival needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> warmth food shelter seeing, hearing and taking part in what's going on safe physical exploration getting to know your own body and its strengths and limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comfortable classrooms with well-positioned equipment healthy meals and snacks; access to drinking water when needed existence of a breakfast club indoor and outdoor play areas sensory trails sporting and challenge activities ponds and natural or wild areas 	1 10
Safety needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> having boundaries having basic needs met knowing you are in safe hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> secure, risk-assessed sites consistent, caring supervision simple, clearly explained rules clear policies and procedures for tackling bullying 	1 10
Love, affection and belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feeling cared for having others look out for you when you can't do it for yourself having responsibilities and opportunities to effect change recognising feeling states in yourself and others talking, listening, exploring and reflecting on experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> positive relationships and interactions with staff and peers evidence that diversity and difference is valued and celebrated places, times and people you can go to for help and support pupils' involvement in setting rules and expectations work displayed on the wall opportunities for group work peer-support programmes 	1 10
Self-esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> being valued, accepted and celebrated being noticed and listened to influencing outcomes being supported to take responsibility for outcomes with increasing independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use of praise use of appropriate language to correct behaviour rewards and recognition systems opportunities to have special responsibilities 	1 10
Self-actualisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> exploring ideas and learning new things being creative developing talents and stretching yourself having an internal structure of values and principles recognising and using signs, symbols, image and metaphor being reflective developing shared meanings and a shared narrative (ways of talking about what happens) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lessons that provide stimulation, challenge and opportunities to use diverse talents values and rights education taught skill-based courses, including thinking and problem-solving skills time for reflection use of storytelling, language, literature and metaphor in the curriculum drama, art, music and movement that communicate feelings, meanings, experiences positive modelling by all school staff 	1 10

Resource sheet 1.3

Effects of labelling

Condition	Expected behaviours	Actual behaviours	Allowances made for behaviours	Consistency with school policy
e.g. ADHD or Down's Syndrome				Consistent Inconsistent

Section 2: Applying existing strategies effectively

Schools are likely to have clear and detailed policies about how staff promote positive behaviour and attendance, and respond to inappropriate behaviour. Very often these policies have been developed through the involvement of all staff, pupils and parents/carers to increase a feeling of ownership among all members of the school community. The policy then needs to be kept alive through regular monitoring of its effectiveness, adaptation where necessary and ongoing communication to all members of the school about what remains the same and what has changed. In this way, schools achieve appropriate levels of consistency between all staff, and pupils understand and can predict consequences, as can their parents/carers.

The pressure of constantly dealing with low-level disruption can lead staff to:

- feel isolated when confronting poor behaviour;
- lack confidence in their own skills and in the support they might receive from other colleagues;
- use inconsistent approaches towards pupils, resulting in a further decline in behaviour.

Activity 2.1: Policy review

Considering how effective the school policy is for individual cases

Some pupils challenge the agreed policy and systems in a school on a regular basis. Monitoring staff responses is important in ensuring that application is appropriate and consistent. For example, procedures for recognising good behaviour may be lost when a pupil who frequently misbehaves, then behaves well and staff either fail to notice this deviation from the norm or feel disinclined to recognise what they may see as an accidental or short-term improvement. Similarly, staff may feel inclined to overlook a pupil's poor behaviour because they believe that challenging the pupil will lead to a situation they cannot control. These responses inadvertently reinforce poor behaviour and discourage appropriate behaviour.

Audience

Senior staff, all staff with a responsibility for behaviour or attendance

Purpose

To consider the effectiveness of the behaviour and attendance policy for individual pupils with consistently poor behaviour; to explore what works successfully to engage these pupils

Description

Participants:

1. identify a pupil with consistently poor behaviour and track him or her through a day. (A learning mentor or teaching assistant assigned to the pupil may be able to complete this information gathering.) Tracking will need to include all behaviours and all interventions, whether from another pupil or an adult;

2. consider the following questions:
 - How consistently is the school's policy on expectations of behaviour followed?
 - Do staff with whom the pupil comes into contact state these expectations in a clear and positive manner?
 - What are the areas of expected behaviour that cause concern?
 - Where a member of staff is successful in engaging the pupil, what does that colleague do that is effective?
3. consider the general questions:
 - What actions can be taken to revise aspects of school policy to engage and support staff in implementing it more effectively?
 - Are there any examples of poor behaviour that are not covered by the policy?

Summary

- Schools need an established procedure for responding to consistently poor behaviour.
- All staff need to be well informed and confident about this procedure.
- Schools need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of systems for dealing with consistently poor behaviour in order to improve the system.

Links

Toolkit unit 1: Leadership and management

National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance (NPSL-BA) Module B: Leading positive approaches to behaviour and attendance

Activity 2.2: Development of staff skills

Considering staff as role models

The role of the teacher in modelling behaviours

'Teachers and other school staff can help to reinforce positive behaviours – such as tolerance, respect, empathy and self-awareness – by modelling these in their everyday interactions with pupils. In relation to learning, teachers have a key modelling role: demonstrating resilience in the face of difficulties. Learning itself can be a difficult process, in which setbacks, uncertainty and making mistakes are a critical part of becoming more effective learners. If a pupil has seen adults get angry or overwhelmed when they face difficulties, this is likely to shape their response to such situations. You can help to counteract this by modelling the handling of confusion and frustration as part of a 'normal' learning process.'

Promoting emotional health and well-being, NHSS, 2004

Staff behaviour is the most important determinant of pupils' behaviour. Staff can reflect on their own behaviour through a planned professional development programme, which includes the observation of good practice and good support mechanisms within the school. Staff can influence pupils' behaviour by engaging in a whole-school approach to:

- build relationships;
- model the attributes of an assertive teacher;

- use intervention strategies which have a significant weighting towards praise and encouragement;
- respond to inappropriate behaviour by using techniques which avoid escalation.

Assertive teaching secures positive learning experiences for all pupils and positive intervention strategies, underpinned by a consistently applied behaviour and attendance policy, promoting behaviour for learning.

A range of techniques can help to develop assertive teaching and such strategies. These techniques are based on developing relationships, use of praise and correction, use of support within the classroom, ways of applying classroom rules and routines.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To consider realistically staff confidence in dealing with difficult situations; to discuss the key barriers to staff confidence; to consider appropriate actions for increasing staff confidence

Description

Remind participants of the definition of assertiveness used in Core day 2, session 2:

An assertive teacher:

‘states or expresses positively, to affirm’.

In pairs, participants:

1. discuss their initial feelings and thoughts about the concept of assertiveness and the ‘assertive teacher’;
2. give brief feedback to the group.

Remind the group that assertive members of staff actively contribute to raising standards in the classroom when teaching, and also through their daily interactions in and around the school.

Participants then:

3. individually, look at **resource sheet 2.1** and circle the features of assertiveness which they feel they possess;
4. tick the skills they have that are necessary to achieve the listed characteristics;
5. in pairs, compare their resource sheets and discuss areas they would like to improve.

Remind staff that they should develop effective strategies for dealing with potentially confrontational situations when they are secure with their personal feelings and perceptions. Dealing with behaviour can sometimes cause staff to react emotionally, especially if the behaviour is repeated constantly over time.

Introduce participants to the matrix on **resource sheet 2.2**, which supports the group to explore the different ways in which staff deal with confrontational situations.

Ask participants to consider a situation where either the member of staff or the pupil was in a high emotional state. An example is included on resource sheet 2.2.

Participants:

6. use the appropriate box on the resource sheet to record a brief outline of:
 - the incident;
 - the impact for learning for the pupil and the rest of the group;
7. consider the remaining boxes and identify scenarios that fit;
8. as a group, discuss the benefits of adopting a rational response, making a list of effective strategies that can de-escalate the situation. For example, thinking time, reassuring oneself about handling the situation, counting backwards from 10, 20, 50, telling someone else about their feelings.

Summary

Assertive staff are successful because they:

- have clear expectations;
- model behaviour for learning;
- actively promote regular attendance;
- are consistent in approach;
- are able to combine non-verbal and verbal teaching skills effectively.

This is particularly important when we consider that some research states that people communicate:

- 55% through their body language;
- 38% through the tone of their voice;
- 7% by the words that they use.

Based on O'Connor, J. and Seymour, J. (1998) *Introducing NLP: Neuro-linguistic programming*, HarperCollins, ISBN 1-85538-344-6

Links

Toolkit units 8: Curriculum; 6: Classroom behaviour; 7: Out-of-class behaviour; 9: Attendance Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 1 – *Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy* (DfES 0392-2003 R), session 4

Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2 – *Developing effective practice across the school to promote positive behaviour and attendance* (DfES 0055-2004 R), session 2

Activity 2.3: Offering support to colleagues

Reviewing the process for handling incidents and the effect this has on the emotional health and well-being of staff

Staff facing challenging behaviour are likely to need support. Supporting and promoting staff emotional health and well-being has direct benefits for staff, and supports pupils' well-being and

school improvement by enhancing teaching and learning and assisting recruitment and retention.

Many schools have found training in the following areas helpful:

- all aspects of emotional health and well-being, and its role in school improvement and learning;
- listening skills; school council development; conflict resolution;
- anti-discriminatory practice to support inclusion;
- establishing work on social, emotional and behavioural skills.

Audience

Senior staff, all staff with a responsibility for behaviour or attendance

Purpose

To consider existing support for the emotional health and well-being of staff; to explore strategies to enhance provision

Description

Participants:

1. complete **resource sheet 2.3** individually;
2. in pairs, compare how they have scored each feature. Each pair then joins another pair and discusses their completed resource sheets;
3. compare the findings of the whole group and go on to consider the following questions:
 - What is the school most successful at? Why?
 - What area needs most development? Why?
 - What changes can be made in the short term?
 - What long-term changes need to be made?

Summary

- Supporting and promoting the emotional health and well-being of staff benefits both staff and pupils, and impacts on behaviour, attendance and attainment.
- To support pupils' well-being, staff need to be supported in their own.
- Staff well-being is enhanced when they feel informed, confident and competent.

Links

Toolkit unit 1: Leadership and management

Promoting emotional health and well-being, NHSS, 2004, ISBN 1-84279-263-6

www.wiredforhealth.gov.uk

Resource sheet 2.1

Characteristics of an assertive teacher

1. Circle the characteristics which you think you model confidently.

shows leadership	is reliable	listens to pupils
has confidence	sets clear boundaries	values pupils' opinions
is open and direct	states both academic and behavioural expectations	provides a good model of behaviour, e.g. is polite
is decisive	is fair and consistent	uses humour – but shared with pupils, not directed at them
has high expectations	raises both achievement and effort	is dependable

2. Tick the skills you have that are necessary to achieve the characteristics listed above. You:

- are well-prepared;
- plan in advance;
- are a good communicator;
- are a good listener;
- show rational detachment;
- show alertness;
- are a challenger;
- are a finisher.

Resource sheet 2.2

Matrix for dealing with confrontation

		Teacher	
		High emotion Low rationale	Low emotion High rationale
Pupil	High emotion Low rationale	<p>Conflict between teacher and pupil</p> <p>For example, a teacher has already asked a pupil on four occasions to stop tapping her pen. During the last lesson the same behaviour took place. The pupil taps again for the fifth time. The teacher snatches the pen and shouts loudly at the pupil.</p>	Teacher manages the situation
	Low emotion High rationale	Pupil in charge of the situation	Behaviour for learning modelled by teacher and pupil

Resource sheet 2.3

Where are we now?

Checklist: Emotional health and well-being of staff		
To what extent:	1 = Not in place 10 = Entirely in place	Comments
Is there an open and respectful climate in which staff can admit and explore any concerns and difficulties; solve problems collaboratively and seek help and support?	1 10	
Is there an effective behaviour-for-learning policy and strategies to reduce staff stress?	1 10	
Are there opportunities for staff to celebrate successes and achievements?	1 10	
Can you offer experiential training days run by external experts with sessions offering topics related to emotional health and well-being, such as relaxation, stress management, health and fitness, anger management and assertiveness?	1 10	
Is there easy and speedy access to expert advice and assistance, for example financial advice, health screening, counselling, careers advice?	1 10	
Do you provide access to supervisory support or counselling for staff working with the most vulnerable or challenging pupils?	1 10	

Section 3: Learning support units (LSUs)

If, despite a range of well-considered responses that include highly developed staff skills and smarter strategies, as well as an emotionally healthy environment, consistently poor behaviour persists and, indeed, escalates in seriousness, schools may wish to consider other more-formal responses. One option would be to set up an LSU. Although LSUs vary in approach from school to school, there are some common guiding principles.

- The LSU exists to keep disaffected pupils in school and working while they are addressing their behavioural problems, facilitating their reintegration into mainstream classes as quickly as possible.
- LSUs devise and support individual curriculum and behaviour packages so that pupils re-engage in the learning process, either in school or elsewhere.
- Ideally LSUs can be part of the school's social inclusion team or faculty.
- It is helpful if the role and function of the LSU are discussed with staff and are fully understood and embedded into school policies and practice.

Effective LSUs have the following purposes, either singly or in combination. They:

- reduce exclusions by retaining the pupil's engagement in school when all else has failed;
- improve inclusion by supporting the most vulnerable pupils at times when they would otherwise be failing to learn;
- provide targeted intervention for groups of pupils with specific behavioural problems through a series of programmes designed to re-engage them in education and assist their family;
- contribute substantially to a whole-school inclusion policy linked to special educational needs, education welfare, Behaviour and Education Support Team (BEST) and learning mentor programme within an inclusion faculty;
- support pupils' learning by identification of behavioural problems and then help them to develop strategies to manage their behaviour better in the classroom;
- provide flexible and part-time provision for pupils who are having particular difficulties in certain lessons;
- serve as a base for the reintegration of pupils who are poor attenders or who are returning from exclusion;
- provide expertise for the training and support of staff in improving behaviour for learning.

Where LSUs are successful, their purposes are clear. Where the purpose of an LSU is poorly defined, there is little chance of identifying whether the LSU is successful or not. When identifying the purpose of their LSUs, schools could select from the list above to create clear aims and objectives. LSUs cannot operate effectively if they are expected to accommodate pupils referred on the instant or as an immediate holding operation when excluded from a lesson. Separate facilities and procedures are needed for these pupils. In all cases, referral must be through an agreed procedure at a referral meeting to which all staff, including senior staff, abide.

Based on www.dfes.gov.uk/ibis/departmentalpublications/lstu

Activity 3.1: Targeted programmes

Considering the benefits of specific programmes for individual needs

A robust and transparent referral system for entry into the LSU, published with other relevant documentation in the school's handbook and policy statements, is key to the LSU's success. The LSU manager should have the authority to challenge inappropriate referrals or those made more difficult by the pupil's personality or conflict issues. A referral panel is ideal to get agencies and staff together on a regular basis to look at referrals and exit from the programme. The panel should clarify the problem and prepare an action plan for implementation in the LSU.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To provide schools with an opportunity to consider who may benefit from LSU intervention and how referral processes can be managed

Description

In groups, participants:

1. imagine that they are the members of the LSU referral panel at the school (refer to **resource sheet 3.1**, which outlines the possible criteria for referral);
2. use the four scenarios on **resource sheet 3.2** to decide which pupils would be suitable for referral.

Resource sheet 3.3 provides further information for the SLT and behaviour and attendance leaders to consider when reviewing referral systems.

Summary

The key to a successful LSU is:

- a robust and transparent referral system;
- having an LSU manager supported to challenge inappropriate referrals;
- having an active referral panel that brings together agencies and staff on a regular basis.

Links

National Programme for Specialist Leaders in Behaviour and Attendance (NPSL-BA) Module B: Leading positive approaches to behaviour and attendance

www.dfes.gov.uk/ibis/departmentalpublications/lstu

Activity 3.2: Effective programmes

Reviewing LSUs and their suitability for your school

LSUs meet the needs of carefully selected pupils who may have any number, or combination, of disadvantages. LSUs support these pupils and help them to remain engaged in education for as long as possible.

LSUs are rarely successful in isolation and therefore are considered to be an integral part of a whole-school behaviour and inclusion policy, supported by the LEA behaviour improvement plan. At its most effective, the LSU is in tune with the school's values and ethos. Its role will depend on the behaviour improvement priorities for the school. These priorities can be identified through a whole-school behaviour audit. This may be the starting point for any school establishing an LSU or reviewing its existing provision.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To consider the features of an effective LSU

Description

Refer participants to **resource sheet 3.4**, which is a checklist of features of good practice in an LSU.

Participants:

1. in groups, complete the checklist and give feedback on perceived strengths and areas of development;
2. as a whole group, develop an action plan for further development.

Alternatively, if the school does not currently have a LSU, participants use the checklist to consider whether the issues are covered by other provision in the school, or whether there are gaps.

An audit to use if considering setting up an LSU can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/ibis/departmentalpublications/l-su.

Summary

In developing an LSU, schools may wish to consider:

- the needs of carefully selected pupils;
- integration with a whole-school behaviour and inclusion policy;
- links with the behaviour improvement priorities of the school.

Links

www.dfes.gov.uk/ibis/departmentalpublications/l-su

Activity 3.3: Running an alternative programme

Considering the practical arrangements

Many schools have developed systems of collecting information on behaviour from staff and pupils. Information gathered must be accurate and useful and its provision must not be seen as merely a form-filling exercise. In many LSUs, as part of the initial assessment, pupils are asked to fill in assessments or summaries of their own perception of their behaviour and any difficulties they had, either before the programme of intervention starts or in the first few days. This activity is often a good ice-breaking strategy. It is important that the pupil owns the problem and the solutions. Some schools have targeted Key Stage 3, to have the greatest chance of successful reintegration.

By analysing data, trends can be identified, involving, for instance, factors such as behaviour, academic performance, gender, ethnicity and looked-after children. A whole-school understanding of the criteria set and the procedures to be followed is helpful, along with clear referral systems for entry and exit. A social inclusion or multi-disciplinary team meeting is essential.

Time limits or review milestones are useful in assessing progress being made against targets set in an action plan. Support needs to be geared to the individual; some need short-term, others long-term intervention. LSUs are sometimes used to allow designated pupils time out if need be. However, it is not desirable for the LSU to be used as an excuse for pupils to leave classrooms inappropriately.

The fundamental goal of any LSU is the reintegration of the pupil either into mainstream classes or into their mainstream school. Alternatively, they may have to be moved on to another provision if reintegration proves impossible. Close cooperation and support from the class teacher, pupils and the school will help to ensure reintegration success. Teaching assistants can be invaluable in easing transition, as they act as the link between the LSU and the school's teachers and pastoral staff. It is helpful to agree and implement a structured reintegration plan with the pupil and staff. This could form part of a pastoral support plan with information gained from the pupil's time in the LSU and ideas on approaches and strategies.

Audience

All staff

Purpose

To consider and plan practical arrangements for setting up or making an existing LSU effective

Description

Participants:

1. use **resource sheet 3.5** to consider the practical arrangements needed to run a successful and effective LSU;
2. record the implications for their school and any actions required.

Summary

- Information on behaviour must be accurate and useful.
- A social inclusion or multi-disciplinary team meeting is essential.
- Support needs to be geared to the individual.
- The fundamental goal of any LSU is the reintegration of the pupil.

Links

www.dfes.gov.uk/ibis/departmentalpublications/lisu

Resource sheet 3.1

Pupils who may need LSU support

Below is a list of entry criteria for support. Consider the case studies on **resource sheet 3.2** and decide whether you would make a referral in each case.

Learning

- Low attainment in relation to ability
- Falling motivation
- Poor concentration and attention difficulties
- Behaviour affecting learning of individual pupil and/or class group
- Consistent underachievement of individual education plan (IEP) targets

Emotional and social development

- Difficult relationships with adults/peers
- Low self-esteem
- Social skills deficits
- Communication skill deficits
- Present on EBD register
- Poor attitude to discipline
- Behaviour for learning – pupil or staff issue
- Risk of exclusion
- High incidence of times sent to isolation room
- Persistent failure to modify behaviour
- Vulnerable pupils

Attendance

- Patterns of poor attendance
- Internal truancy
- Integration of pupils on exit plans
- Integration of transitional pupils

Many kinds of pupils are supported by LSUs, including those who:

- have poor anger management skills;
- find it difficult to accept sanctions;
- are aggressive, insolent and belligerent;
- lack respect for authority;
- have poor social and communication skills;
- lack self-esteem or confidence;
- are shy, withdrawn or anxious;
- find adjusting to new situations difficult – for instance asylum seekers and refugees, pupils moving from primary to secondary school and those unable to cope with large institutions;
- have difficult family or social circumstances or who are looked-after children;
- are long-term absentees;
- are victims of bullying, robberies, domestic violence, etc.

Resource sheet 3.2

Scenarios

Mark is the oldest of a family of seven children. Both Mark and his sister have a lot of responsibility in the home, and the whole family is on the central At Risk register. Mark has always attended well here – much better than at his primary school. Currently, he is achieving 99% attendance. His problems are in relationships with his peers. He also has considerable learning difficulties.

In her primary report there were concerns regarding Jade's attitude to learning and education in general. She sometimes absconded and often became challenging if confronted with the consequences of her actions. During classroom observation the mentors and head of year are concerned by Jade's obvious disaffection. She returned from holidays with this intensified and, on the whole, doesn't respond well to teachers' criticisms.

Yoko is unable to cope with working in class and has an inability to cope with crowds. Her attendance at school has been patchy since term 1 of Year 10. She lacks self-esteem and self-confidence and has become increasingly detached from examination courses.

Pravinda has experienced bullying from a number of pupils in his tutor group. He is feeling very insecure and has verbally lashed out at a number of pupils. He is grumpy and uncooperative with his tutor.

Resource sheet 3.3

Referrals – good practice

There are numerous examples of referral processes. In the main they are made either through heads of year, referral panel meetings, or members of the SLT.

The referral form should include details of:

- skills and strengths;
- areas of concern (a checklist is usually helpful);
- reasons for referral;
- focus of intervention requested;
- information about relationships and attitude;
- other support received such as SEN or language support;
- strategies previously employed;
- contact details/pupil's current status;
- other agencies involved;
- statutory care issues;
- family/carer involvement in school;
- dates, referring member of staff and addresses;
- an action plan for LSU staff to implement.

Examples of good practice include the following.

- Referrals are made via form tutors, heads of subject and house tutors. A grid is completed which highlights problems in work ethic, verbal/non-verbal skills and any problem subjects. Parents/carers are invited in and a commitment document is signed by the LSU manager, the parents/carers and the pupil as an agreement to work together to improve the pupil's social skills.
- A designated support panel meets every three weeks. All concerns are passed to the panel via the head of year. An emergency referral structure goes directly to the head of the LSU, which can avoid many short-term exclusions.
- The head of year completes the referral form; then it circulates to teaching staff who assess behaviour and attitude. There is a meeting with the pupil, another with the pupil and parents/carers, then a programme is devised and initiated.

Resource sheet 3.4

Features of an effective LSU

Checklist	In place	In need of review
The LSU is part of a whole-school policy and strategy for behaviour for learning and inclusion which has been designed following a behaviour audit.		
It is supported by the SLT at all levels and is regularly reviewed by them.		
There is clear and effective line management of LSU staff.		
It is recognised by pupils and parents/carers as an asset to the school, helping those with difficulty.		
It involves all teaching and support staff, in some way. All are aware of the principles and practice in the LSU.		
Consequently, the role of the LSU is tightly defined as one of a raft of intervention strategies.		
The taught curriculum is specifically designed to aid the reintegration of the pupil into mainstream classes as quickly as possible.		
The teaching uses a wide range of resources, including ICT, and a variety of styles appropriate to the pupil and in keeping with styles elsewhere in the school.		
There is a planned and phased reintegration into full-time mainstream classes, which is understood by pupils and staff right from the start.		
Pupils feel able to return to the LSU for further support if they start to regress. However, this opportunity is strictly controlled for times that are agreed by everyone.		
There is a regular monitoring and evaluation system with agreed measures of effectiveness identified through the collation of recorded data.		
There are strong links with other agencies and there are effective systems to develop good family and multi-disciplinary working, particularly with the LEA Behaviour Support Services, other LSUs, pupil referral units (PRUs) and BEST teams		
Wide use is made of other appropriately trained and vetted adults – parents/carers, TIE groups, local industry, Connexions, etc.		
Pupils, staff, and parents/carers all view the LSU as a place for rigorous learning which supports pupils in mastering the challenge of school and raises their self-esteem and motivation in a caring and positive atmosphere.		

Resource sheet 3.5

Practical arrangements for running an LSU

Optimum time in an LSU:

- Two to three weeks maximum full-time, then part-time.
- With more-able pupils, approximately five weeks' structured reintegration; with less-able pupils a longer period with more literacy, PSHE and confidence-boosting activity.
- In a three-tier system: three, four or five weeks or half-termly. The most vulnerable pupils are full-time.
- If pupils are to attend for one term, the optimum is for half a term full-time, and half a term spent being slowly reintegrated into mainstream classes. However, the average reintegration period is one to two weeks.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Self-assessment

In many LSUs, pupils are asked to fill in assessments or summaries of their own perception of their behaviour and any difficulties, either before the programme of intervention starts or in the first few days as part of the initial assessment.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Referral systems

There needs to be whole-school understanding of the criteria set and the procedures to be followed, along with clear referral systems for entry and exit.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Individual action plans

Support needs to be geared to the individual; some need short-term, others long-term intervention. Time limits or review milestones are useful in assessing progress being made against targets set in an action plan. LSUs are sometimes used to allow designated pupils time out if need be. However, the LSU must not be used as an excuse for pupils to leave classrooms inappropriately.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Exit criteria

Many LSUs develop exit criteria to help assess whether pupils are ready to be reintegrated into mainstream classroom settings. These may include:

- more positive self-image;
- improved attitude to school and attendance;
- confidence, willingness to move on;
- better motivation and attitude to learning;
- gradual reintegration through their 'best subjects'; with a report book monitored by LSU staff;
- targets or objectives met, including individual behaviour plan (IBP), pastoral support plan (PSP);
- referral to alternative agency or provision;
- monitoring interviews (involving staff, pupil and parents/carers).

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Reintegration

Levels of reintegration should be identified according to need.

Gradual support reintegration is where pupils may be in classes at times unsupported and at other times supported. This can be part of a flexible arrangement where pupils might reduce the number of curriculum areas attended and concentrate on those in which they are achieving well. Flexibility is the key, aided by regular monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress. There needs to be full involvement by staff, pupil, parents/carers and agencies at regular review meetings, together with guidance and support for all staff in the school through individual support and advice, observations, training and written reports.

Completely supported integration involves pupils having access to a learning mentor or LSU assistant for a variety of lessons. In addition, they may return to the LSU for some of their curriculum time and use drop-in support.

Close cooperation and support from the class teacher, pupils and the school help to ensure reintegration success. Help from teaching assistants can be invaluable in easing transition. They act as the link between the LSU and the school's teachers and pastoral staff. A structured reintegration plan needs to be agreed by the pupil and staff and then implemented. This could form part of a PSP with information gained from the pupil's time in the LSU and ideas on approaches and strategies.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Reintegration breakdown

If the reintegration breaks down, a review must be considered. Some pupils may benefit from signing contracts or targets, which can be monitored during the day. Constant praise and reward as each step is taken is helpful, reinforced with high expectations of improving work and good behaviour. Pupils need time to review their targets in their IEPs, PSPs and daily targets on a regular basis. For some pupils only part reintegration may be achievable and access to group work, drop-in, and other agency support may be an ongoing element of a package. A realisation by all staff that no pupil returns from a LSU 'cured' but may still need ongoing support and understanding is an important position to achieve.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?

Reintegration from PRUs

Schools may use LSUs as a halfway house. All the above points apply to this process for pupils reintegrating from PRUs. Some pupils may have an extended package between the PRU, the LSU and access to mainstream classrooms.

What happens in our school? Are all pupils' needs being met?