

Managing Challenging Behaviour

Introduction

This policy stems from St. Anne's National School's commitment to provide an optimum learning and teaching environment in our ASD class. The policy is designed to ensure the rights of children in the ASD class and the staff who support them, to live and develop in an environment that is positive, respectful, safe and inclusive.

Promoting positive behaviour and preventing and managing challenging behaviour is vital to ensuring the safety of all children, staff and families. As a staff we believe that children have an inherent need for a safe and secure environment. As a school community we will endeavor at all times to model positive behaviour by treating children and adults with respect and dignity and building up positive relationships with pupils.

Definition of Challenging Behaviour

Challenging behaviour is *"behaviour, within the context of the school, which prevents participation in appropriate educational activities; often isolates children from their peers; affects the learning and functioning of other pupils; significantly reduces the opportunities for involvement in ordinary community activities; makes excessive demands on staff and resources; places the child or others in physical danger"* (Harris, Cook and Upton 1996)

St. Anne's approach to Behaviour Support acknowledges that the student's behavioural difficulties may be linked to the triad of impairments, sensory sensitivities, and cognitive abilities of the individual. The school acknowledges that the students may have a dual diagnosis and the impact this may have on behaviour. All of these factors will be assessed and will inform the approach taken when providing behaviour support for individual students. The school is committed to working with parents to help reduce problematic behaviours; however the complex needs of individual students will always inform the ultimate approach adopted.

Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

The most effective methodology in attempting to manage challenging behaviour is to prevent it occurring in the first place. It is important to understand that challenging behaviour usually serves a purpose for the individual. Often it is a means of communication and if we understand what the child is trying to communicate by engaging in the behaviour, we may be able to support the child to learn a safer and more effective way of communication. Acceptable behaviour is reinforced in a school and classroom climate, which is supportive of positive behaviour. In St. Anne's we believe that school and home should work co-operatively together in order to enhance and successfully promote positive behaviour. The positive school ethos extends to all members of the school community adopting a positive, calm approach to challenges that may be encountered from time to time. Every effort should be made to ensure that the classroom and school environment is enriched with frequent opportunities for students and staff to encounter social praise and acknowledgement for achievements and to experience a varied schedule of activities to be enjoyed across the school day.

The following are some of the strategies that will be used to promote positive behavior in our ASD class:

- Develop language and communication skills – including PECS, Lámh, requesting and manding.
- Clear and simple classroom rules and instructions
- The use of timers to plan for transitions
- Visual schedules
- Reward systems
- Choice boards
- Regular communication with parents
- The teaching of social skills
- The use of social stories
- Consistent approaches to behaviour by staff members
- Clear, consistent consequences for misbehaviour
- Talk and discussion of behaviour with the child

- The teaching and reinforcing of appropriate replacement behaviours that serve the same function for the child (e.g. teaching the student an appropriate means of asking for a break from a demanding task without resorting to challenging behaviour).
- The use of social praise and acknowledgement
- The use of merit awards for achievements; token/points economies for work completed throughout the day
- Access to preferred items/ activities intermittently throughout the day following an appropriate request or the completion of a particular task
- Group-based reinforcement contingencies for rule-following/ appropriate behaviour

Staff Training

The health and safety of all students and staff is of utmost priority. Therefore St. Anne's promote Continuous Professional Development to help SNAs and teachers in our ASD class develop their skills and confidence to work successfully with students who have challenging behaviour. This also helps support positive behaviour. Training in both promoting positive behavior and managing challenging behavior will be undertaken by all staff in the ASD class.

Responsibilities Related to Behaviour Management

Teachers will be responsible for:

- Providing a safe and supportive classroom environment, which promotes the educational, social, emotional and behavioural development of all students. This includes communication with the student's parents/guardians as early as possible to discuss concerns, suggest forms of support and encourage feedback.
- Implementing suitable classroom management practices and appropriate intervention strategies for students who are at risk of developing challenging behaviour.
- Behaviour Management Plans will be put in place where needed in consultation with the Parents
- Participating in professional learning that contributes to their skill development and understanding of students with challenging behaviour.
- Documenting all challenging behaviour incidents as they occur. Incident reports will be written when needed (see Health and Safety Statement)
- Reporting all challenging behaviour and incidents to the principal and parents/ guardians.

Parents/Guardians will be responsible for:

- Communicating with the child's teacher or school principal concerns about their child's behaviour.
- Contributing to management plans that concern their child and providing feedback on the results of any interventions.
- Cooperating with interventions and strategies that are proposed by the child's classroom teacher and the principal.
- To inform the school if their child is receiving any regular medication. Where prescribed medications are known to have a behavioural effect these possible effects will be factored in to all behaviour support measures
- Talk in confidence to the class teacher or principal about any significant developments in a child's life, in the past or present, which may affect the child's behaviour.

The Principal will be responsible for:

- Facilitating the development of a supportive school environment and implementing the Challenging Behaviour Policy within the school.
- Leading the school in relation to the management of students with challenging behaviour and supporting staff in relation to these students.
- Facilitating access of all staff to programs of professional learning in relation to students with challenging behaviour as deemed appropriate by the principal.
- Providing the opportunity for the teachers in the ASD class to develop higher-level skills so that they can provide additional support and advice within the school.
- Seeking outside support and advice.
- Deciding on a final course of action when all intervention programs have been exhausted

Steps in Managing Challenging Behaviour

The approach adopted by St. Anne's N.S. in response to challenging behaviour is to affect a decrease in inappropriate behaviour by increasing appropriate behaviour. This should be achieved through the employment of reinforcement strategies and positive behavior promotion. Only when data indicates that these positive measures have been tried and exhausted; or have been unsuccessful in eliminating or sufficiently reducing problem behaviour, should the following strategies be considered;

Minor challenging behaviour:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be dealt with at class level as appropriate
- Will be written up in each child's ABC chart (see appendix 1)
- Focus initially on positive behaviour demonstrated by other students

Minor challenging behaviours which are ongoing:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be written in child's ABC chart.
- Will be reported to parents/ guardians.
- Will be dealt with appropriately which may include the creation of a Behavioural Support Plan

Aggressive behaviour – threats:

- Will be discussed with the child
- Will be written in child's ABC chart
- Will be reported to parents/guardians
- A Behavioural Support Plan will be implemented

Please Note: The Principal may be consulted at any stage above.

Aggressive behaviour – assaults/ Serious Challenging behaviour:

- The child will be spoken to by staff directly involved.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the class teacher.
- A written report will be made on the incident and kept in the ABC chart and recorded in the Incident folder.
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the principal.
- Each incident will be reported to parents/guardians.
- A Behavioural Support Plan will be implemented in consultation with the parents.
- If the behaviour recurs, the same procedure will be followed and the Behavioural Plan will be reviewed after each incident.
- Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehavior, the Chairperson of the Board of management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend a meeting at the school with the Chairperson, the Principal and the Class Teacher.
- If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with the class teacher and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act.
- In the case of gross misbehavior, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils and staff of St. Anne's, the Board may authorize the Chairperson or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with parents.
- Following or during a period of suspension, the parent(s) may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent(s) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupils reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The principal will re-admit the pupil formally to the class if that decision is made.

- The school endeavours to support each child on an individual basis and ensure that it's an appropriate school placement for the child. However, if it is the opinion of the Board of Management that the student poses an unacceptable risk to the health and safety of other students, to school staff or to school property, a decision may be made to exclude the child from the school.
- Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.
- If a decision is made in relation to expulsion, the parents/guardians will be informed of their rights according to Section 29 of the Education Act and a copy of the application form to appeal the decision will be forwarded to the parents/guardians.

Please Note: The above steps are in keeping with our school Code of Behaviour.

Please Note: Behavioural interventions implemented in the school will only be done so with full parental/guardian support. In situations where parental/guardian support for the best practice intervention as selected is not forthcoming, a meeting will be held with the child/young person's family to present and examine all of alternative interventions available. The potential effectiveness, outcomes, and consequences of each intervention will be discussed with reference to the school's duty of care towards all its students and staff. After all outcomes and risks have been examined a decision will be proposed. If agreement can't be arrived at then the matter is referred to the Board of Management.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff members of St. Anne's N.S. must adhere to the Challenging Behaviour Policy. The Principal is responsible for ensuring that all staff are made aware of it. Parents must sign a statement saying that they will adhere to the policy.

Limitations. This document is not designed to list all the possible situations that may arise, nor state all the possible strategies to address challenging behaviour, but to serve as a general guide to the students, the teacher, and the Principal to be used to solve individual problems.

Policy Review/Ratification

It is fully acknowledged by all parties that this Challenging Behaviour Policy will be reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that it is kept up to date and that it retains its relevance. Ongoing evaluation and new approaches to education and/or DES guidelines may require this document to be modified.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairman: _____ **Date :**

Principal: _____ **Date**

ASD Class Policy on Challenging Behaviour

Appendix 1: ABC Chart

Date ___/___/___

Name of Person Observed: _____

Observer: _____

Behavior(s):

Date	Time	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence	Possible Function