

Managing Extreme Behaviour in Schools

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About the Author

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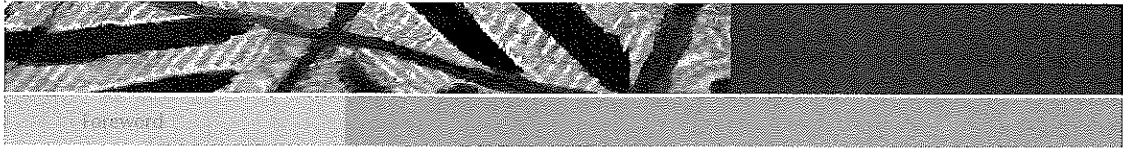
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for the Ministry of Education

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Foreword

Better supporting teachers and parents to manage children and young people with extreme behaviour needs is a priority for the Ministry of Education, and I'm pleased to introduce this updated resource as a reflection of our commitment.

It provides a systematic approach to the management of extreme behaviour in schools. As well as advocating the use of individual management plans, the book provides practical guidance that will help schools become physically and emotionally safer environments.

Primarily this booklet is a resource for classroom teachers, but it will also provide parents with a range of useful information.

I urge you to read it and to use and adapt the strategies and ideas described. They will help you support student education achievement, and create long term behaviour change.

The latest research evidence tells us effective teaching is the largest influence within the education system on education outcomes. Fostering better student engagement in learning and developing mutually respectful relationships are core components of an effective teaching process.

Effective teaching relies on a strong knowledge base and expertise, and on the ability to foster positive relationships within the classroom with students and their parents, families and whānau.

We do need to work together to support students with severe behaviour needs, reading and using the strategies outlined in this resource will provide us all with a good first step in that journey.

Barbara Disley
GROUP MANAGER
Ministry of Education, Special Education



Introduction

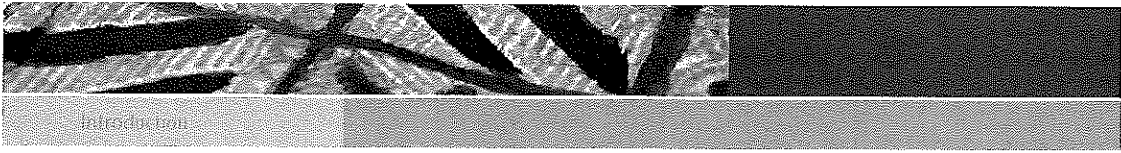
Students with extreme behaviour difficulties can pose major problems for schools. These behaviours interfere with the functioning of class and school programmes, affect the wellbeing of the student and others, and make excessive demands on staff and resources. Sometimes people and property are damaged and the students themselves cause considerable concern for their families and communities.

Extreme behaviour happens when students engage in acting out behaviour. This may include hitting, biting, kicking and hair pulling. Objects may be used as weapons. The behaviour can be accompanied by threats, crying, yelling, screaming or swearing. The student's response to teacher reprimands may include an escalation of the acting out behaviour.

It is very difficult for teachers to deal with extreme behaviour in classrooms. Teachers facing these problems need support from others. By working together, teachers help keep themselves and their students safe and will not feel it is their problem alone.

Teachers generally have a range of strategies for the day-to-day management of their classes in ways that stress positive relationships, develop self-esteem in their pupils and provide clear guidelines on expectations. There is also a variety of school-wide initiatives such as EV (Eliminating Violence) Anti-bullying and Assertive Discipline programmes. These are important because, for example, high rates of bullying in a school are often a precursor to violence and would therefore indicate that there is an immediate need for a school-wide approach to deal with this problem.

School staff dealing with incidences of extreme behaviour can respond in a variety of ways. Sometimes the responses are not effective and problems get worse. Teachers need to use techniques for preventing and defusing violent situations. Principals have a role to ensure that staff are trained and able to support each other and to problem-solve situations where students and teachers are in danger.



This book is a practical guide for teachers on how to respond during times of extreme behaviour. More importantly, it aims to prevent incidents.

The techniques outlined do not replace detailed assessments, individual programming or specialist support and intervention. Extreme behaviour indicates extreme problems, and extreme problems need to be comprehensively dealt with in order to achieve long term behaviour change.

- *A student broke his construction so he punched him to the ground and kicked him in the stomach. He then started swearing at me. I took him out of the room. He was screaming and swearing. He broke two panes of glass. He threw blocks at the other students, hurting three of them. He hit my feet with the same blocks. He is a danger to others and himself.*
- *She has tantrums which are brought on by the slightest frustration such as not having her demands responded to immediately. She stomps, bangs her fists against the wall, has kicked and hit teachers and other students, and emits verbal abuse including swearing of some dimensions.*
- *He returned again but this time entered the classroom, jumping over the desk and grabbing one of the other boys by the throat with both hands and attempting to strangle him.*

School and Classroom Policies

Schools need written policies that outline behaviour expectations and include guidelines for preventing and responding to extreme behaviour. Boards of trustees have a responsibility to provide safe physical and emotional environments for students (National Administration Guidelines 5.2) and to be a good employer (State Sector Act). Policies that have been developed by boards with staff, family, whānau and community input protect both students and staff. They provide a framework for action and accountability. Good policies, consistently applied, give communities confidence that schools are safe for students.

There are ethical and legal issues surrounding the use of negative responses that schools may currently use such as timeout and physical restraint, both of which have led to formal complaints against teachers and schools.

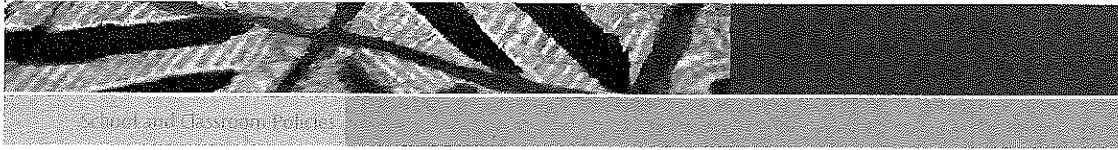
Schools are likely to achieve more effective results when they use positive strategies and work together with parents, caregivers, families and whānau to develop policies and mutual goals.

School Policies

School policies guide teachers in the preparation of classroom behaviour plans and management strategies for individual students. Policies provide the boundaries for the adults. These are vital when staff are faced with young people behaving in out-of-control and extreme ways.

School policies could include:

- a statement about students' rights
- recognition of cultural issues relevant to the community
- school rules. All students need to know what is expected of them. These need to be clearly specified so they can be responded to in a consistent manner
- guidelines for the involvement of families
- positive procedures for the management of extreme behaviour



- guidelines for preparation of Safety Plans, including appropriate interventions
- strategies that are unacceptable (strategies can be unacceptable because they are illegal or because they do not fit within the ethos of the school and community)
- guidelines for the use of any form of timeout from the class, if it has been endorsed by the school and community. The conditions for timeout need to be clearly spelled out for staff, students and their families
- guidelines for imposition of suspension and expulsion (in accordance with the Education Act 1989)
- guidelines for the use of physical restraint. This is an action of last resort during serious incidents, and care needs to be taken with the specification for its use
- support services both from within the school and outside of the school.

Schools need to have in place a procedure for dealing with a crisis. It is recommended a team is trained and available to respond when required, such as when a teacher is dealing with a serious incident in the playground. Schools should also ensure they have a method for signalling a member of the team. One system is to have a coloured card, which a teacher gives to a student who takes it to the office. Other schools have more immediate systems such as a telephone or alarm system.

Classroom Behaviour Management Plans

Classroom behaviour management plans comply with school policies and guidelines. They are the responsibility of a class teacher and may be written in consultation with the students. It is also helpful to work together with parents, caregivers, families and whānau, in the preparation of the plans, as this is likely to ensure wider support.

A classroom behaviour management plan may include:

- rules, positives and consequences
- classroom routines for promoting classroom organisation and cooperative behaviour
- strategies for teaching social and cooperative behaviour
- strategies for teaching rules and routines
- strategies for dealing with severe behaviour.

Teachers usually have a list of rules on display in the classroom, but sometimes these are vague and difficult to respond to. For example:

Stand tall, Make good choices, Consider others than yourself, Look after equipment, Be nice to others, and Listen to the teacher.

How can we be sure a child is listening to the teacher, or being nice, or making good choices?

We need to be more specific than that, for example:

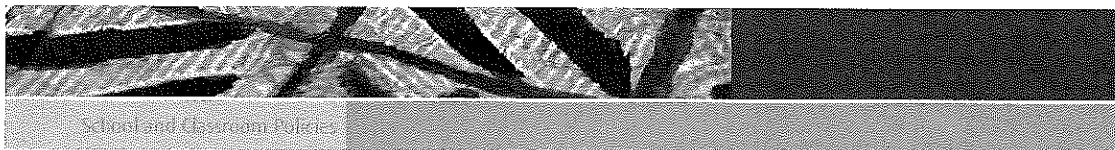
Do what the teacher tells you.

If rules are vague and unable to be followed through, then teachers tend to respond inconsistently and students become confused about what is expected of them.

It is helpful for a teacher to distinguish between rules and routines for they need to be written in a way so that every child and adult understands them and also understands the associated consequences.

Rules need to be:

- clearly specified
- functional and achievable
- able to be followed through.



By being followed through consistently children learn that:

- appropriate behaviour (academic and social) results in positive consequences
- inappropriate behaviour leads to the absence or withdrawal of positive consequences.

By responding consistently, a teacher increases predictability in children's lives and helps in their learning of social and cooperative behaviour.

Classroom Behaviour Management Plan	
Class Rules	Positives
<i>We follow teacher direction</i>	<i>Individual:</i> praise, positive points on group chart, name on board, certificate, choosing activity <i>Class awards:</i> shared lunch, ice block, game outside, pizza party
<i>We keep our hands and feet to ourselves and don't hit or annoy others</i>	
<i>We try to finish our work</i>	Consequences
<i>We do not swear or use put-downs to other students</i>	Warning, Non availability of points for chart, apology, finish work in own time, 5 minutes compliance training or practice of routines.

Routines provide guidance for how people should go about their daily work. Teachers establish routines for things like coming into and leaving the room, sitting on the mat, stopping when the teacher claps his/her hands, getting started on written activities and following teacher directions.

When delivering instructions, teachers ensure they have student attention. The strong relationship between effective teaching practices such as these and student behaviour is well documented.

Teachers promote cooperative behaviour in their classrooms by teaching both routines and rules with their classes. These have to be established immediately from the first day, otherwise it gets more difficult later. They may need to be rehearsed and reviewed with individuals or groups when necessary.

Rules that are broken can be practised by simulating situations involving them, providing practise, followed by debriefing. Teachers also use whole class activities as a means for promoting cooperation. For example, Brain Gym, DEX (Daily Exercises for School), or games such as Simon Says.

Mat Manners (Routines)

Sit on your bottom with a nice straight back
Put up your hand if you wish to speak
Don't have anything in your hands unless it's for news

Classroom Expectations (Routines)

In our classroom we try to look after each other and our environment.
This means:
We keep our classroom tidy and clean
We help those who are doing something wrong to be good
We help others when they need it
We listen quietly when someone is talking in class

Individual Behaviour Plan

A student who persistently exhibits severe behaviour and who has not responded to a class behaviour management system, requires an Individual Behaviour Plan for long term behaviour change. These are like Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and are written in consultation with the team working with the student including parents, caregivers, families and whānau, teachers, and an RTLB (Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour) or a behaviour specialist from the Ministry of Education, Special Education (GSE).

The plan is based on a careful and comprehensive assessment and analysis of the behaviour, and other relevant information. Intervention strategies are in accordance with the research literature and with assessment information. Individual Behaviour Plans need to comply with school policies in order to be safe for teachers and students.

Safety Plans

This is an action plan for responding to incidents of extreme behaviour. Safety Plans ensure that everyone, including the student, knows what will happen if incidents occur. In addition, these plans include ways that prevent incidents happening in the first place or will at least reduce the impact of them when they do. Safety Plans can be developed and implemented quickly in order to assist with immediate situations and are also included as part of an Individual Behaviour Plan. Behaviour specialists follow Ministry of Education policy with the development of these plans.

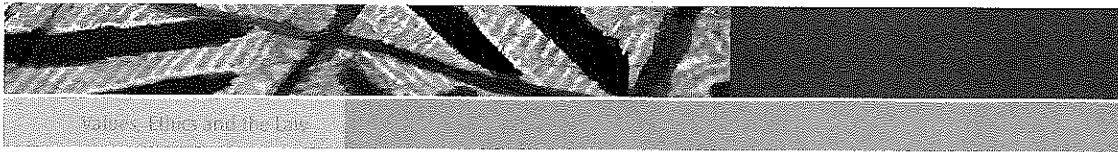
Parents, caregivers, family and whānau are encouraged to participate in the planning process. They need to know how their child's behaviour, is going to be managed at school. Collaboration and cooperation between teachers and parents demonstrate to the young person that there is consistency and support across the home and school situations.

A Safety Plan may include the following:

- information about the behaviour of concern including under what circumstances it is more likely and less likely to occur
- preventative strategies to avoid an incident arising in the first place
- strategies and script for defusing incidents
- script and plan for dealing with incidents.

Have a plan. Know what to do

- *Todd wouldn't play with a ball because he didn't get the partner he wanted. We had to restrain him. J crying because he trod on her hand. Had to carry him to classroom. He really went off. Both of us bruised. Teacher in tears. Tape deck broken. Crayons spread everywhere. I desperately needed a cup of tea so took him with me. He wouldn't settle and threw things. I spent an awful night worrying. I'm very bruised and my hand is sprained.*
- *Two students were having a friendly argument over something. Jo who was not at all involved, suddenly jumped up and punched one of the students in the stomach. She refused to leave the room. I finally got her outside the door. She yelled and swore "you f-n bitch" and ran away.*



Values, Ethics and the Law

Behaviour is not either desirable or undesirable. Rather than being a dichotomy, desirability can be measured on a continuum and behaviour has degrees of desirability. The same holds for many other adjectives, such as "appropriate" or "acceptable".

LA VIGNA & DONNELLAN, 1997 P2.

There is no fixed way of judging the appropriateness or acceptability of any behaviour, apart from where the behaviour is in breach of the Crimes Act, or other legislation. There are many standards by which behaviour may be judged and these will vary greatly between age groups, cultures, families, schools and other groupings of people.

Behaviour change can be brought about in a number of ways. Each procedure has values attached to it, associated ethical considerations and must operate within specific cultural context and legal frameworks.

In the past it was believed that the punitive measures such as corporal punishment and exclusion were essential tools for behaviour change. These and other aversive methods are not necessary and have a dehumanising effect on staff and students.

In contrast there are many strategies which will bring about behaviour change in a less intrusive way. For example, students do respond to carefully managed systems of positive incentives for desired behaviour. In addition, in the short term, extreme behaviour may be able to be managed through supportive statements and other non-punitive verbal strategies that assist the student to calm down. Strategies enabling students to learn more acceptable behaviours can also be effective. Positive methods are almost invariably more acceptable to staff and families. Where they are less acceptable there may already be too much reliance on punishment and control.

The key to the use of less intrusive strategies is to always remember that the short-term goal is to manage the extreme behaviour so that no one gets hurt. Short-term management must not contribute to the escalation of out-of-control behaviours. Negative comments and reprimands during the crisis will probably result in escalation.

It is important to avoid actions that are likely to be emotionally or physically distressing to a student. These actions are aversive and can place both students and staff at risk:

- shutting students into rooms where they can't get out
- confining students to chairs including wheelchairs to restrict movement
- using force to drag or pull students to make them go some place else
- restraining students in ways that are dehumanising and unsafe, for example, sitting on students
- pouring cold water over students
- hitting, slapping, shaking
- verbally abusing.

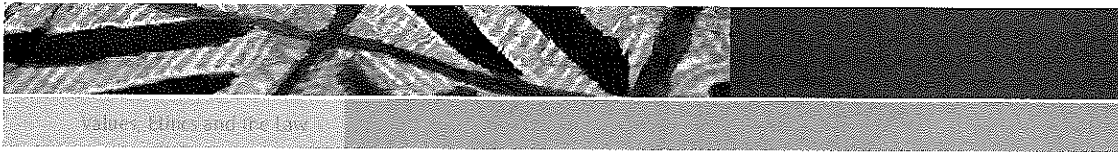
Behaviour results in consequences, which may be positive or negative. For example, the consequence of learning a new skill may be the pleasure enjoyed by being able to participate in a new activity with others. This is a positive consequence to increase behaviour. A negative consequence occurs, for example, when a child has destroyed a toy and then does not have use of it after it has been destroyed. Consequences, as well as occurring naturally, can be linked to specific behaviours and used effectively by teachers. For example, sports, games, swimming, free reading time and computer games can be awarded as rewards or as positive reinforcement. Alternatively, if used as a negative consequence or a sanction, then the reward is not given.

Positive consequence (positive reinforcement):

If you play without hurting anyone you will be able to take the ball outside at lunchtime.

Negative consequence (or consequence to reduce behaviour):

If you act silly and hurt someone you will not be able to use the ball at lunchtime.



Consequences can be incorporated into an Individual Behaviour Plan to reduce a target behaviour. They may include things like not getting points, staying for a few minutes to practise a desired behaviour, writing a statement about what rule should have been followed, or not receiving access to a reward activity. Some schools have a system of community service. Note the mildness of the consequences. They are not intended to punish students. Consequences are something the student doesn't like but are more of a nuisance value to the student and more importantly they let him or her know that every time certain behaviour occurs, you are going to follow through. It is not the severity of the consequence that is important, it is the consistency. This process lessens the chance of a negative behaviour occurring again, especially when combined with a positive consequence that reinforces the desired behaviour. Students are more likely to accept consequences as fair and just if they know about them beforehand and know they are going to be followed through in a consistent manner by the teacher.

Consequences to reduce behaviour should always be paired with positive use of incentives to promote or teach acceptable behaviour so that a student is motivated by incentive.

More severe consequences, such as removal of the student from class or the use of physical intervention in order to protect others from harm may be needed occasionally to prevent people being hurt. It is important to remember that students may become more aggressive if restrained and that people may be hurt. Staff involved in physical restraint can also be vulnerable to allegations of assault or indecency.

Use of physical intervention is therefore a last resort to manage an immediately dangerous situation. It can only be used to prevent hurt or damage, and only be used for the time it takes the student to calm down. It needs to be used with great care in accordance with school and Ministry of Education policies, which should specify the circumstances when physical intervention may be used. It should not be used to punish or to force a student to go to the principal's office.

While the removal of a student from the presence of others may be necessary, if the student is not responsive then it is easier to ask the other students to leave. It is safer to bring support staff to the student than to take the student elsewhere.

The cultural values of students can easily be violated. These violations may lead to more aggression on the part of the student. For example, for some the touching of the head can be interpreted to be challenging rather than supporting.

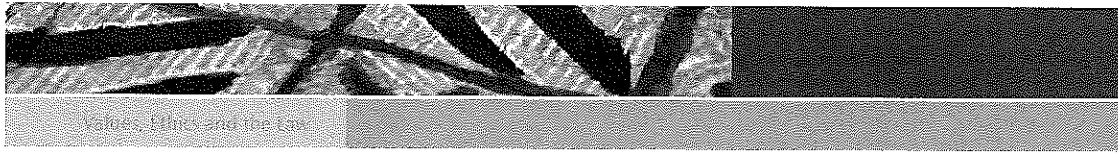
When working with Māori students, staff should take into account their physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual values, all essential to that student's wellbeing. Some of the terminology used by Māori in this context includes: mana, whakama and wairuatanga. This cultural understanding is very important. Always remember that the issue is to restore calm and order, never to punish.

Establishing a rapport with the family requires an understanding of whānaukatanga. This is the concept of relating to the child in the context wider than the immediate family.

It recognises the significant role of extended family and the child's place within their extended family.

Whakama is a state of mind that may affect both positive and negative behaviour. Students' reactions can be seen to be arrogant or withdrawn when they may actually be distressed. Whakama can also affect interaction with families because of different understandings of problems. An understanding of whakama will help the whānau to keep mana intact.

Wairuatanga is the basis of spirituality for Māori people. Karakia, an integral part of wairuatanga, is the visible expression of that. Each home visit or meeting may include karakia, which can be performed personally or shared. It can provide a beginning and an end for the focus of the meeting.



Teachers have a responsibility to know how to handle difficult behaviour safely. They should work within their levels of competence and seek further training and guidance if necessary. This includes extending the understanding of cultures other than their own and using this knowledge to prevent incidents, defuse potentially violent situations and deal with behaviour without causing unnecessary distress and loss of mana to the student and their whānau.

Teachers must also understand and recognise the rights of young people in relation to natural justice, legal and human rights, and incorporate safe practices in the management of difficult behaviour situations.

- *Guides to the ethical obligations of teachers can be found in the Teachers Registration Board Leaflet 5 (A Satisfactory Teacher) and the New Zealand Educational Institute Code of Ethics.*
- *The legal obligations of early childhood centres and schools are in Section 139a of the Education Act 1989 and its Amendments, the Human Rights Act 1994 and the New Zealand Bill of Rights 1990. The regulations that accompany the Education Act are the National Education Guidelines. These include the National Education Goals, the National Curriculum Statements and the National Administration Guidelines. In addition New Zealand is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC).*

Preventing Extreme Behaviour

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Extreme behaviours significantly and seriously disrupt the functioning and wellbeing of the student. Extreme behaviours cause major disruption and danger or harm to others.

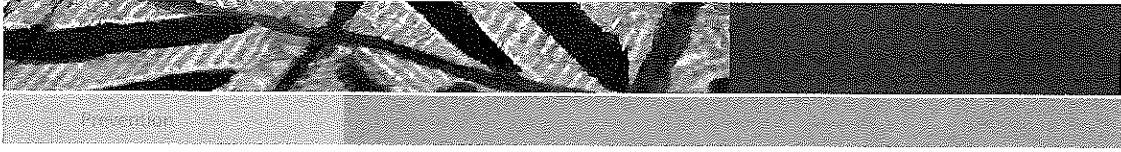
Students develop extreme behaviours for a variety of reasons. The behaviours may be associated with trauma caused by physical, sexual or emotional abuse, severe family stress, illness or other issues occurring at home, school or in the community. It is possible for the effects of trauma to remain long after events have occurred. Extreme behaviour can also be related to developmental factors.

Students may not have learnt to deal with frustration that arises when things don't go their way or others upset them. Aggressive reactions to frustration can become persistent if the aggression achieves what is wanted. Where this happens the behaviour has been reinforced and thus becomes learnt. There is little motivation to change when extreme behaviour produces desired outcomes.

Behaviour has a function for the individual. When students have limited means for verbal communication they may learn to express themselves through extreme behaviours. They may be expressing needs and feelings, for example, boredom, frustration or hunger. It is easy to misinterpret these communication attempts. Careful observations will help identify the function the behaviour serves.

We do not have control over all factors influencing behaviour but there are many that affect learning over which we do have an influence. For example, we can change the way in which we respond and this can make a difference. We can also assist students to learn to cope during times of upset and frustration.

Some students have had difficulty learning, or have not been taught social and cooperative behaviour. Often these students behave in generally non-compliant ways across settings and experience difficulty with things like sharing, turn-taking, and following the rules of games. More significantly they have not been taught to follow directions.



Many of the issues outlined here would be addressed within assessment-based intervention for long term behaviour change. For example, communication and social skill training could be included in the goals of an Individual Behaviour Plan. Where a student is engaging in extreme behaviour a Safety Plan can be implemented immediately.

It is far easier to prevent extreme behaviour or to defuse situations that may lead to extreme behaviour than to intervene further down the track.

Prevention strategies involve planned changes that lessen the likelihood of extreme behaviour developing. These include:

- having policies and practices that promote non-violence, mutual respect and respect for property
- providing interesting programmes that are achievable. Students who experience success are less likely to engage in negative behaviour
- giving praise and positive reinforcement for effort and for completion of tasks and activities
- providing stable predictable environments with familiar routines, rules and consistent limits. Students benefit by knowing what is acceptable behaviour, what is required and what will happen if transgressions occur. Rules are displayed, explained and reviewed
- creating positive environments. Creating situations where students will value praise and comments
- teaching that reinforces acceptable behaviour and doesn't assume that this will be learned incidentally. For example, teach students to put their hands up to gain attention and praise and respond to them when they do. Practise where necessary
- defusing incidents through positive comments. Friendly positive direction will encourage cooperation (for example, "*When you have removed your hat you can come and join us*"). Give choices. Choices reduce the likelihood of outright refusal (for example, "*You can do this now or at lunchtime*")

- being aware of events that may be stressful for students and teachers. These situations cannot always be avoided, but careful management can reduce the risk of extreme behaviour
- avoiding situations known to lead to extreme behaviour for individual students. Know the circumstances under which certain behaviour is likely to occur and make changes accordingly
- intervening early, and not ignoring behaviours that are likely to become extreme.

Students whose behaviour provides ongoing difficulties can best be helped if staff work together to share ideas and support each other.

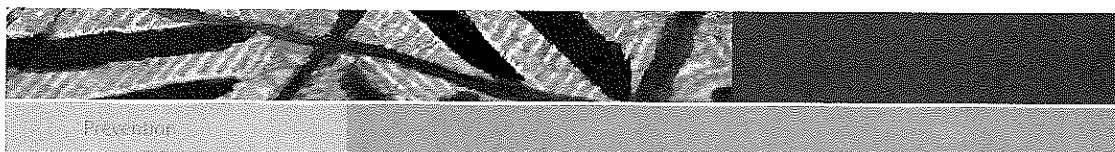
Teachers must not be left on their own to deal with extreme behaviour. If they are expected to simply cope, they become isolated and increase the risk of major difficulties such as severe stress or allegations of assault.

We cannot make young people behave themselves.

Students cannot be punished into good behaviour.

A planned team approach is far more likely to succeed and is more likely to be within the boundaries of safe practice. A team approach benefits students, teachers, family, whānau and the school.

- *I took her by the wrist. She used her feet to break all the constructions and as I removed her she kicked down chairs, tables and used her other arm to sweep everything off the tables. She then kicked me several times on the shins, stamped on my foot and tried to bite me. I moved her towards the door and she picked up children's shoes and threw them knocking a light. She threw blocks, shoes and other objects at the children.*
- *When I said he hadn't done his spelling he hit me and kept launching himself on me. Also hit other kids. I took him out and he ran away. I caught him and he kicked me. I took his shoes off and he kicked me again. Very vicious fight with him laughing and saying, "ha ha" and spitting in my face all the time. Head-butted me when I tried to restrain him.*



Classroom Checklist

Tasks

1. The teacher uses positive statements and gives clear directions.
2. Students know what is expected of them.
3. Students have the equipment they need to participate in the classroom programme.
4. Achievable tasks and incentives enable students to experience success.
5. There are clear routines operating around classroom processes and organisation.
6. The rules are understood and consistently followed through.
7. There are choices and consequences and these are known by the students.
8. The teacher is consistent and fair.
9. The teacher knows how to deal with non-compliance in ways that will defuse incidents.

Crisis Behaviour Development Model

Anxiety

Although it may seem that behaviour occurs *out of the blue*, this is not usually the case. The thing that triggers it off is not necessarily the cause. Those in a stressed state or those in a stressful situation may have a *shorter* fuse and therefore react more immediately to something than would normally be the case.

Anxiety may be associated with feelings of worry, frustration, anger, distress, sadness and fear. These feelings may not be obvious to another person and can be misinterpreted. An example of this is when a student refuses to apologise. This is seen as an act of defiance, when it may actually be an indication of embarrassment and distress. Other examples include students smiling or laughing when being reprimanded.

Cultural, as well as individual, differences influence the way anxiety is shown. Students get anxious about different things and some get more anxious than others. Some students don't even show they are in an anxious state. Teachers need to get to know all their students and observe and note their moods. Those with high levels of anxiety are most likely to react to things that happen at school. If students have not learnt to react in acceptable ways seemingly small incidents can escalate out of control.

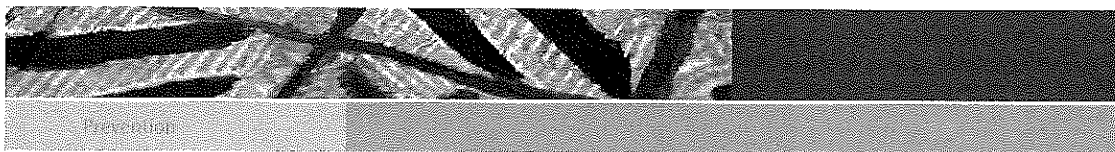
The following behaviours may indicate high anxiety:

- increase in movement and noise
- talking faster and louder
- non-compliance
- head down, quiet and overly compliant
- social withdrawal and avoidance of eye contact
- inappropriate smiling and laughter
- not concentrating.

Staff and parents or caregivers can prevent and avoid situations known to cause anxiety. They can also provide communication between home and school so people can be warned when a student is in an anxious state. There is a staff responsibility at these times, to be more watchful and supportive of students and to help them feel more secure.

This can mean being on hand to intervene if necessary.

- *Ella arrived at school with a face like thunder. Within a few minutes she was involved in a fight with another student. Later when talking to Ella's mother, the teacher discovered that Ella's father had gone away on business and this had been known to cause problems previously. It was decided to give Ella a calendar with a picture of Dad pasted onto the day on which he was coming home and to incorporate relevant discussion into her daily programme.*



Agitation

Students who are anxious may become agitated under certain conditions, leading to increases in movement and verbalisation, and to less rational behaviour. Agitation is more difficult to manage and may escalate into aggression.

All sorts of things set young people off in this way, for example, losing a toy or object, being told to take their jacket off, being beaten to the front of the line or being teased. Some of the precipitators may seem small and inconsequential. However, it is important to remember that the student is already in an anxious state. By getting to know a student well it is possible to gauge what is more likely to trigger anxious and agitated behaviour.

Factors that may trigger anxious and agitated behaviour, in addition to the ones above, include:

- changes in routine. These can include sports days, end of year activities, class outings and teacher absence
- illness, discomfort, pain, anger, lack of sleep, sensory difficulties
- difficulty understanding instructions and/or tasks
- fear and embarrassment, which can be caused by incidents including being reprimanded in front of others.

The anxious/agitated state is critical because staff actions will either accelerate or defuse the situation.

Students should not become more aggressive as a result of staff intervention. The goal for staff is always to defuse. Effective management requires the adult to remain calm and to set limits. The important thing for staff to remember is firstly to defuse the situation, and sort out the issues later. If a person is unable to do this, the behaviour could escalate into a more serious incident.

Students in an agitated state require guidance and direction to increase their sense of security. Use verbal intervention to defuse the situation, calmly telling the student what to do. Where possible and appropriate, give the student a choice, then some time to respond. The student makes their choice, then after an appropriate time, the teacher follows through with consequences. If the student is disruptive and not responding to verbal intervention escort them from the room in accordance with school policy until they have calmed down.

- *Wiri started pacing up and down the corridor outside the principal's office. He was talking loudly, saying repeatedly that he was going to ring his mother. He was thumping the walls.*

Acting out

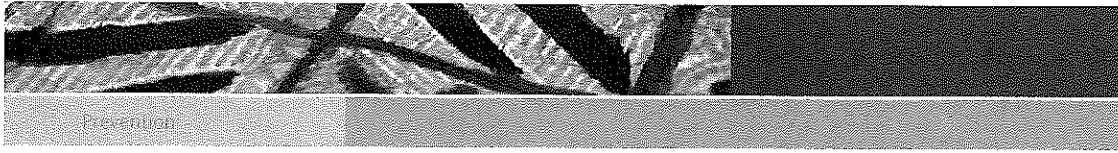
Although acting out behaviour often follows anxiety and agitation, it can also occur with little or no warning. Acting out students are aggressive and are dangerous to themselves and others.

In these situations when the student is out-of-control, the teacher's first priority is to assist the student to regain control. Safety comes first and the goal is to defuse the situation. Where there is already a Safety Plan or Individual Behaviour Plan, staff will know what to do. It is helpful if there is an actual script outlining a step by step process for staff to follow.

Where there is no existing plan, staff members will need to follow the school policy.

Where the aggressive act has been completed and it is unlikely that further aggression will follow, there is no need to physically intervene. Certainly the matter still needs to be dealt with, for example, the victim attended to, and consequences for the perpetrator.

Where the perpetrator is in a highly anxious or agitated state, have another staff member attend to the victim and get the perpetrator to sit quietly until they are calm enough to talk about what has happened. When they do talk it is important to be non-judgemental and not to lecture. Remind the student of the rules and follow through with consequences.



If the behaviour continues to be threatening and disruptive, isolate the student from the others. Ask for their co-operation in doing this: *"Come outside until things have settled."* Ideally the student will readily come outside. To achieve this, prior practise will be helpful.

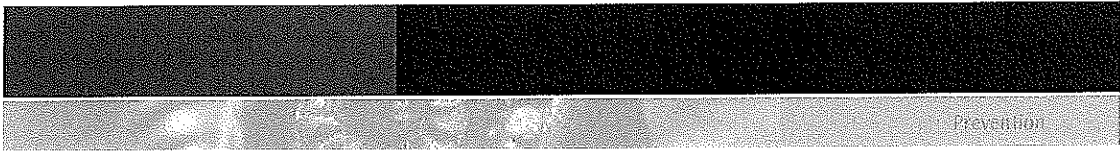
The purpose is to assist rather than to punish the student. Irrational and abusive language from the student should not be taken personally. If they are being physically aggressive then it may be necessary to restrain them in accordance with safe practice.

Where patterns of student aggression are shown, preliminary actions can be taken. For example, if a student is known to kick others then all children could have their shoes off inside. If a student scratches, ensure fingernails are cut short. Objects lying around the place that may be used as something to throw, can be put away. Also avoid overcrowding a student who might lash out and bite. It is amazing how many people get hurt simply because they're too close to a student. The objective with safety precautions is prevention. Prevention is physically and emotionally easier on everyone.

Avoid practices that are emotionally or physically harmful to students. These practices are likely to increase extreme reactions and are not helpful. Non-aversive interventions that aim to teach positive behaviours, combined with planned incentives, will always be more effective.

For advice and training on safe escorting and restraint contact your local Ministry of Education, Special Education office. They may be able to run a course such as Non-violent Crisis Intervention, or at least provide guidance for individuals.

- *He chased another pupil into the classroom, threw furniture around the room and had to be restrained by a teacher until I arrived. He attempted to punch and kick and abuse all those around him.*

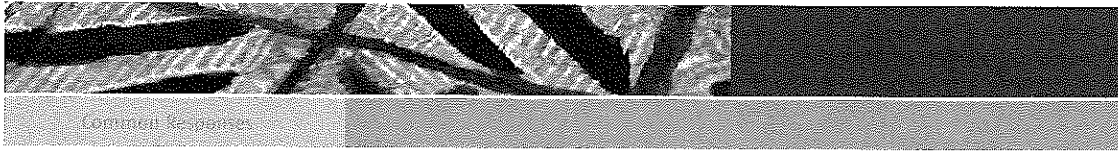


After an incident

The teacher sits down and talks therapeutically with the student. This provides an opportunity for the student to give their version of events. It may not be the correct one but the teacher needs to listen in a non threatening, matter-of-fact manner. Don't engage in argument. The teacher reminds the student of the rule and consequence and assists in planning an alternative procedure for next time.

Summary	
Behaviour	Strategy
Anxiety	Be supportive - give clear simple directions.
Agitation	Stay calm, set limits, do not overwhelm the student.
Acting out	Stay calm, protect victims, set limits, and seek help. Isolate the student either by removing them or removing other students. Use Easy Change or other practiced procedure. Restrain only if necessary to avoid people being hurt.
After an incident	Attend to victims. Listen to the perpetrator. Remind them of the rules. Follow through with consequences. Debrief the incident with other staff and plan for the management of future incidents.

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Common Responses to Extreme Behaviour

It can be difficult and frustrating to respond to acting out behaviour. Sometimes no matter what a teacher does the behaviour seems to get worse. Teachers not knowing what to do can become more punitive towards the student, increasing the severity of the consequences. Where there has been no forward planning, consequences are often reactive and may include physical coercion, verbal chastisement, unnecessarily severe deprivations and long periods of isolation for the student. These are unsafe or unnecessary practices for both staff and student.

Teachers sometimes use a range of responses within a short period of time. This is confusing for a student with behaviour difficulties and it is not likely to result in positive change.

Effective interventions are likely to have been planned, implemented early and will follow a sequence, starting with the least intrusive.

Verbal Interventions

The difference between the success and failure of a verbal intervention can often be found in the way teachers speak to students. Authoritarian approaches encourage opposition and defiance. Tactics such as lecturing, arguing, counselling, threatening and answering back do not defuse heated situations.

Staying calm and providing the student with the opportunity to move out of the situation with dignity is important. The student may or may not take this opportunity. However, if they do, the immediate and most important objective of managing and defusing the situation will have been achieved.

It is important for the teacher not to force an issue in front of the class. If the student is no longer disruptive the incident can be followed up later.

Setting limits is about providing clear boundaries for the student to respond and consistently enforcing consequences. It is a step-by-step procedure aimed at helping a student to feel more secure and regain control.

For some students, teachers may use visual strategies, including cue cards, to increase their understanding.

Practical Tips for Dealing with Disruptions

Keep it simple. Watch body language and body space. The aim is to defuse the situation and prevent a serious outburst. When approaching the student, stand in a non-threatening way slightly to the side and with hands at the side or in front. Avoid invading the person's personal space. Try to use verbal methods to gain compliance and give clear and simple directions.

Setting Limits

Gain attention by saying the student's name

Ben.

Wait for him to look at you and praise

Good.

Give direction, stating which behaviour is unacceptable

Ben, you are upsetting Robbie.

Focus on what you want the student to do

I want you to return to your desk and finish your writing.

If the student responds then praise

That's good Ben.

If the student doesn't respond, give a reasonable choice or consequences.

Say what will happen if they do not follow the instruction. Remember

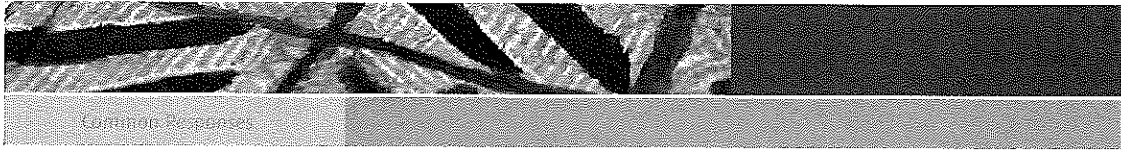
the student may be in a high anxiety state and therefore less rational.

Do not engage in argument.

Ben, you either do your writing now or at lunchtime.

Add an additional incentive

If you do it now you will get your point and then you will be able to have a choosing time.



Give time. This is important. As long as the student is not disruptive then you can leave them to make their choice. If the student does not choose the original instruction then ensure you follow through

All right Ben, you have made your choice, you will not get your point and you will do your work at lunchtime.

If the student becomes more agitated, stay in control. People can become irrational and say things they don't really mean. Don't take it personally. It might be difficult to do this but it's best to deal with it later. The current task is to assist the student to regain control. Use an understanding, reasonable approach, set limits and be prepared to enforce them.

If the student continues to be disruptive you will need to go to the next step on your plan. For example, it may be necessary to isolate Ben from the other children.

Ben, go to the library corner and I will be there in a minute.

Tip: It is best to have it worked out beforehand what you are going to say. Have a script.

If aggression is developing, escort the student from the room. There needs to be a planned procedure for this in order to avoid further disruption. For example, the first strategy is to ask the student to leave, if necessary escort them out, or fetch another person to assist the student from the room. If the procedure has been previously practised and established there is rarely a problem.

The point at which the student is out of the room and the disruption and aggression has stopped, the incident is over. There is no more danger at this time and the objectives of situational management and defusing have been achieved.

When the student is out of the room, sit down and let him or her talk. Don't react too much to what is being said. Help the student to settle and then let them return to class. The issues of consequences and acceptable behaviour can come later.

High probability response

One way to increase cooperation is by using a high probability instruction or something the student is likely to follow. Some people may see this as rewarding the student but remember that at this stage the objective is to defuse the situation by diverting their attention or by providing them with a face-saving way to extricate themselves from a developing situation.

Higher probability (High P)

Let's go for a walk round the playground.

Will you go and get the swimming key for me?

Read in the library corner for a few minutes.

Lower probability (Low P)

We are going to the principal's office.

Come while I ring your parents.

Increase motivation by providing an incentive:

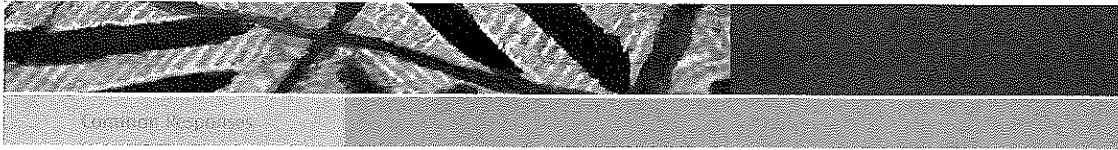
When we have done our walk we can come back inside.

If you go to the library corner quietly I won't have to send for the principal.

If a student has not learnt instructional control then this needs to form part of the assessment information and be incorporated in the individual behaviour plan.

Mini-timeout

Mini-timeout is a planned procedure where a student removes him or herself to a specified space nearby for a brief period of time, usually less than a minute. Students choose to use Mini-timeout. The motivation for students to use Mini-timeout is that it gives them the opportunity to shift out of a developing situation with minimal fuss and then be able to return to the group within a short period of time and without a more severe consequence being implemented.



Mini-timeout needs to be implemented in the early stages of uncooperative behaviour, before students become aggressive. It is more effective when it has been planned, discussed and practised with the student prior to a demand being made. With prior discussion and planning, students know what to do and they also know that there will be no more serious consequences.

Seek Assistance from Other Staff Members

Teachers need to know how and when to seek assistance from other staff. It is important to have a clear understanding of the role of the support person, who will likely be a senior staff member. Is it to take over the situation or is it to support the teacher who called for assistance? By seeing another teacher there, the student may understand that the situation has become serious and be more likely to comply with requests and instructions. However, it is also possible that the presence of another teacher might cause the student's behaviour to escalate so be prepared and know what you are going to do.

Working in partnership the two teachers can set limits, with one person giving the directions and the other acting in a supportive role, concentrating on managing and defusing the situation and thus protecting other students and adults.

If the student is still non-compliant and disruptive it may be necessary to isolate them either by escorting them from the room, according to a pre-rehearsed procedure, or by sending other students away.

Ignoring

- *I decided to ignore everything that he did but that only made him worse.*

Ignoring is not an appropriate response for extreme behaviour. Where there is the possibility of people getting hurt or of property being damaged, teachers have a responsibility to intervene. All teachers ignore some disruptive behaviour and this may be appropriate where the disruption is minor and when the student involved actually responds and stops.

Some people ignore behaviour because they don't know what else to do. They may be tentative around the student and anxious about how the student will react if they intervene. Ignoring sends out confused messages to both perpetrators and other students. For example, if extreme behaviour is ignored for some students and not for others then there will be confusion about what is and what isn't acceptable. Also, for some students ignoring may actually lead to a decline in behaviour and will set up the possibility that it will become even more extreme and dangerous.

Reasoning

- *I tried to reason with her and get her to talk but she became more aggressive.*

Acting out students are in a highly emotional state and are unlikely to be able to discuss their behaviour in a rational way. It is not appropriate to try to reason or talk the student out of their state. The time for reasoning and rational discussion will come later at the point where the student is able to discuss what happened, the consequences of their actions and how they can prevent the extreme behaviour from happening again.

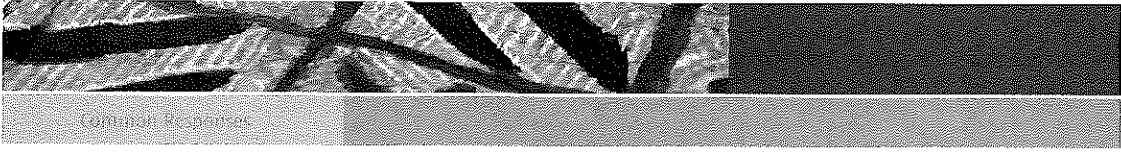
Reprimands

- *No matter how much I told him off he wouldn't stop.*

It is not appropriate to lecture or continuously reprimand. Don't engage in verbal battles or conversation. Don't argue. This is because the student will be in a less rational state of mind and so unlikely to react positively. Do speak calmly, give clear directions and be supportive. Always remember that the objective is to manage and defuse the situation.

Sarcasm and Public Humiliation

- *Following an incident the student was made to sit in the middle of the classroom and each member of the class walked past and said aloud what they didn't like about the student.*



Sarcasm and public humiliation are not appropriate for behaviour management. Schools are required to provide emotionally and physically safe environments for all students. This includes students who behave in extreme ways. Sarcasm and public humiliation are in breach of these requirements.

Students who are humiliated in front of others may feel that they have nothing more to lose and their out-of-control behaviour may escalate. In addition, it is likely that they, and the other students who hear the sarcasm and public humiliation, will learn these techniques and use them on more vulnerable students.

Send Out of the Room

- *I sent him outside. He kept banging on the doors and windows.*

Students who are excluded from the classroom and left on their own can use this as an opportunity to continue the disruption. For example, excluded or isolated students may pull faces through a glass door or window, bang on the door, call out or disrupt other classes. Sending students out of the classroom is a form of timeout and must be used with care. Use Mini-timeout or Easy Change (see below).

Easy Change

This is a planned alternative activity in which students can be motivated to walk unassisted (but accompanied) from a room to engage in an alternative previously practised activity which has a calming effect so that the student can return to class in a short time and with minimum fuss.

The alternative activity may include something like a power walk around the netball court, or a ball catching activity.

Advantages

- it is inclusive in that it involves regular activities that other children engage in
- it helps the student to calm down
- it increases compliance under difficult conditions
- the teacher is still in charge
- it involves teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviour
- it teaches self-control.

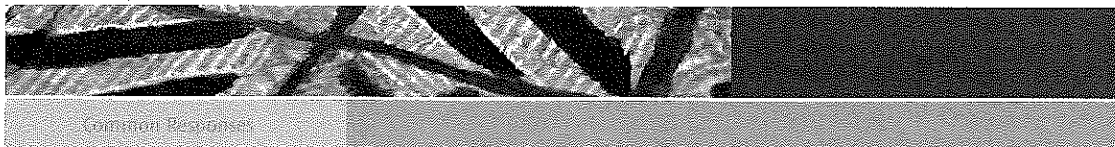
Here is an example of an Easy Change procedure developed for Caleb. The task was to immediately redirect him away from the trouble spot to something he liked doing and so help him calm down. The teacher aide took a ball outside and had catches, counting each throw until they reached 10. If Caleb was calm the teacher would then ask if he was ready to go back inside. As this routine became established, the ball catches were deleted and Caleb was able to count by himself slowly to 10.

Students comply with Easy Change because they:

- know what will happen and are therefore less likely to increase anxiety
- know that if they go quickly and quietly they will be able to return to class and the teacher won't, for example, send for the principal
- have practised the procedure and it comes easily to them.

Timeout Room

- *Amy had a tantrum and was dragged by two staff to her specially prepared timeout room. Her screaming could be heard throughout the school. This is happening more than once a day and so far her behaviour has not improved.*



Timeout is when a student is removed from other students for a specified period of time. Sometimes special timeout rooms are used. Timeout is often misused and misunderstood.

Timeout rooms should not be used. They are not necessary and can result in teachers and schools being accused of using inhumane and cruel punishments.

A major disadvantage of timeout is that it does not teach the student alternative appropriate behaviours. Use Mini-timeout or Easy Change.

Withdrawal of Privileges, Desired Activities or Points Earned

- *You will lose all your points for this week.*

Points systems are based on accumulations for good behaviour rather than on deficits. For points systems to be effective the points have to be valued by students. If the points are not valued there is no incentive and they will not work. A loss of points may erode their value to students. The more they lose, the less they mean.

In addition, it does not pay to spring unpleasant surprises on students who are already behaving in extreme or potentially extreme ways.

The sudden threat of losing points may precipitate further loss of control and the onset of aggressive, violent behaviour. The student may perceive they have nothing left to lose.

If loss of points is included within the management plan for the student then ensure that the student is aware that this loss will be a consequence for extreme behaviour. Better still have a system of positive reinforcement operating where the student earns points for good behaviour.

Informing Parents/Caregivers

- *I received a visit from a parent who said the teacher rings her each time her child misbehaves at school. The parent wonders why the school can't control her son. She said, "When I hear he has got into trouble at school, I just crack him and send him to his room. He gets a hell of a hiding. I'll punish him but why can't you sort him out?"*

Parents, caregivers, family and whānau need to be involved in what is happening with their children at school but it is best if they are involved, working together with the team rather than only being called during a crisis. They also need to hear the positive things as well as being informed of problems. There can be risks for students when parents/caregivers are informed of out-of-control behaviour. These include physical and emotional punishment and a loss of faith in both the school and the teacher. Where students are physically punished there is a need to be aware of the issues surrounding abuse. If abuse is suspected then teachers need to follow the school policy and protocol for the reporting of that abuse.

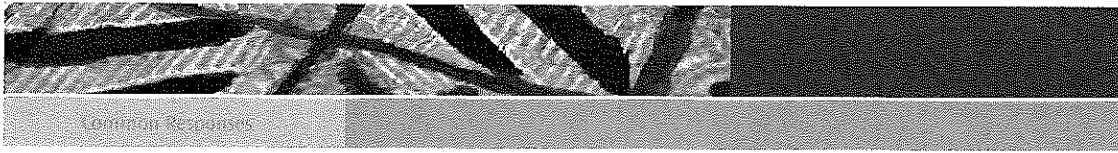
Informing parents and families is most successful when they are invited to collaborate with the school in developing ways of preventing acting out behaviour. The partnership between the school, family and whānau may ensure that consistent management strategies can be used in both settings.

Restraint

- *I restrained him, holding each wrist hoping to stop his anger and calm him down. He kicked me. I forcibly took him out to the corridor but he continued screaming and kicking.*

If the need for restraint arises, because people are being hurt, then follow the Safety Plan for that person. Restraint should not be used if there is any doubt about the teacher's physical ability to safely restrain the student. Where there is doubt, do the best to make the environment safe and seek further help. This may require calling the police.

Staff should avoid getting too close to a student who is in an angry state. It is easy to get involved unnecessarily.



Any use of restraint must conform to school and national policy. Staff need to be trained in safe methods but, more importantly, they need to be trained in alternative, less aversive and more effective strategies.

For advice contact your local Ministry of Education, Special Education (GSE) office listed at the back of this booklet.

Informal Suspension (Kiwi Suspension)

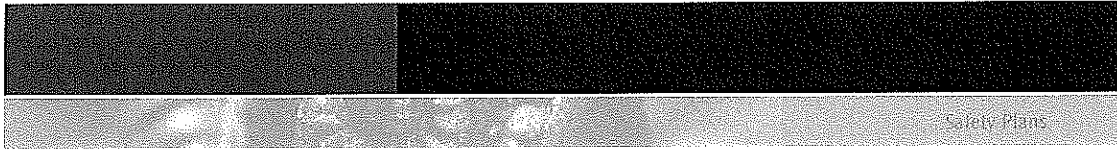
- *The parents were asked by the school to keep their child at home for a few days. When they took him back they were advised to take him to another school. The principal said that this would be better than having to suspend him indefinitely. They took him away but found that no other school would take him.*

Kiwi suspensions deprive students of their right to an education and are illegal under the Education Act 1989. They happen when schools send students home during school time without following the suspension regulations. Schools are not entitled to do this; parents often do not know what their rights are in this situation or they may feel embarrassed and vulnerable because of the behaviour of the student and will not be able to either ask about the rights of their child, or to stand up for those rights.

Involve parents, family and whānau and the student concerned to work together in a collaborative plan for their child so that everyone knows the outcomes of incidents of severe behaviour.

Safety Plans are for students who have a history of behaviour that threatens the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others.

Safety Plans are written documents that outline procedures to be followed when a student, who is out-of-control, engages in behaviours such as outbursts of swearing, physical aggression against people or property, and/or self-injurious actions. Safety Plans include both preventative strategies and procedures for managing out-of-control behaviour. The objectives of the Safety Plan are prevention, defusion and management.



Safety Plans for Students

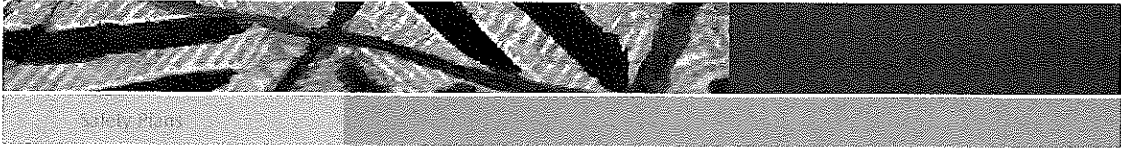
Preparation of Safety Plans

Safety Plans are collaborative documents. They are the result of partnerships between families, whānau, teachers, other school staff, Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLBs) and GSE Psychologists or Behaviour Specialists. The participation of parents or caregivers is critical. Parents who are involved will know what the Safety Plan is, they will understand the need for it and what is trying to be achieved, and it is likely that they will be supportive of it. If this is the case, the principles and procedures are also more likely to be used both at home and at school, because everyone understands and agrees with them.

A Safety Plan is not a behaviour intervention plan. It involves quick and early responses to an individual's behaviour before a more detailed comprehensive plan is introduced to address long term behaviour change.

Safety Plans must comply with school policies. This is particularly important in the areas of touch, restraint and in any form of timeout. Parents will also have to give their permission for the Plan to be implemented.

The preparation of a Safety Plan takes into account up-to-date information about the student at home, school and in the community. This includes social and interactional patterns, verbal and other communication skills, activities and interests, academic achievements and information about the behaviours of concern.



A Safety Plan includes:

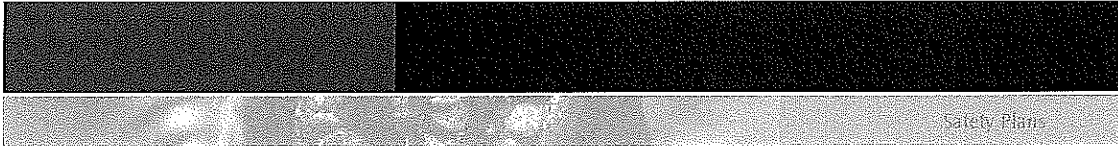
- the behaviour that is causing concern
- preceding and surrounding events associated with the behaviour (when it is more likely to occur)
- preventative strategies
- strategies for defusing and preventing incidents
- planned action for responding to acting out behaviour
- scripts for staff to follow during an incident
- contingency plans (for example, management for when relievers are taking the class).

Involve the student in the preparation of the Plan and ensure they understand it. They then know their behaviour is going to be monitored and that if acting out behaviour occurs there will be set procedures and consequences. It is helpful to walk the student through the Plan. It is also important to teach and practise a planned procedure or activity such as Easy Change to help defuse a situation. This process may actually reduce incidents.

The student needs to understand:

- everyone is working together as a team
- the behaviour that is required
- the behaviour that is unacceptable
- the consequences for unacceptable behaviour
- the incentives for improved behaviour
- how the Safety Plan will be monitored and reviewed
- monitoring methods.

Data collection can include incident reports, graphs, charts, observations and any other appropriate material. This assists staff to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan. A frequency chart will indicate the occurrence or non-occurrence of severe incidents.



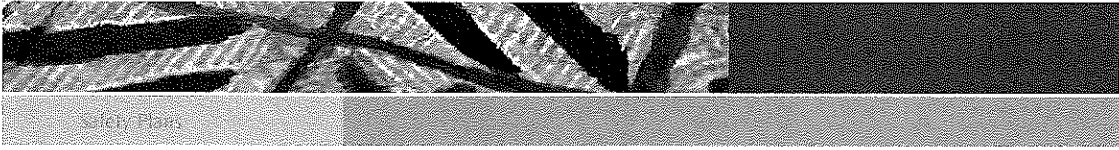
Safety Plans need to be reviewed in the early stages. This will ensure that the plan is modified as required and the teacher feels supported. Safety Plans that are reviewed frequently are more likely to be effective.

Implementation of the Safety Plans

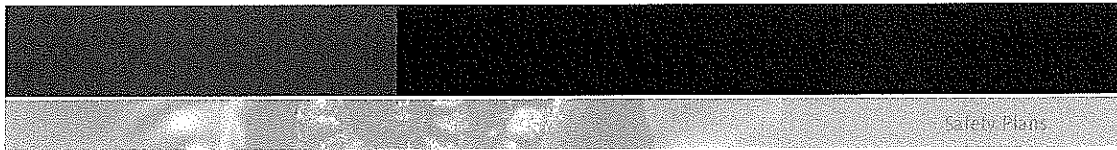
All staff working with the student need to understand the Plan and be confident of their ability to put it into practice. It is important that the Safety Plan is implemented consistently and safely. This will not happen if there are staff members who do not understand or support it.

When changes are required these must be discussed and agreed on during review meetings. When changes need to be made between reviews it is important that the student and all staff are informed as soon as possible.

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Example: Safety Plan for Sammy	
Behaviour of concern	Hitting, kicking and biting
Information about the behaviour	Occurring 5-10 times a week Students getting scratched and kicked. Other kids wind him up and he loses it. Mostly occurs in playground but also in classroom during morning writing activities.
Rule/goal	No hitting, kicking or biting
Preventive methods	Adapted programme with achievable tasks Restricted play area with activity (bats and ball) Teacher aide to intervene to prevent incidents Teach and practise Easy Change activity (power walk) Reward activity for completed work Teach coping strategies No teasing allowed.
Incentives	DRO (direct reinforcement of other behaviour) 2 points three times a day for no hitting or biting = 1 sticker Alt-R (direct reinforcement of alternative behaviour) a point for each completed task. 6 points = 1 sticker all points entered onto 100's chart 10 points = choose from reinforcement menu 100 points = class award of shared lunch.
Consequences	5 minutes compliance training plus apology If behaviour recovers consequence is discussed and lessened Doesn't earn point for chart.



Behaviour out-of-control	Power walk around netball court Follow up with consequence later when calm again.
Monitoring	Daily completed tasks plus frequency of incidents Incident report 100's chart for total points Graph.
Review	Mondays at 3pm team meeting.

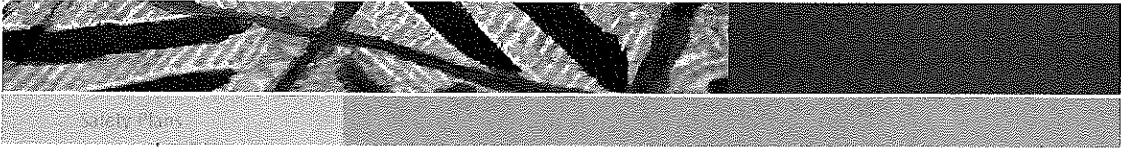
Responding to Extreme Behaviour

First - assess

Take into account the following:

- is anyone being physically hurt now? If they are do everything that you can to stop this.
- what is the problem?
- is anyone hurt?
- is anyone likely to get hurt?
- who is involved?
- are there any weapons or dangerous objects?
- can I handle this, do I need help?
- how angry/frightened are the people involved?

Although an immediate intervention may be required to prevent further injury, often the arrival of the teacher will stop the immediate crisis. When this happens a quick assessment based on the above will assist the teacher to make decisions that will contribute to defusing and managing the situation.



Second - act

As a matter of school policy it should be expected that if violent acts happen within the school (classrooms or playing areas), at least two teachers would be on hand as quickly as possible. This is a protection measure for teachers. Where there are two teachers it is less likely that unsafe practices will happen. One manages the extreme behaviour while the other attends to the victim.

Where there is only one teacher present:

- tell the student to stop
- follow the Safety Plan or the Individual Behaviour Plan if there is one
- follow the School Plan for dealing with crises
- use assertive verbal direction to defuse the situation, set limits
- if verbal directions do not work take stronger actions. For example, get adult help as quickly as possible, clear the area of onlookers, and protect victims.
- *He attacked a fellow student during a class run. When I arrived he had him down and was kicking him in the head. Student's mouth was bleeding.*
- *I spoke quietly but firmly and told him to hand over the knife but he refused. I removed the knife and escorted him to my office. On the way he slammed a door shut, pulled over the bookcase and scattered a box of materials over the floor. He abused me loudly in obscene terms.*
- *She climbed the wall and banged on the glass door. Got her settled. She did it again just before the bell. This was a very fierce attack and it took two of us to restrain her. The principal took her away. The teacher aide was punched on the jaw and has a broken watch and bruised arms.*

Ensure that all actions comply with school policy and do not put the teacher at risk of charges of assault or allegations of cruelty.

Where there are two teachers present:

- protect and attend to the victim
- isolate the out-of-control student and send other students away if in the playground
- send other students from the classroom or remove the student
- do not leave teachers on their own with the student if there is any danger that the violence will continue
- remove dangerous objects
- keep clear of windows and objects that may be thrown, tripped over or used as weapons.

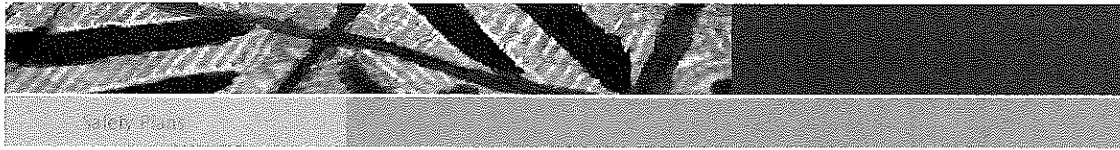
It is important that teachers protect themselves from both physical injury and the emotional injury that can come from allegations of assault or cruel practice.

Protection from physical injury can be avoided by remaining at a safe distance. Allegations of assault are most likely to come from situations of isolation. For example, if a teacher has to manage a situation on their own they are far more vulnerable to allegations than if they have a colleague present.

Physical Intervention

Physical restraint is sometimes used with students who are hurting themselves or others and/or are seriously damaging property.

It is a method of last resort to prevent further damage and must be used with extreme caution. School policies need to outline what staff can and cannot do in these situations. Use only approved methods to avoid injury. Guidance on the use of restraint is available through local GSE offices, see the back of this booklet for contact details.



Never show anger when dealing with an incident. The student may see any anger as a challenge. Remaining outwardly calm will help the student to feel more secure and to regain control.

When holding a student do not engage in dialogue other than to tell the student what is wanted of them but avoid repetitive talk.

Calm down. When you are quiet you can go back to class.

Accompany decreased restraint with verbal encouragement.

That's it, good job, settle down.

Combine with reinforcement of desired behaviour.

Good you are calm again now. Let's count to 10 slowly together and then we can go back and join the others.

Any incident should be documented as soon as possible and debriefed. Debriefing provides the opportunity for the incident to be reviewed and for lessons to be drawn from it. Debriefing will also assist the teacher and others to deal with any emotional residue that they may have and will ensure that they feel supported.

Dealing with Fights

Fights are the same as other out-of-control situations. They should be approached in the same way as suggested earlier and in accordance with school policy. With fights it is always appropriate to intervene early. Avoid leaving the students who are fighting to sort it out for themselves. However, don't intervene if you can't handle the situation safely. The initial intervention with fights is always verbal. Tell the students to stop fighting. If this is not effective then use the strategies listed earlier.

Personal Safety

Staff need to know how to protect themselves. This can include common-sense measures like avoiding wearing earrings, keeping hair tied back, ensuring that ties and scarves cannot be used to choke.

Keep out of the student's personal space whenever possible. Often it is important to avoid small, enclosed spaces. Solid, heavy tables, or some other barrier between the teacher and the student, may be appropriate if there is a danger of the student suddenly lashing out.

When the Aggression has Stopped

Often incidents are already over by the time teachers arrive. In these situations if there are two teachers present one attends to the victim and the other manages the perpetrator.

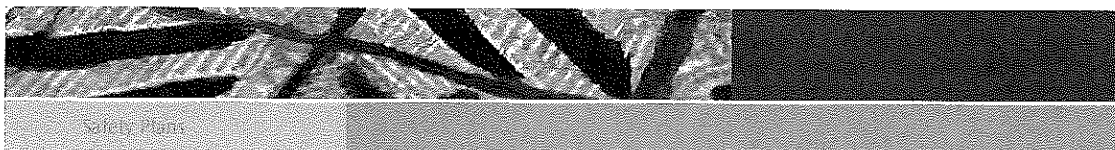
Check the victim for physical injuries and provide necessary care. Attending to the victim sends a message to other students. So that it is not the aggressor who receives the attention.

Sit with the victim in a quiet place and when they feel up to it ask them what happened. Write a detailed version of events. Check whether it has happened before and whether there is a pattern. Ask the student how they could prevent it happening again. Remember though, it is not the victim's fault.

When they are ready they should return to class and to regular school activities.

Meanwhile the other staff member attends to the perpetrator. Although the incident is over, the student may still be in a highly agitated state so that the staff member has several responsibilities:

- It is important that the student is not antagonised so the out-of-control behaviour recurs. This unfortunately is a common occurrence as staff start to blame and question the student. The staff member must defuse the situation and help the student to keep calm.

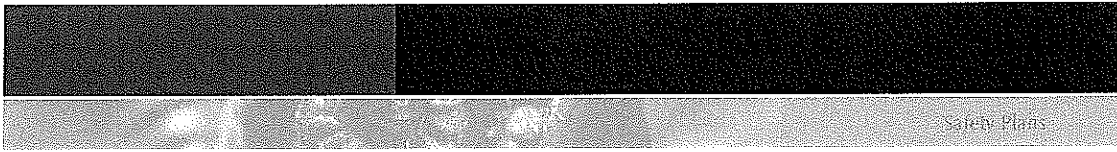


- It is important to find out what happened from the perpetrator's point of view. It is likely that this will vary considerably from the account of the victim. It is important that the victim and the perpetrator are not brought together when their stories are told.
- When the student is ready to talk, write a detailed version of their account. Do not get into arguments about accuracy. This is a recording of one version.
- Check whether or not it has happened before and whether there is a pattern. Ask what could have been done to prevent the violence and what they would do if it seemed to be happening again.
- Ensure that the student hears that hitting, kicking or violence towards others is completely unacceptable at school, regardless of the cause. Explain to them that there are consequences for their actions and that the matter will be followed through.

Keep in mind, following the incident, that the school has a responsibility to provide an emotionally and physically safe environment for all students. It would be appropriate to ensure that the perpetrator is monitored for the rest of the day. In particular, if the student disappears from school, this needs to be reported and steps taken to ensure that the student is safe.

In some circumstances it may be necessary to call the police. This is less likely to be necessary with younger children. Violence against others is assault and is against the law. The young age of a perpetrator does not make it any more acceptable or any less illegal. Where there is an immediate and ongoing danger of people getting hurt and the perpetrator will not respond to efforts to manage or defuse the situation, then the police should be called. Clearly the principal should be involved in any decision to call the police. In situations where lives are in danger, immediate action may be required.

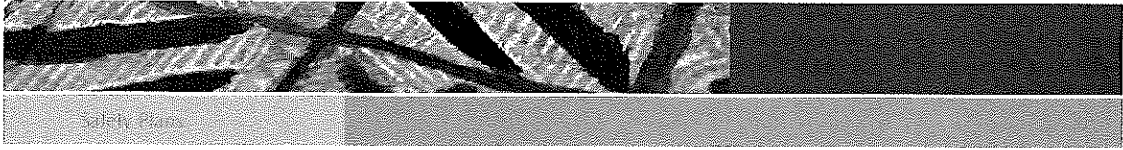
The school's senior management team considers each incident report. It will usually be appropriate for the teachers involved in the incident to be a part of these considerations.



The recommendations that can arise from the review of an incident report can include liaison with the family and whānau, use of in-school monitoring systems and the development of an Individual Behaviour Plan.

Reviews will also guide school practice and policy development. It is important for the school to develop more effective ways of dealing with these types of situations in order to ensure that the obligations for the provision of a safe physical and emotional environment are being met.

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Incident Report Form

Name of interviewer:

Person being interviewed:

Date:

Description of what was happening before the incident:

Time, Place and Activity:

Who was there?

Description of incident:

What did the person do?

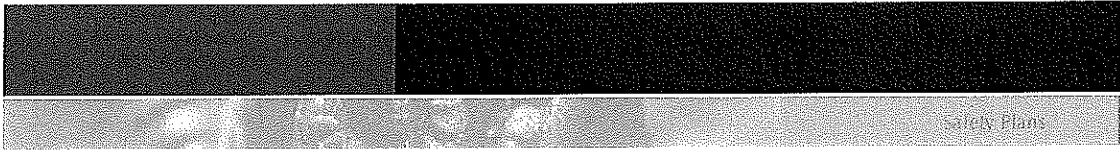
Who was affected and how?

Description of what happened after the incident:

Why did it happen?

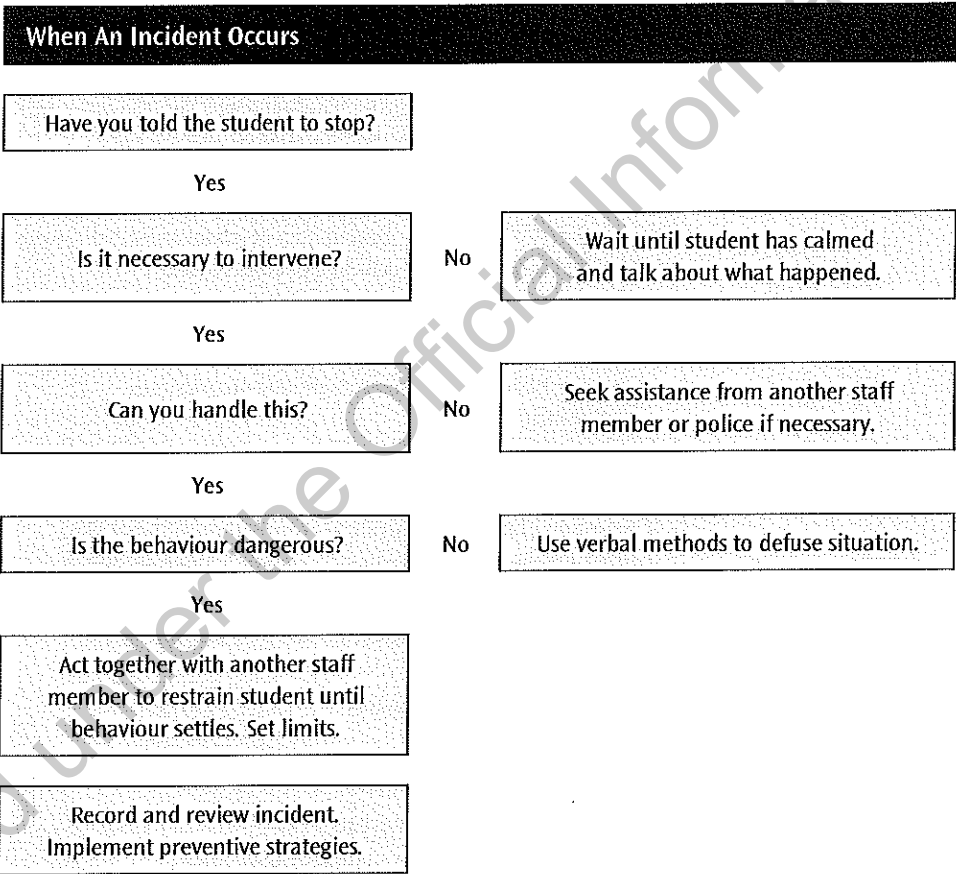
How can you prevent a further recurrence?

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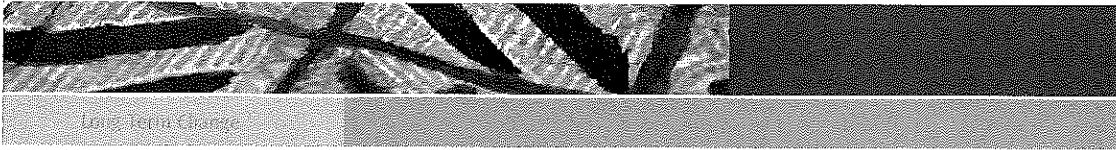


Decision Flow Chart

The following decision chart can be used for decision-making when an incident occurs.



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Long term Behaviour Change

This book is primarily about preventing, defusing and managing extreme behaviour.

For long term behaviour change a student requires an Individual Behaviour Plan based on a comprehensive specialist assessment across all areas of their life.

This assessment is carried out by a behaviour specialist in collaboration with school staff, parents, caregivers, family and whānau. The assessment is a process of gathering information for analysis. Assessment incorporates both environmental and individual events, and involves a number of methods including observations, interviews and sharing of information. It also involves examination of school and other records and individual curriculum and achievement assessment.

The assessment content comprises a range of relevant information including:

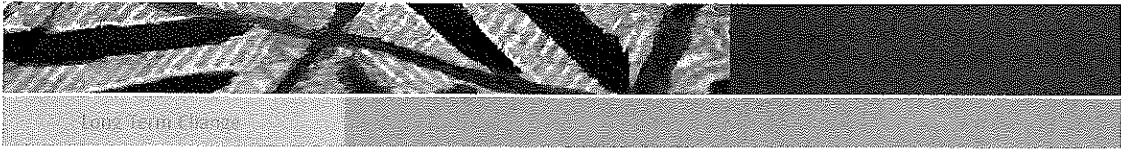
- characteristics of environments including programmes and activities
- individual skills and activities in different environments including cognitive, communication, social, recreation and daily living
- description of the behaviour that is causing concern including current baseline levels – frequency, duration, intensity and effect on others
- preceding and surrounding events that may be contributing to the behaviour
- health and physiological factors
- communication intent
- preferences and non preferences
- social interaction and friendships
- previous interventions and comments from others.

The analysis of information is best carried out as a shared process involving key people who have a significant involvement with the child. In analysis we are asking: *Why does the behaviour occur and what now needs to happen?* The assessment information will indicate the content of the intervention and will identify a number of goals and methods. It will tell us what to do.

The Individual Behaviour Plan identifies new goal behaviours and skills to be taught. This is the most enduring of all components. The students can be motivated to learn these through the use of incentives, which may no longer be needed, as the social and interactional skills are learned. An Individual Behaviour Plan helps to prevent the student being suspended or expelled. Suspension and expulsions lead to early disengagement from education.

Long-term plans are formulated in accordance with the assessment. They may include:

- goal behaviours, and strategies for teaching and promoting goal behaviour
- strategies for motivating and promoting change
- antecedent changes - changes to learning environments to reduce the incidence of problem behaviour. Includes adaptation of the physical environment, materials, programmes, instructional methods, rules and routines
- safety plans for responding to out-of-control behaviours, including strategies for defusing and preventing incidents
- teaching of new skills and behaviours including educational skills, communication skills, social skills, instructional control, self-control strategies and recreation activities
- health and well-being. Medical and related issues are referred to a health practitioner
- reinforcement schedules targeting both desired and negative behaviours to facilitate application of pro-social activities and behaviours in home, school and community settings
- working with families and whānau.



Reinforcement Schedules

Reinforcement is a powerful but under utilised tool for behaviour change. Positive reinforcement is a consequence that strengthens behaviour. If a behaviour is followed by something a person likes then behaviour is more likely to happen again. The behaviour has been strengthened or reinforced.

Positive reinforcement, carried out in a systematic and consistent manner, enables a young person to make a connection between doing something desirable and getting a reward for it. A predictable environment helps. For example: *Penelope knows that after writing time she can choose a book to read.* Behaviour specialists can assist with constructing schedules to increase desired behaviour for those with severe behaviour difficulties. The schedule can be faded when the behaviour has been acquired.

Compliance Training

Some students with severe behaviour have not acquired instructional control in their early years. This means, for example, that they have not learnt to respond to a simple command such as Stop or a simple instruction such as *Bring me your book.*

A detailed assessment helps identify the reason for non-compliance and then, if necessary, a simple routine of instruction and practise can be implemented. It is often effective to introduce practise in compliance as a consequence for negative behaviour. This serves a dual purpose. It provides a consequence to reduce behaviour that is at the same time educative and assist the student to develop instructional control. Effective teachers also respond in a fair and consistent manner to reinforce the classroom rules and routines.

School Review and Staff Development

Schools need policies and procedures to assist with the management of students who behave in extreme ways.

Checklist for schools

School has relevant policies and guidelines for:

- student management
- management of traumatic incidents
- management of extreme behaviour.

Policy endorsed by board of trustees

Policy introduced to staff

Policy introduced to parents

Policy introduced to students

Relief staff know policy

All classes have policies

Procedures for incident reporting in place

All incidents reviewed by staff

Individual Behaviour Plans for identified students

Individual Behaviour Plans monitoring and review system in place

Staff use preventative strategies

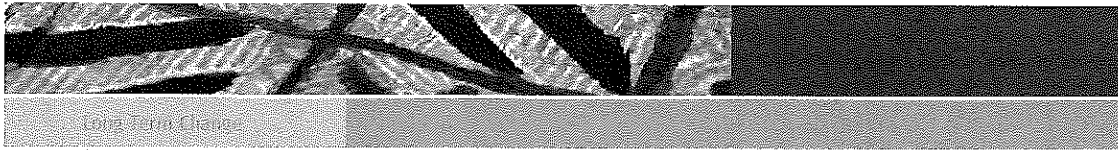
Staff know how to defuse incidents to avoid crises

Staff trained in safe restraint methods.

Staff Development

All teachers need to be familiar with the methods described in this book for preventing and managing extreme behaviour. The book can be used as the basis for staff training sessions.

It is also recommended that all staff complete a course such as Non-violent Crisis Intervention.



Development suggestions

Ask teachers to take responsibility for presenting different topics to staff. The presentation could include a discussion of the content and its application to the school or syndicate. Staff action can then be planned to ensure a safe environment for students and staff.

Ask staff in groups to take two incidents that have occurred recently and to review them using ideas in the book to guide discussion. Staff brainstorm ideas and write a plan for future action.

Teach, practise and model staff behaviours so that staff are less likely to revert to old behaviour when under stress and dealing with particularly difficult students. This includes role-playing in giving directions, setting limits, use of restraint.

Staff consult with and work with parents, families and whānau to establish policy statements, and in the writing of Individual Behaviour Plans.

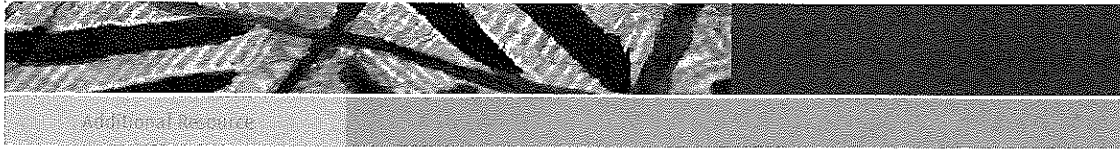
Use either examples of extreme behaviour from staff experience or the following scenarios and develop appropriate:

- prevention strategies
- methods for defusing
- management plans (either for the particular incident or specific Individual Behaviour Plans).

The Ministry of Education, Special Education has behaviour specialists in all Area Offices. Referrals can be phoned, faxed or written. Contact can also be made through the Ministry's website: www.minedu.govt.nz

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- Walker Hill M., Colvin Geoff, & Ramsey Elizabeth. *Antisocial Behaviour in School: Strategies and Best Practices*. Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, Pacific Grove, California, 1994



Additional Resource Materials

Non Violent Crisis Intervention (1987) A course and manual developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute, Inc. Brookfield, Wisconsin Service and Support Manual Code of Physical Conduct with Students, New Zealand Education Institute, May 1993

The Responsibility of Boards of Trustees for the Personal Safety of Students, Including when they are in Residential Facilities Associated with Schools and in Off-Site Programmes. Circular to Schools, March 13, 1997

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