Strategies for Managing Low-Level Misbehaviour

Rationale for Behaviour Strategies Being an Inclusion Tool

Please refer to the 'Behaviour Interventions' strand of the Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit. (Teaching and Learning Toolkit | EEF (educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)). According to the research described, well-applied behaviour interventions can add +4 months of learning equivalence per student per year (+3 months for secondary students), and also works towards closing the disadvantage gap.

Toolkit Strand	Impact (Months)	Closing the Disadvantage Gap
Behaviour interventions	+4 months	According to figures from the Department for Education, pupils who receive Free School Meals are more likely to receive a permanent or fixed period exclusion compared to those who do not. The most common reason for exclusion is persistent disruptive behaviour. Pupil behaviour will have multiple influences, some of which teachers can directly manage though universal or classroom management approaches. Some pupils will require more specialist support to help manage their self-regulation or social and emotional skills.

7 Key Attitudes

1. Keep control of your tone of voice and body-language (never rely on shouting)
2. Avoid using judgemental language
3. Aim for a 'win-win' outcome in which your student does not lose face
4. Increase the level of teacher intervention in controlled increments – *this means that when escalation of intervention is needed, we should neither stay 'stuck' on one level of behaviour intervention, nor over-escalate too rapidly*
5. Be consistent with sanctions – *the inevitability of the sanction is more important than severity. Sanctions should always be followed with a restorative conversation*
6. Be consistent with recognition and praise – *maintaining fairness is key. Praise and recognition is only fair if achievable by any student and does not depend on their raw ability*
7. Plan for positive behaviour – it does not happen by magic or by accident – *e.g., using seating plans, student data and information, appropriate range of teaching resources that both support and stretch sufficiently, ensuring that activities are stimulating, engaging, and representative of the diversity of the learner community.*

Teacher Language and Wording

A teacher's language in the classroom should be at all times:

- Non-judgemental / non-sarcastic
- Clear
- Instructive
- Inclusive

Wording should be chosen so they are *assertive*, avoiding the two extremes of being *overly passive* or *overly hostile*. Assertive language is *focussed* and *urgent*, whilst at the same time being *calm* and *non-threatening*. Paul Dix has (a behaviour management expert) has suggested using the following **sentence stems** when giving an assertive instruction:

- I need you to…
- In 5 minutes, I will see…
- You should…
- You must…

Typical Statements by teacher	Improved Wording *(using a calm tone of voice and neutral body language)*
Don't speak to me like that	*I need you to speak respectfully*
Why are you dropping litter?	*I need you to pick that up and put it in the bin. Thank you*
You've left your equipment out again!	*You must put away your equipment.*
How dare you argue with me!	*I am giving you a chance to re-phrase your concern*
You are really annoying me by interrupting.	*Remember the rule about interrupting.*
What do you think you're doing?	*I need you to refocus on your learning task*
Who told you to get that book out?	*You should return that book, and return to your learning task*

Strategies for Promoting Positive Behaviour

1. **Tone of voice** – keep this low and neutral, especially when delivering sanctions (do not shout)

2. **Eye Contact** – make eye-contact with the student who is off-task

3. **Non-verbal signals** – using hand signals or eye-signals to indicate that something must be done. This is a great way to be discrete, drawing less attention than a loud oral instruction (e.g., pointing to the learning task)

4. **Tutor Proximity** – walk near to the problem area in the room – this alone may solve the issue!

5. **Pupil name** – memorising students names is a powerful tool. Use their name to give them an instruction. E.g., *'Sajidah, I need you to return to your seat'*

6. **Rule Reminder** – you could turn it into a question, e.g. *'Can you remind me what the rule is for safety goggles?'*

7. **Repetition (cracked record)** – Repeat instructions (this is up to the teacher's discretion, as to how many times before escalating to the next level of sanction)

8. **Recognition, recognition, recognition!** – When students are doing something right, notice it, and acknowledge it. E.g., 'Brian, I noticed that you really focussed hard on getting your graph right, well done!

9. **Proximity praise of good behaviour** – Praise pupils nearby, who are doing the right thing. It's an indirect way of redirecting others (ripple effect)

10. **Shift support and focus on learning** – try switching focus of language over to the learning, rather than the behaviour, e.g., instead of *'I need you to stop twiddling your thumbs'*, you might say *'how are you getting on with that concept map',*

11. **Clarify expectations / give micro-instructions** – Restate the instruction or the expectation, using a *much greater level of detail* (sometimes called micro-instructions)

12. **Offer choices** – e.g., say *"you can either complete the task, or risk getting a detention"*. This allows the student to save face, as you have given them a degree of control.

13. **Allow take-up time** – After giving the instruction, walk away from the student to give them some time and space to do the right thing (supports 'saving face'). Also shows them that you are trusting them to do the right thing without the teacher standing over them

14. **Partial agreement** – e.g., say *"yes, I know it might seem boring, but I need you to try and become more interested in your learning"* (supports 'saving face')

15. **When-then** – e.g., say *"When you have fully completed your first draft, then I will reconsider your request to return to your original seat"* (supports 'saving face')

16. **Non-judgemental description of reality** – refer to the behaviour (using plain language), and not referring to the child. E.g., say *"I notice that you have not yet taken out your learning apparatus"*, rather than *"you never take out your learning apparatus unless I tell you"*, or *"you are always too slow"*. This may be followed up with a plain instruction, such as *"I need you to…"*.

17. **Tactical/selective ignoring** – you may wish to tackle one issue at a time to keep things manageable, tactically ignoring others altogether, or to be postponed for chasing up at another time

18. **Deferred consequences** – By deferring delivering the consequences, you may be able to identify a better opportunity, when greater discretion can be used (e.g., avoiding a public 'show-down', reducing the audience)

19. *Redirecting behaviour* – say *"As interesting as that is, I do need you to …"*

20. **Ignoring secondary behaviour** – If the student has followed the primary redirection, it may be best to strategically ignore any secondary misbehaviours being displayed (e.g., teeth-kissing, eye-rolling), as you have already gained the strategic win. Many of us have accidentally re-ignited an argument just when things were starting to calm down, by not ignoring the (relatively minor) secondary misbehaviour (supports 'saving face')

21. **Discretion (avoid public confrontation)** – Avoid a public 'show-down' (saving face). Sanctions do not have to be delivered publicly. Use discretion and a low / calm tone of voice when delivering sanctions

22. **Inevitable consequences or sanctions** – Consistency and inevitability of sanctions are more important than their severity. If a warning is issued, follow up with action! Increase the severity of the sanction in gradually controlled increments.

23. **Divert and diffuse** –
    a. Diversion: 'I need your help with…'
    b. Diffuse: 'I know this is difficult but…'

24. **A little empathy goes a long way**! – show the students that you see them as human, and this will humanise the teacher too, in the student's eyes

25. **30 second microscript** – This is a piece of pre-formulated script that once formulated, you can pull out habitually. It acts as a safety net for when the mind 'goes blank'. Here is an example provided by Paul Dix
    a. An opening line … 'I notice that … '
    b. The message delivered … 'And you know that we need to … '
    c. The consequence … 'If you choose to … I will need to speak to you after the lesson … '

26. **Rules** – Should be few in number, phrased positively, and understood by all, use visual cues. They should be prominently displayed, and regularly referred to. Best developed with the students (to gain buy-in)

27. **Routines** – not the same as rules. Can be many in number and as detailed as necessary. Make a routine for everything that happens regularly and give students time to learn and become habituated to these. Use them for entering the classroom…, for leaving it…, for coming in from lunch…, where they sit…, and who with…, for moving around the room/lab…, for getting work marked…, for getting your attention…, and for you getting their attention too

28. **Restorative conversation** after every sanction (see below)

Restorative Conversation

Teachers are often too busy to follow up on a sanction (e.g. a detention) with a restorative conversation. However, by not doing so, the purpose of the sanction is usually unintentionally undermined. Sanctions should not be viewed as punishment for its own sake, but rather a means through which a student can reflect on their behaviour, learn, and improve it. Sanctions should *always* be followed up with a restorative conservation to:

- Give students' support in reflecting on their behaviour in a calm and structured way, removed from an audience or other triggers
- Restore student-teacher trust, by showing students' that the teacher cares about the student
- Ensure that the student is ready to re-enter class with the best learning attitudes going forwards

This is an example of a framework for a restorative conversation:

1. What has happened?
2. What were you thinking at the time (teacher and students)
3. Who has been affected by the actions?
4. How have they been affected?
5. What needs to be done now to make things right?
6. How can we do things differently in the future?

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