



Positive behaviour management



Positive behaviour management

It's no secret that behaviour is one of the major causes of stress for teachers.

This guide offers tips on supporting some of the key areas of behaviour to help as you develop your experience in the classroom. It contains some key themes, such as the importance of having high expectations of all children and young people, including those with special educational needs or disability (SEND), remaining calm and being in charge.

You should know your school behaviour policy, discuss it with your mentor and colleagues and use it in your classroom.

It can take time to become fully confident in supporting behaviour. Every experienced teacher has gone through the same process. Focusing on these basics will help you on the journey to becoming brilliant at supporting behaviour.



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always here for
you – get in
touch using
the details
on page 22**

Children and young people with SEND need a differentiated approach to behaviour management. Their SEN or disability may make it more difficult for them to comply with school behaviour policies and education professionals need to be aware of this in managing classroom behaviour. Rewards systems should, for example, reflect a differentiated approach which is understood by all pupils, staff and parents. The school behaviour policy should provide advice on ways in which the school specifically manages the behaviour of pupils with SEND.

The Department for Education guidance Mental health and behaviour in schools says:

"It may be unlawful to apply a behaviour policy that treats all pupils the same if a pupil's disability makes it harder for them to comply with the policy than other pupils who are not disabled."

Education staff are responsible for the teaching and learning of ALL students. Staff should be fully aware of SEND when managing classroom behaviour and seek advice from the school special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) if unsure about how to work effectively on behaviour with individual pupils. The advice in this guide includes considerations of SEND in behaviour management within each section.

Tips for supporting behaviour

- **calm** – try to appear calm, even if you are not feeling calm. The first step in a difficult situation is to create thinking time, so try taking a deep breath
- **status preservation** – pupils operate within a peer group, so be aware of this and use private rather than public reprimands when managing behaviour
- **empathy** – show empathy by avoiding challenging questions such as “what do you think you are doing?” try using “I understand that you are feeling... In our classroom we...”
- **respect** – model appropriate behaviour to reinforce your expectations. Always show pupils respect
- **building relationships** – build relationships with children and their families. If there is a significant change in behaviour flag it up with parents/carers and the senior leadership team (SLT).



Praise and expectations

Think about the culture you are trying to develop. Your relationship with your students is key, let them know you have high expectations and always praise effort.

Bear in mind that for pupils with SEND individual targets and expectations may be required. These should be discussed with the school SENCO, their previous teacher if possible, the pupil and their parents/carers.

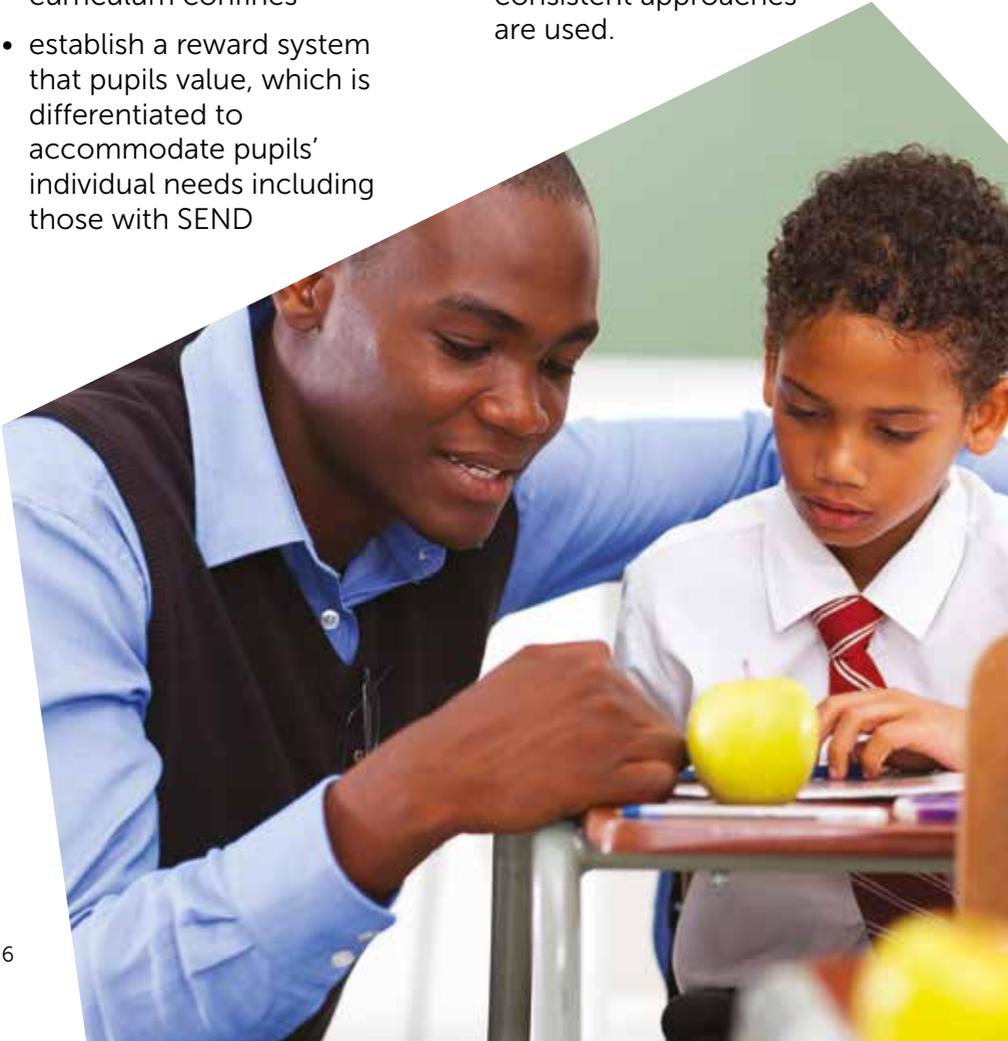
You could:

- praise efforts to follow your behaviour guidelines as this will encourage others to mirror good behaviour
- choose one goal at a time – there may be a million behaviours you want to change, but you won't be able to change them all at once
- focus on a learning attitude and put it on the wall
- a 'praise board' or 'recognition board' can be useful for discouraging low-level disruption – it could also be marbles in a jar, stickers – any way of recognising positive behaviour. Be aware some children have difficulties accepting praise
- always add a name to the board for doing the right thing, never for the wrong thing, and when you get to 50 names, celebrate with applause
- have high expectations; rather than saying "bring a pen", "look at me", "put your bag at the side of the room", which are functional behaviours, set the expectation much higher
- talk about solutions, curiosity, perseverance, courage and independence.

Building your confidence

To increase your confidence in managing behaviour the following tips may be useful:

- be aware of the different levels of concentration pupils are capable of
- build on pupil interests wherever possible within curriculum confines
- establish a reward system that pupils value, which is differentiated to accommodate pupils' individual needs including those with SEND
- ensure that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with quickly, consistently and fairly
- enlist the help of a senior staff member or the SENCO to advise on behaviour issues
- work with external agencies and parents to ensure consistent approaches are used.



...but show you care

Being in charge is extremely important, but it's just as important to show that you care about your pupils:

- be warm, respectful and kind
- take an interest in your pupils as individuals with lives outside of the classroom
- be proportionate with consequences and make sure you start every lesson with a clean slate
- smiling helps, as does a little fun.

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Entering the classroom

How pupils enter the classroom can set the tone for the lesson. Some schools have set procedures, others leave it to teachers:

- establish routines outside the classroom
- give pupils a challenge on paper as they come into the classroom or have a stimulus on the board to focus pupil discussion.



For a pupil who does not always respond well to praise, try using understated praise to the individual, not the whole class

Seating plans

Seating plans serve a number of purposes:

- they subtly communicate that the teacher has responsibility for managing the classroom environment
- they help in learning names
- they enable the most efficient and least disruptive grouping of pupils.

Consider how anxious pupils will react to a change in routine.

If the plan does not seem to be working:

- discuss individually with the pupil
- ensure pupils who are on task are not penalised by seat swapping.



Positive encouragement

For a pupil who does not always respond well to praise, you could try:

- using understated praise to the individual, not the whole class
- involving the parent/carer or form tutor to triangulate praise, as above, for example sending positive postcards home
- implementing a whole-class reward system to avoid singling anyone out, such as names on a board, as above
- asking the pupil to choose a target for the lesson and give reward/praise if met, even if other behaviour was inappropriate
- giving the pupil a role/responsibility within the class
- praising work achieved rather than behaviour
- setting a personal/social/emotional target
- encouraging the pupil to keep a diary of positives/negatives
- having one-to-one or group activities to build confidence/self-esteem
- organising circle time appropriate to their needs.

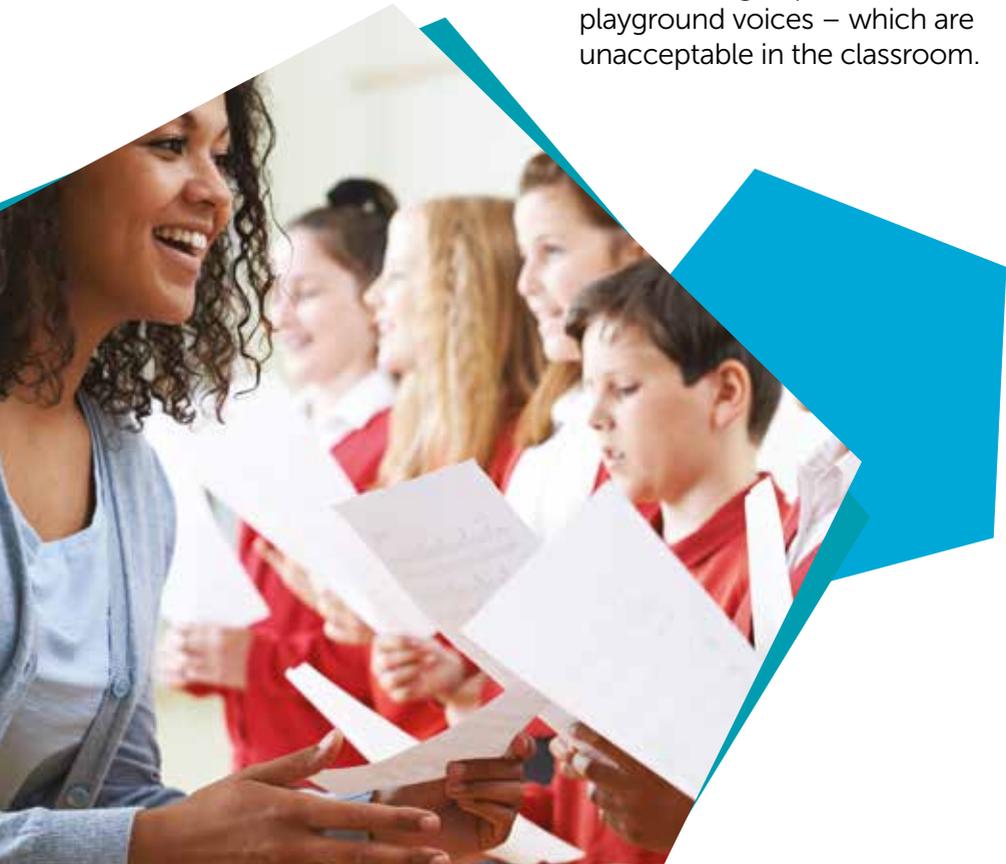
Using your voice

It is important to distinguish between shouting in anger and raising your voice to warn of danger. There is no place for shouting if it:

- signals anger to pupils
- teaches pupils that it is acceptable behaviour
- makes a noisy class noisier
- isn't good for you – losing your voice is a real danger.

While there may be circumstances when it is appropriate to raise your voice in a measured, proportionate way, you are more likely to gain attention and get your message across by speaking more quietly or using non-verbal cues.

You can also model the different noise levels and voices that are appropriate for the context, for example silence, pair voices, group voices, voices for answering a question, and playground voices – which are unacceptable in the classroom.



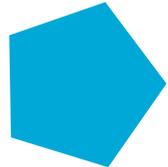
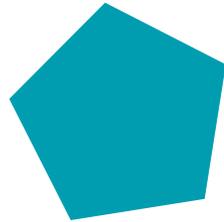
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Positive engagement with pupils

If you find yourself getting drawn into arguments with pupils:

- don't accept the provocation
- use the partial agreement technique, for example: "I understand that you want to sit next to your friend but your place is over there"
- have planned responses
- state the instruction and walk away, allowing the pupils time to start the task
- don't display your stress – appear calm and in control
- take a deep breath.



The school's behaviour policy

If you are following the school's behaviour procedures, but pupils complain and say they don't have to do 'x' or 'y' in other classes, try the following:

- make every effort to be consistent in the way that you follow the policy
- provide a calm and assertive response, eg "You know the rules and my expectations of your behaviour"
- the school behaviour policy should provide advice on ways in which the school specifically manages the behaviour of pupils with SEND – this should provide advice on a differentiated approach
- discuss the issue with your mentor/senior colleagues; if there really is inconsistency in the way staff follow policy and procedures, this needs to be addressed.

Be assertive

To be an assertive teacher:

- be firm but fair
- don't react to inappropriate behaviour, manage it
- make clear your expectations and rules
- make use of non-verbal communication, such as thumbs up, time out cards or looks
- if you say you're going to do something, make sure you do it and if you don't, apologise
- consistency is key (with the proviso that a differentiated approach may be required for pupils with SEND)
- follow through on inappropriate behaviour and follow through on consequences
- focus on rewarding positive behaviour
- make use of humour, but avoid sarcasm at all costs.



**Follow through
on inappropriate
behaviour and
follow through on
consequences**

Keeping students on task

When pupils are supposed to be working independently or in groups but use it as an opportunity to chat or mess around, to encourage them to stay on task, you could:

- provide a choice of two or three tasks, this may help if the reason for disengagement is boredom with the set task
- deliver gentle reminders to individuals or groups
- pause the activity, allow for thinking time and ask pupils to feedback on what they have done so far
- use positive encouragement, such as: "You've made a good start – what do you need to do next?"
- set and stick to time limits for tasks
- ask open questions, for example: "What should you be doing now?"
- review the task – was it interesting, relevant, appropriate; did pupils have the resources they needed to do it well?

Low-level chatter

Low-level chatter can be an issue, even in an experienced teacher's classroom. Try some of these tips to address it:

- give pupils legitimate opportunities to talk, eg talking with their partner or small group work
- use challenges to encourage pupils to be quiet as quickly as possible, eg "That took 30 seconds – that's good, next time see if we can halve it"
- clap your hands, sound a horn, use a musical instrument or use a silent gesture eg hand in the air
- write instructions on the board
- set a task as soon as they enter the room – they might be more willing to listen as a result
- understand that some pupils with SEND will need reasonable adjustments in regard to calling out or reacting to instructions
- use engaging short tasks
- set rules, eg "When I ring the bell, that means I need you to be quiet"
- build relationships – pupils are more likely to respond to a teacher they like and respect
- consider your input time and pupils' concentration.



Give pupils legitimate opportunities to talk, eg talking with their partner or small group work

Managing calling out

To manage inappropriate calling out from pupils:

- understand that some pupils with SEND will need reasonable adjustments in regard to calling out in class and individuals' targets should be discussed with the SENCO, pupil and their parents/carers
- establish boundaries around calling out
- if you use 'hands up', reinforce it with a visual cue by raising your hand when inviting contributions
- use 'talk partners' or similar, where pupils have a short amount of time to discuss the answer to a question with a partner, then pick an individual to answer
- tactically ignore it, repeat your expectation that there is no calling out, and follow it up privately afterwards.



Answering back

It is important to deal with rudeness, answering back and general disrespect:

- always address it appropriately
- do not overreact by saying something like "how dare you speak to me like that?"
- make them aware of the effect of their behaviour – if it happens more than once, follow it up – this could involve a discussion outside class time
- consider some pupils struggle to differentiate between rudeness and fact.

Supporting pupils who need/want extra attention

- consider if there is an explanation for it, does the child have a special educational need or has there been a significant event in their life?
- try to reframe your view of their behaviour, not necessarily accepting it but working with the pupil to change it
- if there is an impulsive element to it, give a set time when you will respond, eg "I'll come to you when I have finished at this table"
- if the pupil is new, identify pupils to help them settle in
- teach the pupil the acceptable ways they can get your attention
- praise and positively reinforce acceptable behaviour.

Praise and positively reinforce acceptable behaviour





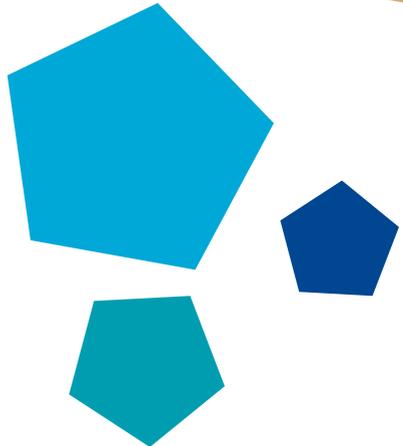
Engaging reluctant pupils

- consider the reasons for the refusal/reluctance in the context of previous encounters with the pupil and prior knowledge of the pupil
- is there a special educational need which affects their behaviour?
- use the language of choice
- repeat the instruction, using an 'I' statement, finishing with "thanks" and allow take-up time
- follow the school's procedure in a measured, firm, fair and consistent way
- keep words to a minimum to avoid coming across as nagging
- stay out of their personal space and ensure your body language conveys calmness
- try not to ask demanding questions – these can push the pupil into 'fight or flight' mode.

Managing pupil comments

To manage comments between pupils, such as when they make fun of one another's appearance or rubbish each other's work:

- follow the school procedures for overtly hostile bullying or abusive comments
- revisit the class contract
- be assertive when challenging the comments being made
- use 'I' statements, eg "I need you to stop saying things like that, as I expect everyone to treat each other with respect in this class"
- have a quiet word with those involved
- work with the whole class to develop understanding around issues.





**Regularly
let parents
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Working with parents

To work collaboratively with parents, let them know their views are valued:

- develop positive relationships with the parents – explain that the school seeks to work in partnership with parents
- clarify the school's expectations which should be set out in the home-school agreement
- don't just contact parents about negative behaviour – regularly let parents know when their child has behaved well
- keep a reasonably detailed and factual record of incidents, eg "Ethan left his seat, went across the classroom and hit James on the back", rather than "Ethan disrupted the lesson"
- you may wish to ask another teacher to be with you when you talk to parents initially in order to have an accurate record of the exchange
- seek advice from your mentor on school procedures for meeting parents.



If you need support and advice about how to engage with a particular pupil or class, speak to your mentor or a colleague

You're not alone

No member of the National Education Union should feel alone when facing pupil behaviour that is threatening or undermining. All teachers need guidance and support around pupil behaviour from colleagues, specialist services or their union at various points in their career.

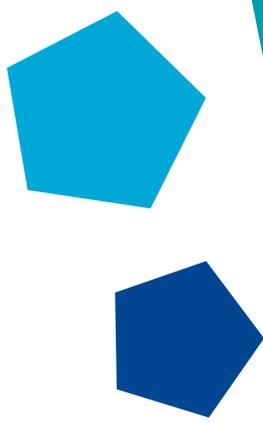
Schools should provide systems of support for teachers. The school behaviour policy should explain what teachers can and should do when they are experiencing persistent disruptive behaviour, or violent or threatening behaviour, from students. If you need support and advice about how to engage with a particular pupil or class, speak to your mentor or a colleague.

The National Education Union is committed to bringing you the best professional development opportunities. We run courses on a wide range of issues such as wellbeing and behaviour management. For more information go to **neu.org.uk/learning**

Get in touch

As a member of the National Education Union, you have access to excellent advice and support. Your first point of contact is the rep at your school or college, who will be able to offer you practical and personal support. Your branch/district can also provide help and advice. If you do not have a rep in your workplace or do not know the name/telephone number of your rep or branch/district secretary, see **neu.org.uk/contact-us**

You can also call the Adviceline on **0345 811 8111** or email **adviceline@neu.org.uk** for advice and support.





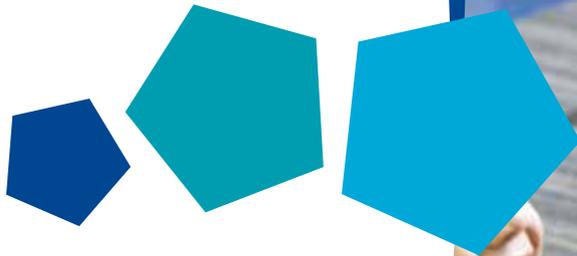


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