



St Ann's School

Positive Behaviour Support Policy

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Philosophy

The paramount aim of St Ann's positive behaviour support is to ensure the welfare and security of all students by maximising their opportunities to exercise control over, and take responsibility for, their own behaviour. We strive to ensure our young people are happy and safe in order to enhance their learning and quality of life. This ethos drives forward the use of positive and proactive approaches.

Behaviour can be described as challenging when it is of such an intensity, frequency or duration as to threaten the quality of life and/or the physical safety of the individual or others and is likely to lead to responses that are restrictive, aversive or result in exclusion. (Learning Disabilities Professional Senate, 2016, p4)

Ashton (2015) considers that the term 'challenging behaviour'

refers to a range of behaviours that present as a problem to others, not something intrinsic to the child. They represent the greatest of unmet needs. (p151).

This carries two major implications. Firstly, that we as teachers, TAs, school leaders, mealtime supervisors, bus escorts etc, are as much a part of the behaviour as the students themselves and secondly, Behaviour (with a capital B) is a subject to be taught like any other subject.

*In fact, when the challenging behaviour prevents learning it becomes **the** subject to be taught, since nothing else can progress until the issues are dealt with. (Imray, 2017, p15, original emphasis).*

We accept that because of the huge communication and other difficulties which our learners face challenging behaviour can be seen as 'normal' (Hewett, 1998) and that

many challenging behaviours can be construed as (at least in the short term) coherently organized adaptive responses to challenging situations (Emerson, 2001, p3).

Finally, in this section, St Ann's School believes that

'challenging behaviour' is a socially determined construct. Reiteration of this construct and its accepted definition is necessary to focus assessment, formulation and interventions on the relationship between the individual and their environment, rather than on the elimination of behaviours. (Learning Disabilities Professional Senate, 2016, 4)

Acceptance of the statement that the term 'challenging behaviour' is a social construct carries enormous implications for our practice. In the world of special educational needs, labels are used regularly to indicate a broad understanding of the complexity of learning difficulty. We have used the terms SLD, PMLD and/or ASD consistently in this and other documents, but we do not believe that these terms are socially constructed. We can assist all learners to make the very best of their lives, to do the best they can do and be the best they can be, but they will still have SLD, PMLD and/or ASD. Challenging behaviours are however merely communications, expressions of learners' deep dissatisfaction with the world in which they find themselves. In other words, resolutions to such challenges '*will only be found by looking at life from the perspective of the person with learning difficulties*' (Imray and Hewett, 2015, p195).

Those with SLD and PMLD have the right to be equal members of society, to be socially included as equal citizens, to belong, to be part of rather than apart from society. When, however, the goals of education have nothing to do with what is meaningful to people, we further compound both their failure and society's failure. People with learning disabilities have the right to a voice which is their voice, not ours. We have to help them find that voice. (Imray and Colley, 2017, p3).

St Ann's School is proud to be a Unicef Rights Respecting School (Level 2). The school ethos and our daily practice actively promotes the implementation of all Articles within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 2 (without discrimination) Article 3 (best interests of the child), Article 6 (survival and development), Article 12 (respect for the views of the child), Article 15 (freedom of association), and Article 28 (right to education) are particularly pertinent to St Ann's Positive Behaviour Support Policy.

Practice

Reasons behind the behaviour. Staff always search for the context and meaning of every challenging behaviour. They use these insights to proactively adjust each student's environment and relationships, which in turn enhances the young adult's life. Using the information from the Challenging Behaviour Foundation, St Ann's has placed the reasons for the behaviours into five categories:

1. Activity or Situation Avoidance
2. Social Attention
3. Tangibly seeking something (apart from attention)
4. Sensory
5. Health

We recognise, however, that these are not mutually exclusive and may well work together to produce multiple reasons. Nonetheless, positive behaviour support is based on the principle that

"...there is always a reason for challenging behaviour. In many cases, it's a way for a person to control what is going on around them and to get their needs met. They also might be ill or in pain, or want to get something". (Challenging

Behaviour Foundation)

We do not define the behaviour the student exhibits as bad and recognise that it always arises from difficulty communicating needs and wants.

Acting on the reasons. After analysing the challenges in order to understand why challenging situations and behaviours may arise, we try to set up a positive behaviour support plan (BSP) which aims to resolve the behaviour **before** it arises; that is, we seek to be proactive rather than reactive. If we recognise that behaviours always have a reason behind them, it follows that listening to the student's voice and even more importantly acting on that voice, is the essential first step.

Telstar Class

Those with SLD and PMLD learn very, very differently from neuro-typical, conventionally developing learners. If they learn differently, we ought to be teaching them differently and teaching them different things.

By definition, exceptional students require an extraordinary response from educators – something different from the ordinary, even if the ordinary is good.....Failure to create these explicit structures to accommodate students at the extremes of performance distribution inevitably results in their neglect. They are forgotten. They don't just fail a little. They fail a lot, and their noses are rubbed in their failures. (Kauffman, 2002, 259)

A full explanation of the Telstar class can be found in an article jointly written by Peter Imray, Andrew Colley and members of St Ann's SLT and recently published in *The SLD Experience*, a copy of which is attached to this document (Appendix 2). We believe this to be a radical yet logical response to ensure that all learners can engage as fully as they are able with the complete educational experience.

Crises

St Ann's recognises that crises do occasionally arise for reasons which may be outside of our control.

In the event of a crisis, staff at St Ann's follow the Department of Health document *Positive and Proactive Care (PPC)*: *reducing the need for restrictive interventions*, there are three categorised strategies to reduce challenging behaviour;

1. Primary preventative strategies. These are our first strategies of distraction, diversion and occasionally disengagement when the young adult becomes anxious, aroused or distressed.
2. Secondary preventative strategies. Look to promote relaxation which is used after a crisis to try and reduce the chance of the crisis happening again.
3. Tertiary (reactive) strategies which involve physical handling and possible temporary restraint. All handling in such cases follows *Pro-Act-Scipr* recommendations and such techniques and will only be used when the learner is at risk or puts others at risk.

Physical handling, defined by the *Positive and Proactive Care* document as...

...any direct physical contact where the intervener's intention is to prevent, restrict, or subdue movement of the body, or part of the body of another person

will only take place in order to guide at-risk students to a safe place where they will be able to begin the process of taking control of their own behaviour by having their own space and enough room to self regulate. Any and all uses of restraint are regarded by the school as a matter of considerable concern necessitating an urgent review of the young person's complex behavioural needs.

The increasing use of restraint programmes through organisations such as Team Teach, SCIP or PRICE, potentially takes the responsibility away from the teacher and formalises a reactive policy. This is not to criticise organisations that provide training in restraint techniques, for such training is absolutely essential for when things (as they do!) inevitably go wrong. We are merely pointing out that such organisations were born out of a need for those working with pupils who habitually exhibit sometimes extreme challenging behaviours, to deal with crises. They are, therefore, naturally reactive; their role is to give essential advice and training for when things go wrong, and we need to concentrate much more on creating the conditions for things going right and fully recognising the creation of these conditions as a curricular concern. Imray and Hewett, 2015, 193).

Students often choose to go on the field, other outside areas, the Space Station or in the foyer outside the school office. The basic principle of physical handling will however always be to

- (i) only use in a crisis situation or as a last resort to avoid a crisis situation
- (ii) use the minimum amount of force necessary for the minimum amount of time
- (iii) guide to the nearest safe open space
- (iv) never use static holds unless there is an immediate and extreme risk either to the young person or other people. This hold must be risk assessed around the individual.

All instances of physical handling are recorded and fully reviewed by members of the SLT within 24 hours. Under no circumstances will staff use physical restraint or breakaway techniques that involve the use of pain.

Positive Behaviour Support Plans

Students that are considered to have challenging behaviour at St Ann's school will have a Positive Behaviour Support Plan (Appendix 1), which will have strategies that are proactive primary, secondary and tertiary. The tertiary strategies that are restrictive will have an individual Pro-Act-Scipr risk assessment completed by team teach instructors. This plan follows the PBS plan from the Challenging Behaviour Foundation and the following discussion with Parents/Carers Positive Behaviour Support Plans are signed off as agreed.

These plans are written to reduce anxiety levels and focus on ways that keep students at a calm, happy and engaged level known as the "Green Stage". This approach is person-centred and views every student as an individual and every behaviour as a form of

communication.

St Ann's School has adopted the PBS Academy Framework (2015) which provides.....

.....a detailed framework of the things that you need to know and the things that you need to do when delivering best practice PBS to persons with intellectual disabilities and behaviours that challenge. Page 13

St Ann's ensures it has a whole school approach and attitude to positive behaviour support. Our core values are dignity, respect, warmth, empathy, and compassion and are demonstrated in all interactions with students. Any staff behaviour that deviates from these core values is considered a serious disciplinary matter.

Recording and Analysing Challenging Behaviour

St Ann's believes that data analysis helps to enable

- reductions in challenging behaviour
- increases in functional communication
- acquisition of new skills
- participation in activity
- decreases in the use of restrictive practices including, but not limited to, physical restraint.

The school use two systems for data entry and analysis.

1. RAG ratings

- All students with a current Positive Behaviour Support Plan have their behaviour rated Green, Amber or Red every 45 minutes.
- This is rated according to each individual's own personal level of anxiety and may therefore look very different from one student to another, but essentially Green is no concern, Amber is cause for concern which may lead to crisis, and Red is crisis.
- The information recorded enables us to identify patterns and build a picture of a student's school life.
- The staff will use the words Green, Amber and Red as a code to quickly inform other staff as to how a student is presenting without compromising the young person's dignity or privacy or re-escalating them.

2. Student Alarm Recordings

The second system is when a student is in crisis and is generally entered after an alarm has been pressed. A student is entered into this database if the alarm has been pressed twice for challenging behaviour in one-half term. This database records key information such as an unplanned restraint as well as assessments of the reasons behind the behaviour. This data is regularly assessed by a team of staff lead by the Deputy Headteacher and fed back to the SLT and Governors.

The school regularly reviews and revises the support provided to each young person to make sure that it reflects his/her current needs, interests, health and well-being and risks.

Good professional relationships between staff and students are essential to maintaining a

safe and secure environment at St. Ann's. It is recognised that the vast majority of the students at St. Ann's respond positively to the school's ethos and the approach taken by the staff to ensure a positive and ordered learning environment. It is also acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of reasonable, proportionate and necessary force may be required.

The school emphasises that physical techniques are only used as a last resort in the context of the positive, holistic approach to behaviour support.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in the school:

- (i) clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where the use of force is necessary and
- (ii) are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

Space Station Room

Students have access to one of two customised low-stimulation rooms where they are allowed to go to self-regulate. Staff are able to guide students to the room but if a student does not wish to be in this room they can leave at any time.

Space Station are rooms that no longer have doors as we feel as a school that it is important that there is no restrictive practice being implemented when students use this facility such as holding doors.

As the teaching and support staff have a "Duty of Care" towards our students they could be liable for a claim of negligence if they fail to follow the guidance within this policy. All staff are regularly trained in the Awareness of positive behaviour support.

Date of last review...May 2021.....

Date of next review May 2023.....

