

## LETTER FROM THE MINISTER

June 2001

Dear Colleague

From my many visits to schools and discussions with teachers, I am very much aware of the importance that schools place on how their pupils behave, and the profound effect that behaviour can have on the working environment in the school. Every teacher, in every school, seeks to create the best possible circumstances for learning for their pupils. In essence, this means creating and maintaining the sort of positive relationships throughout the school within which pupils will want to learn, and teachers can teach most effectively.

I would like to thank all involved for their work on behalf of schools and for preparing the guidance which follows. I am also most grateful for the helpful comments and contributions made by teachers' unions and many others to the guidance in draft. By sharing ideas, strategies and examples of good practice, schools and those who support them can learn from one another's experiences. In this way, all can work towards establishing an ethos and a learning environment which help promote and maintain affirmative relationships and positive behaviour, while at the same time learning to cope more effectively with the incidents of difficult and challenging behaviour which every teacher encounters from time to time.

The aim of this document is to provide guidance for staff as they work together to develop and review their policies and procedures surrounding the way their pupils behave in school. It is hoped that, in working through the document, staff will learn about the quality of relationships that they have among themselves, between themselves and the pupils, among the pupils and between the school and the home. I hope that schools will find the strategies, examples and staff assignments which the guidance offers to be practical, and helpful to them in their daily work.

*Martin Mc Guinness*

Martin McGuinness MP MLA  
Minister for Education



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### APPENDICES

1. Acknowledgements: the Northern Ireland Regional Working Group and Drafting Group and other contributors.
2. Legislation, Circulars, Official Publications, References and Further Reading
3. Report of a Survey into School Discipline, 1996-98: Education and Training Inspectorate
4. Glossary of acronyms used.
5. Contacts and helplines

## FOREWORD

Following publication of the booklet “Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour: A Discipline Strategy for Schools”<sup>1</sup>, the Department of Education established a Working Group comprising representatives on the Education and Library Boards, the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) and the Department. The Group’s remit included preparing “best practice guidelines on successful discipline policies and practices, including action to deal with bullying behaviour, for issue to all schools”. The guidance was to reflect effective approaches which have been used in our schools, and to include examples of action which could be taken by schools to promote positive behaviour. The names, including membership of the Group, of all who have contributed to the preparation of this guidance appears as Appendix 1.

Good behaviour keeps pupils safe, reduces stress for teachers and contributes to a welcoming and caring environment in which pupils can develop as people and both pupils and teachers can do their best work. A school’s behaviour policy, therefore, needs to be set within the context of its overall pastoral care policy, linked to its child protection policy and reflecting the school’s culture and ethos, as well as practical procedural matters. In drawing up their policies, schools should take account of this guidance, as well as existing policies and guidelines on behaviour issued by the Department, the Boards and, as appropriate, CCMS.

This guidance commends the involvement of the whole school community: the Board of Governors, all staff, pupils and parents - in a partnership approach to developing and maintaining good behaviour. It is structured around topics, presented in a sequence which schools can work through, or as sections which can be used to help in reviewing single issues of particular interest.

### Staff Assignments

Throughout this guidance, you will see boxes like this with numbered “staff assignments”. These are offered, in context, as (voluntary) tasks which can help principals and staff to develop within their school a shared view of a behaviour policy which suits the needs of the pupils, the staff and the parents. The tasks can be used consecutively, for example as the focus for a whole-staff training event, or can be selected from, as best suits the staff’s needs.

*1 School Improvement Programme, Department of Education for Northern Ireland [DENI] 1998*



## INTRODUCTION

### The legal position

1. Every employer has a statutory duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978<sup>2</sup> to provide not only a safe place of work for their employees, but also a safe system of work. Employers also have a duty to conduct their business so that people who are not their employees are not exposed to health and safety risks. For employers in the education sector, this means creating a safe working environment for the pupils in their charge and for any volunteers working in schools, as well as for the teaching and non-teaching staff they employ.
2. As part of their pastoral care responsibilities, Boards of Governors and principals also have a common law duty of care towards their pupils, as well as a statutory responsibility<sup>3</sup> for discipline and good behaviour in their school.

The Board of Governors must:

- ✓ ensure that good behaviour and discipline policies are pursued at the school;
- ✓ make and keep under review, a written statement of 'general principles' about pupil behaviour and discipline, which the principal will have regard to in determining school rules and behaviour policies;
- ✓ before making its statement of general principles, consult the principal and the parents, and consider any guidance from the Department, the Education and Library Board or the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (as appropriate);
- ✓ decide, and set out, what aspects of discipline/behaviour should be a matter for the principal, and give him/her any guidance on these aspects which they feel is appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> *The Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 [SI 1978/1039 (NI 9)]*

<sup>3</sup> *The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 3 [SI 1998/1759 (NI 13)]*

The Principal must:

- ✓ determine the measures (which can include rules and the means of enforcing them) which the school will take to:
  - promote among the pupils self-discipline and respect for authority;
  - encourage good behaviour and respect for others; and
  - secure an acceptable standard of behaviour among the pupils;
- ✓ in so doing, act in accordance with the Board of Governors' statement of general principles, and any other guidance given by them;
- ✓ prepare a written statement of these measures, and give a copy free of charge to the parents.

3. In addition to their legal responsibilities in relation to children with special educational needs, Education and Library Boards also have specific responsibilities in relation to pupils with behavioural difficulties<sup>4</sup>.

The Board must:

- ✓ prepare a statement setting out the arrangements it is making, or is proposing to make, for the education of children with behavioural difficulties; this must include:
  - the board's arrangements for the provision of advice and resources to schools in its area and how it will meet requests from schools for support and assistance in promoting good behaviour;

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<sup>4</sup> *The Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1998, Article 6 [SI 1998/1759 (NI 13)]*

- its arrangements for assisting schools with general behaviour problems and behavioural difficulties of individual pupils;
  - its arrangements in relation to pupil referral units;
  - any other arrangements it has made for helping children with behavioural difficulties to find places at suitable schools; and
  - an indication of how its arrangements for children with behavioural difficulties in this statement relate to its arrangements for such children who also have special educational needs;
- ✓ review the statement at least once a year, and may revise it at any time it considers necessary;
  - ✓ when preparing or reviewing its statement, have regard to any guidance from the Department and consult the other boards, CCMS, the Boards of Governors of the schools in its area and anyone else it considers appropriate;
  - ✓ publish its statement, copy it to the Boards of Governors of the schools in its area and hold it for free inspection at Board Headquarters.

### A positive climate - schools make a difference!

4. Evidence from many studies over the last decade suggests that schools can and do make a difference to young people's lives, and that principals and their staff have the power, through their own efforts, to improve standards of work and behaviour and the life chances of their pupils regardless of their background. Where a school is working successfully in this regard, it is evident - almost palpable - to the outside observer in all aspects of its life, from the front gates onwards, that the school has a positive ethos.

5. A climate which fosters effective learning, both within class and about the school, is at the heart of the education process. Such a climate, or ethos, is best promoted through focusing on the creation and maintenance of good relationships: among the staff themselves, teaching and non-teaching; between staff and pupils; among pupils and their peers; between parents and school; and between the school and the community it serves. Policies designed to promote good behaviour are at the heart of building relationships in school and with the home. The establishment of an effective behaviour policy is not only a legal duty upon Boards of Governors and school principals and the cornerstone of pastoral care work, but is also fundamental to successful work in the classroom.

All young people, from whatever background, have a right to be valued and respected, to be educated in a secure and caring environment, and to have their abilities and talents nurtured and developed to their full potential.

6. In its booklet “Evaluating Schools”<sup>5</sup>, the Inspectorate describes a positive ethos as one in which:

- ✓ the pupils’ confidence and self-esteem are promoted;
- ✓ they are encouraged to value one another; and
- ✓ they show a strong sense of belonging to the school as a community.

Where the ethos is right, pupils take a pride in their achievements and recognise the importance of high standards in their work and in their behaviour. The absence of a positive ethos is equally evident: pupils fail to acquire confidence and self-esteem, they lack respect for one another and there is no sense of community within the school. They are without motivation. Some will be passive, others restless or, at worst, disruptive; they will be content with less than their best. In turn, teachers’ morale is

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Evaluating Schools’, Education and Training Inspectorate, DENI 1992, edited and reissued 1998

adversely affected and, at worst, their health can suffer; the most effective of teachers will find it difficult to work successfully in a school where a positive ethos is absent. Such schools look and feel lacking in purpose.

7. A positive school ethos does not come about by chance, nor is it always easy to create. It is achieved by the principal, members of senior management and staff promoting collectively an atmosphere of care and respect within the formal and informal life of the school community. These efforts result in an atmosphere in which both the pupils and the staff feel secure, welcome and valued, and able to discuss their interests and voice their fears and concerns, confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response.

### External influences

8. The circumstances in which schools operate are sometimes less than helpful to staff in creating a positive climate within the school. The most important external influences are those of the parents and the home and the immediate community. Most parents take their responsibilities seriously and are concerned to be good parents. There are, however, a small number who, for whatever reason, are unsuccessful in developing acceptable behaviour in their children.

9. Further, the wider community does not always demonstrate high standards of behaviour, although it continues to expect them of its schools. Many schools operate in areas of high unemployment, social deprivation and continuing paramilitary influence; still more are aware of incidents of alcohol and drug abuse in their community which occasionally spill over into the life of the school and are a cause of disruptive behaviour.

### The changing relationship

10. A century ago the 'Master' was popularly seen as an authoritarian, often repressive, disciplinarian figure. In today's society, by contrast, the teacher is one who attempts to foster and maintain acceptable standards of behaviour by encouraging in the pupils self-respect, self-discipline, co-operation and respect for others, and setting them an example in this regard. The role of the teacher is still changing, from the largely didactic role of the mid-twentieth century to the twenty-first century role of the stimulator and facilitator of young people's learning. This new role

inevitably demands new skills of classroom management to reflect changing classroom behaviours, but the basic pastoral responsibility to protect and foster the welfare and development of the pupils remains.

11. The great majority of schools place a high priority on their pastoral care responsibilities, and take justifiable pride in the care with which they seek to nurture and develop their pupils in all respects. There is much material and support available in the area of pastoral care; some useful publications are listed in Appendix 2. Integral to an effective pastoral care system is the school's behaviour policy, creating and sustaining a safe, purposeful, open and ordered working climate in the school.

Where it is working...

12. Over the past decade there have been numerous working groups, research projects and studies on pupil behaviour and maintaining discipline in schools. The evidence and findings from all these have had much in common, pointing towards factors typically present in schools where behaviour is good and indiscipline is not an issue:

- ✓ a positive atmosphere based on a sense of community within the school and values which all of its members share;
- ✓ a sense of collective responsibility among staff, and a commitment to the school by the pupils and their parents;
- ✓ effective, well-prepared teaching, where expectations of the pupils are appropriately high, work is differentiated according to pupils' needs, all pupils are challenged and supported as necessary, and homework is carefully and constructively marked;
- ✓ a stimulating and suitably differentiated curriculum, which takes account of the needs and interests of the pupils and allows every pupil to experience a measure of success;
- ✓ effective programmes which promote among pupils a sense of self-esteem and self-respect, respect for others, self-discipline and responsibility;

- ✓ a behaviour policy, devised on a whole-school basis and based on consensus, incorporating an agreed rewards and sanctions regime, which is understood, owned and consistently applied throughout the school by everyone acting in a supervisory role;
- ✓ support for the behaviour policy through:
  - suitable staff development in classroom management techniques
  - suitable training for non-teaching supervisory staff
  - effective links with the home, and the support of parents
  - early identification of learning difficulties which may present as, or lead to, behaviour problems
  - effective links with outside support agencies.

... and where it isn't

13. Many studies have shown that, in schools where behaviour is a problem, a number of common features can be noted, including:

- ✗ a lack of consistency across staff in the implementation of agreed policies, procedures and practice relating to pastoral care and discipline;
- ✗ inadequate supervision of pupils when moving about the school, lining up outside class, and during break and lunch-time;
- ✗ inadequate information and support for substitute teachers;
- ✗ inappropriateness of some aspects of the curriculum for some pupils, and need for greater vocational emphasis and lifeskills across the curriculum;
- ✗ literacy weaknesses among pupils that restricted their access to the curriculum;

- ✘ inappropriate teaching approaches involving too little practical work, and insufficient differentiation; and
- ✘ a need for more training and support for teachers in classroom management skills, including coping with pupils lacking in motivation and the will to learn, in lesson planning and in a suitably broad range of teaching approaches.

During 1996-98, to inform the Department's Discipline Review, the Education and Training Inspectorate surveyed discipline and behaviour issues in a number of schools; the findings of this survey were not published at the time, but are included here in Appendix 3. The report notes features similar to those above. In general, however, and taking into account the findings of over 750 inspections carried out during the previous 4 years, the Inspectorate's findings about pupil behaviour in schools were very positive.

### Staff Assignment 1

In groups, consider the elements of effective practice described in paragraph 12.

- ◆ Do you agree with them?
- ◆ What other important factors would you add?
- ◆ Against your completed list, how does your school measure up? (You can give weightings to the various factors, and agree on a score for each.)
- ◆ What could be done to ensure that your school matched your completed list more closely?

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR POLICY**

14. The guidance which follows offers practical advice to help schools to:
- ✓ understand the factors within school which contribute to the way pupils behave;
  - ✓ review, as a whole-school community, their current approaches to dealing with pupil behaviour;
  - ✓ identify strengths and weaknesses in their current approaches;
  - ✓ plan and implement any necessary modifications and developments.
15. Drawing up a positive behaviour policy is an essential part of a school's pastoral responsibility towards its pupils and so needs to be set in the context of the school's overall pastoral care policy. It needs to incorporate within it, not only measures to help maintain an orderly and safe environment, but also measures to facilitate effective learning and good teaching: creating a climate for the pupils in which they are valued as individuals and encouraged in their learning and in their physical and social development.
16. To achieve this, a whole-school policy is required: one which is developed, understood, accepted and operated with consistency by the whole school. All members of the school community need to play an active part in the formulation of the school's policy: teaching and non-teaching staff, parents, pupils and Governors. To stimulate debate, small schools may wish to consider conducting their review in collaboration with others in a cluster group. All those contributing to the debate should do so with a clear appreciation of the climate the school is trying to create, and, for the staff, in the knowledge of their specific responsibilities and the extent and limits of their powers to enforce the agreed rules and procedures. All should be aware of the need to create a climate in which positive behaviour is encouraged and commended, and in which the pupils feel secure and equally valued.

## How do the pupils behave?

17. Most schools will find that, in their behaviour patterns, their pupils fall into three broad categories:

- ✓ the majority of pupils who, in the main, behave responsibly and conform to the rules and values of the school (such behaviour should be routinely recognised and praised);
- ✓ some pupils who are occasionally disruptive, but respond positively to the planned responses of the teachers;
- ✓ a small number of pupils who have needs which require a range of interventions at Stage 3 of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, including perhaps:
  - additional resources within school;
  - support from external agencies to assist pupils with learning difficulties or who need more structured behaviour management; or
  - a short-term placement in an external pupil referral unit or an in-school withdrawal/learning support unit.

18. In addition to the above, there may be a very small number of pupils for whom none of these interventions are effective. Such pupils may have long-term special educational needs, in terms of emotional and behavioural problems, and may require placement in a special education unit or school. A few may be best served by a permanent placement in an educational or training setting outside school (often referred to as EOTAS - education otherwise than at school). In extreme cases, it may be necessary for provision to be made for some children with long-term psychiatric conditions in joint provision made by health and education.

Where an individual pupil has behaviour difficulties, therefore, and any obvious environmental factors within school or home have been eliminated as the cause, such difficulties should be systematically addressed through the 5 stages of the SEN Code of Practice, just as for any other special educational need.

## Preparing the ground: the aims of the policy

19. To develop a positive behaviour policy through a whole-school approach, the first step in the review must be to ensure that the staff discuss, understand and accept why the review is taking place and what it is intended to achieve. They will also need to know the methodology to be used, the timescale over which it will take place and, importantly, their role in the process. Establishing aims in which there are clear gains for everybody sets the exercise off to a constructive start. In a whole-school positive behaviour policy, the staff are seeking to create a climate within the school that will:

- ✓ promote learning for all the pupils;
- ✓ make it easier for the teachers to teach effectively;
- ✓ enhance the pupils' self-esteem and foster self-respect and respect for others;
- ✓ encourage the pupils to develop independence by accepting the need for self-discipline and self-control and taking responsibility for their own behaviour;
- ✓ develop the pupils' interpersonal skills and their ability to work co-operatively with others to resolve problems and potential or actual conflict; and
- ✓ have the endorsement and active support of parents.

## Consultation with parents

20. Involving parents in drawing up the school's policy is an essential element which needs to be built in to the review plan from the outset. The process of consulting with parents may best begin with a letter from the school informing parents that the school proposes to review its existing policy and inviting them to contribute.

21. How consultation is best carried out will vary according to the school's local circumstances. Some schools have convened a meeting of parents, and divided those attending into focus groups under the direction of a member of staff or a Governor. The success of such an initiative

depends, to a large extent, on the skill of the chairperson to encourage contributions from the group, and the degree to which he or she has been briefed. Other schools have used questionnaires, either of the whole parent body or through representative sampling, to elicit parents' views. (Where sampling is used, all parents should be informed that the exercise is being undertaken, and give them the opportunity to elect to become involved if they so wish.)

22. The questions raised with parents in discussion or through a questionnaire might include the following:

- ◆ Are parents familiar with the school's existing behaviour policy?
- ◆ Are they familiar with aspects of the policy, dealing, for example, with homework, school uniform, smoking, drugs or bullying?
- ◆ Are they aware of what the school expects of them in terms of their child's behaviour?
- ◆ Do they know how the school encourages positive behaviour?
- ◆ Are they aware of the range of sanctions used in school, and under what circumstances they are imposed?
- ◆ Are they aware of the school's procedures for suspending pupils, when these are used and what their rights are if their child is suspended?
- ◆ Do they know how to raise concerns or complaints with the school?
- ◆ Are they happy with current arrangements, or how do they feel the school's behaviour policy could be improved?

23. The views obtained in this manner can usefully inform further consultation within the school, including the staff's own review of the existing policy.

## Consultation with pupils

24. Pupils have a right to be consulted in matters of school life that affect them<sup>6</sup>, and the school's behaviour policy is obviously among the foremost of these. Staff will find that pupils' views on how their behaviour should be managed can prove to be an insightful and constructive contribution to the policy development process. As part of the Inspectorate's survey of discipline in 1996-98, the views of a representative sample of post-primary pupils were canvassed on discipline and behaviour in their school. Their views were perceptive and revealing, and are included in the survey findings in Appendix 3.

25. It should be a primary objective that the pupils feel they have contributed to the development of the school's behaviour policy, and that their views have been listened to and acted upon, so that they can have a sense of ownership of the policy. The result should be a policy that is more easily implemented in the school because it is more widely understood, accepted and adhered to, thus ensuring better behaviour and improved working relationships. The very process of consultation with pupils on policy development can itself prove a valuable tool in building positive relationships.

26. How consultation with pupils can be carried out most effectively will vary according to their age and degree of maturity. In the post-primary sector especially, school prefects who have been involved in supervisory duties may be able to offer a valuable perspective, and in many schools in both primary and post-primary sectors older children will have had experience of mentoring, supervising or working with younger ones. The extent to which even the youngest pupils are aware of, and have views on, the school's policy should not be under-estimated. While the questions will need to be simply phrased for the younger pupils, and for pupils with special needs, the issues are the same for all, and could include themes such as the following:

- ◆ Do the pupils understand the school's existing behaviour policy?

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*6 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which the United Kingdom has been a signatory since 1992*

- ◆ Are they aware of the rules governing behaviour and the reasons for them?
- ◆ Do they view the rules as positive, or wholly negative and dominated by prohibitions and sanctions?
- ◆ Can they identify ways in which the school recognises and rewards good behaviour and positive contributions to the life of the school?

Specifically, pupils' views should be sought on the following:

- ◆ What effects do the current behaviour policy and procedures have on relationships in the school?
- ◆ Are there matters where the rules are too strict, or, conversely, not strict enough?
- ◆ From their perspective, is the existing behaviour policy, especially rewards and sanctions, operated consistently by all staff, teaching and non-teaching?
- ◆ Can the pupils suggest ways the behaviour policy can be improved, so as to make working relationships better and help them take responsibility for how they behave?

## Consultation with Governors

27. The involvement of the school Governors in all stages of the review and development of the policy should be frequent and active. All Governors should have an opportunity to consider the views expressed by staff, parents and pupils, and add their own contribution to the debate. The Governors have legal responsibility for the school's behaviour policy, and it will be necessary to ensure that their statement of principles forms the basis for the consultation which is carried out with both parents and staff.

## Consultation with staff - the School Audit

28. Once the parents and pupils have been consulted about the standard of discipline in the school, the current measures employed to maintain good behaviour and what changes may be needed to achieve better standards, their views can inform the next stage in the exercise. This should be a full consultation with all staff, teaching and non-teaching, in the shape of an audit of the school's existing policy and procedures for ensuring good behaviour, in order to determine those aspects which are proving to be appropriate and effective and those which require modification or replacement. The audit will help to ensure a collegiate approach to the management of behaviour, and a shared sense of ownership with regard to the agreed policy and procedures.

29. When carrying out an audit of the school's current policy, staff may find the following questions helpful in focusing their attention and guiding their deliberations:

- ◆ Is there a sense of community in the school? (How do we know?)
- ◆ Do the staff share a sense of collective responsibility towards the school?
- ◆ Do they share a clear and defensible set of principles and values on which to base a behaviour policy, which take account of the needs of the pupils for a secure, positive and challenging environment and the needs of the staff for clear and supportive procedures?
- ◆ Does the behaviour policy take account of the unique context and ethos of the school?
- ◆ Does the policy reflect and, in turn, influence the school's pastoral care system?
- ◆ Are the rules and regulations governing behaviour based on shared principles? Are they expressed in positive terms? Are they reasonable, enforceable and enforced consistently by everyone who acts in a supervisory capacity - including pupils? Are they kept to a minimum?

- ◆ Does the policy strike a healthy balance between rewards and sanctions, with a strong bias in favour of positive incentives? Are the pupils commended for both academic and non-academic achievements? Is the full range of the pupils' achievements duly celebrated in their Records of Achievement?
- ◆ Are parents informed when behaviour has been commendable, as well as when it has been poor?
- ◆ Are the sanctions available graded in severity according to the seriousness of the misdemeanour? Are they applied fairly and consistently? Is there a degree of flexibility permitted to take account of individual circumstances?
- ◆ Is the punishment of the innocent along with the guilty avoided (as in whole-class detentions)? Is the deliberate humiliation of pupils proscribed?
- ◆ Has there been appropriate training for staff, and do they have guidelines which encourage the avoidance of confrontation and offer help in managing difficult situations?
- ◆ Does the policy apply (and are consistent standards of behaviour expected) in all school activities, whether in or out of school?
- ◆ Does the policy specifically repudiate bullying? Is the staff alert to all the forms that bullying can take? Does the policy set out how bullying will be addressed by the school? Does the school deal firmly with any such offences and take swift and appropriate action to protect and support the pupils who have been bullied? Does it encourage the pupils to tell about bullying, and to protect and support one another? Does it provide for a thorough and prompt response to concerns expressed by parents?

- ◆ Does the policy provide for access to counselling, in appropriate cases, for pupils who have been bullied, and for the bullies, in addition to the sanctions imposed?
- ◆ Is there provision for a regular review of the policy, to evaluate its effectiveness in the light of experience? Do all the staff contribute to this review?

## Staff Assignment 2

The School Audit: In the light of all the views already canvassed, and working in groups, carry out an audit of your school's existing policy and procedures for ensuring good behaviour, using the questions offered in paragraph 29 as a checklist.

- ◆ Is there consensus on the answers to the questions? If not, why not?
- ◆ In the light of your experience, which aspects of the school's policy are proving to be appropriate and effective?
- ◆ Which aspects will require modification or replacement?

## Drawing up the policy

30. Once the process of consultation with parents, pupils, Governors and staff has been completed and the existing policy and procedures have been audited, the task of drawing up a revised policy document may fall to the principal, members of the senior management team or a working group representative of all of the staff. The Board of Governors should have an opportunity to comment on, contribute to and endorse the draft document as it emerges.

31. The next paragraphs are drawn largely from the Report of the MBW Discipline Project<sup>7</sup>, much of which is still very relevant. The process of drawing up a discipline policy needs to include the following tasks:

- ✓ defining key principles and drawing up a mission statement, if the school does not already have one;
- ✓ identifying and agreeing on the expected outcomes;
- ✓ clarifying rights and responsibilities (pupils, teachers and parents);
- ✓ determining desirable and undesirable behaviour;
- ✓ generating rules and procedures;
- ✓ establishing a hierarchy of rewards and sanctions;
- ✓ defining roles and responsibilities and providing support (staff);
- ✓ resourcing the implementation of the policy (staff development and materials);
- ✓ making provision for a regular review of policy and procedures.

### The Mission Statement

32. A school's mission statement is a statement of the key principles and values espoused by the school and supported by the Governors and all the staff, teaching and non-teaching. It is an expression of the school's aspirations on behalf of the pupils in its care. It is the school's active commitment to the development of the attributes and abilities of all of its pupils and to the fulfilment of their potential. It should be reflected in all of the school's policies, not least its behaviour policy, and in the full range of its planning and provision. For example, the staff of one Belfast boys' school, as a shared exercise, compiled the following mission statement:

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<sup>7</sup> *The Report on the 'Making Belfast Work' Discipline Project 1989-94*

"We aim to create a calm and caring community where teachers teach and children learn. Each child will be encouraged to fulfil his intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional potential. Central to the creation of this environment is a commitment to Christian values, the recognition of the worth and value of each child and the cultivation of self-respect, so that the child may accept his appropriate responsibilities and show respect for others. We aim to establish a community wherein pupils, teachers, parents and support staff enjoy a sense of belonging and have an important part to play."

### Staff Assignment 3

- ◆ Working in groups and then in plenary, examine your school's existing mission statement, and suggest possible modifications in the light of paragraph 32 and your own experience.
- ◆ Alternatively, if your school does not have a mission statement, compile one which will reflect your school's key principles and values and your aspirations for the pupils in your care, and which will help achieve your expected outcomes in terms of ethos and behaviour.

## Rights and responsibilities

33. Parents and teachers have discrete and complementary roles in the education of young people. A review of these roles may help to establish a harmonious and productive partnership, and schools may find the following suggestions<sup>8</sup> on the respective rights and responsibilities of pupils, teachers and parents useful as a basis for debate.

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<sup>8</sup> Paragraphs 34-39 draws from the work of the MBW Discipline Project

34. Pupils have a right to:

- ✓ be valued as members of the school community;
- ✓ get help when they seek it, whether with their work or with bullying or other personal worries, and to have a sympathetic audience for their ideas and concerns;
- ✓ make mistakes, and learn from them;
- ✓ be treated fairly, consistently and with respect;
- ✓ be consulted about matters that affect them, and have their views listened to and, as far as is reasonable, acted upon;
- ✓ be taught in a pleasant, well-managed and safe environment;
- ✓ work and play within clearly defined and fairly administered codes of conduct;
- ✓ experience a broad, balanced and suitably differentiated curriculum, and to have any special learning needs identified and met;
- ✓ develop and extend their interests, talents and abilities.

35. Pupils have a responsibility to:

- ✓ come to school on time, with homework done, and suitably equipped for the lessons in the day ahead;
- ✓ respect the views, rights and property of others, and behave safely in and out of class;
- ✓ co-operate in class with the teacher and with their peers;
- ✓ work as hard as they can in class;
- ✓ conform to the conventions of good behaviour and abide by school rules;
- ✓ seek help if they do not understand or are in difficulties;

- ✓ accept ownership for their own behaviour and learning, and to develop the skill of working independently.
36. Teachers have a right to:
- ✓ work in an environment where common courtesies and social conventions are respected;
  - ✓ express their views and to contribute to policies which they are required to reflect in their work;
  - ✓ a suitable career structure and opportunities for professional development;
  - ✓ support and advice from senior colleagues and external bodies;
  - ✓ adequate and appropriate accommodation and resources.
37. Teachers have a responsibility to:
- ✓ behave in a professional manner at all times;
  - ✓ ensure that lessons are well prepared, making use of available resources, and that homework is appropriately set and constructively marked;
  - ✓ show interest and enthusiasm in the work in hand and in their pupils' learning;
  - ✓ listen to the pupils, value their contributions and respect their views;
  - ✓ be sympathetic, approachable and alert to pupils in difficulty or falling behind;
  - ✓ identify and seek to meet pupils' special educational needs through the SEN Code of Practice;
  - ✓ share with the parents any concerns they have about their child's progress or development;
  - ✓ expect high standards and acknowledge effort and achievement;

- ✓ pursue opportunities for personal and professional development.

38. Parents have a right to:

- ✓ a safe, well-managed and stimulating environment for their child's education;
- ✓ reasonable access to the school, and to have their enquiries and concerns dealt with sympathetically and efficiently;
- ✓ be informed promptly if their child is ill or has an accident, or if the school has concerns about their child;
- ✓ be well informed about their child's progress and prospects;
- ✓ be well informed about school rules and procedures;
- ✓ a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum for their child;
- ✓ be involved in key decisions about their child's education;
- ✓ a suitably resourced school with adequate and well-maintained accommodation.

39. Parents have a responsibility to:

- ✓ ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives in good time, with homework done, and suitably equipped for the lessons in the day ahead;
- ✓ be aware of school rules and procedures, and encourage their child to abide by them;
- ✓ show interest in their child's classwork and homework, where possible, provide suitable facilities for studying at home;
- ✓ act as positive role models for their child in their relationship with the school;
- ✓ attend planned meetings with teachers and support school functions;

- ✓ provide the school with all the necessary background information about their child, including telling the school promptly about any concerns they have about school, or any significant change in their child's medical needs or home circumstances.

40. Schools could also find it useful and informative to invite pupils to comment on and contribute to a draft statement of their rights and responsibilities. In primary schools, this can be done in class, for example in Circle Time (see paragraphs 114 and 115); in post-primary schools, such a task could be incorporated into the pupils' PSE programme. Where pupils are given supervisory responsibilities, for example as prefects, it is particularly important that they understand clearly the extent and the limitations of their privileges and responsibilities, and the views of other pupils on how they exercise their role can be illuminating.

#### Staff Assignment 4

Working in groups, identify what you consider, in the light of paragraphs 34-39 and of your own experience, to be the key rights and responsibilities of pupils, teachers and parents.

- ◆ What are the rights and responsibilities of non-teaching staff?
- ◆ What are the rights and responsibilities of the *Governors*?
- ◆ How does your school measure up - do the pupils, teachers, parents, non-teaching staff and *Governors* have the key rights and responsibilities you have identified for them? How do you know?

### Desirable and undesirable behaviour

41. Schools may find it worthwhile to identify the type of behaviour which, in their opinion, is conducive to effective learning and that which militates against it. This exercise, while apparently simplistic, allows the staff to move on to consider how seriously the school, collectively, regards

certain forms of behaviour; the next stage is to consider what the school's response to behaviours of differing degrees of seriousness should be. The suggestions of some schools form the basis for what follows. Again, it is not intended to be definitive, rather to stimulate debate.

42. Desirable behaviour in pupils:

- ✓ demonstrating a positive self-image and the confidence to engage successfully in activities;
- ✓ showing respect for the views, ideas and property of others;
- ✓ recognising that all have a right to share in and contribute to the lesson;
- ✓ co-operating with the teacher and with their peers on shared activities;
- ✓ applying themselves to the task, and working to the best of their ability;
- ✓ adhering to the accepted conventions of courtesy and good manners;
- ✓ responding positively to opportunities to act independently of the teacher and to show initiative.

43. Undesirable behaviour in pupils:

- ✓ being unkind to their peers, including engaging in any form of bullying;
- ✓ calling out in class, interrupting others and being inattentive when others are contributing to the lesson;
- ✓ displaying a lack of interest in learning and preventing others from learning;
- ✓ being unable or unwilling to abide by the accepted conventions of courtesy and good manners;

- ✓ defacing or destroying other pupils' belongings or school property;
- ✓ directing abusive language at other pupils or the teacher;
- ✓ acting aggressively or with violence towards other pupils or the teacher.

Pupils can contribute helpfully to this exercise. They can be asked (in primary schools as a planned topic or in a dedicated class time, eg Circle Time, or in post-primary schools as part of the PSE programme) what they consider to be desirable and undesirable behaviour, in class and outside. Schools will find it illuminating to note the degree of consensus, or otherwise, with the staff's views. Pupils might also be asked for their views on the adult behaviours which help learning, and those behaviours which militate against it.

### Staff Assignment 5

- ◆ Working in groups, identify what you consider, in the light of paragraphs 42-43 and your own experience, to be pupil behaviour which is conducive to effective learning and that which militates against it.
- ◆ Draw up a grading scale (eg 1-5) and grade the undesirable behaviour by its seriousness.
- ◆ Decide what desirable and what undesirable behaviour should be reported back to parents.

## Rules and procedures

44. If staff and pupils are in broad general agreement about what constitutes desirable and undesirable behaviour, the rules and procedures

drawn up by the school to help ensure good behaviour should derive from this consensus. If this is so, the vast majority of pupils are more likely to understand, accept and obey them.

45. It makes sense to keep the number of school rules to a minimum, and the reason for them should be clear to all concerned. All rules should be capable of being enforced, and should be enforced fairly and consistently by everyone who acts in a supervisory capacity within the school: teaching staff, non-teaching staff and senior pupils. Rules should be expressed in positive, rather than negative, terms. The school should distinguish between rules concerned with administrative arrangements (such as when dinner money is to be handed in), and those reflecting key principles, such as the need at all times to show respect for others.

46. The most effective rules are short, personalised, expressed in positive terms, easily monitored and a result of whole-school consultation and debate. Examples of some school rules are listed below, to stimulate debate.

47. Nursery School Rules:

When outdoors, children should always:

- ✓ take care of themselves and their friends;
- ✓ climb, jump and slide with care;
- ✓ always look where they are going;
- ✓ try to keep the sand in the sandpit;
- ✓ ride their bikes in the bike square;
- ✓ tell the teacher if someone gets hurt.

48. Primary School Rules:

When in class, pupils should always:

- ✓ be fully equipped for work;
- ✓ get down to work quickly and keep at it;

- ✓ ask for help when it is needed;
- ✓ be attentive to the teacher and other pupils;
- ✓ co-operate with others on shared tasks;
- ✓ understand that others may take longer to complete tasks, and use any spare minutes productively.

#### 49. Post-primary School Rules:

Pupils should always:

- ✓ show respect and consideration for others;
- ✓ take care of books, equipment and the school building;
- ✓ remain on the school premises unless permission is given to leave;
- ✓ keep to the left and walk quietly and purposefully;
- ✓ come to school on time and fully equipped for the lessons of the day.

50. The use of non-teaching staff to supervise pupils and to help to enforce school rules and procedures is common practice. It is important to ensure that such staff are fully conversant with the responsibilities associated with their role as members of the school community, and the extent and limits of their powers. Likewise, senior pupils or prefects used in a supervisory capacity also need to be absolutely clear about the nature of their duties and the extent of their authority.

#### Staff Assignment 6

In the light of paragraphs 44-49 and your own experience, working in groups, identify what you consider to constitute effective rules and procedures. Then review those currently in use in school, and, where necessary, propose possible amendments. Then, in plenary, agree a common set of effective rules and procedures for your school.

## Rewards and sanctions

51. While rules and procedures protect rights and define responsibilities, rewards and sanctions are necessary to encourage and maintain the rules in class and throughout the school. A healthy balance needs to be struck between rewards and sanctions, and both should be clearly specified.

52. A system of rewards and incentives, applied with consistency by all of the staff, will help to establish and maintain a climate in which pupils come to appreciate what constitutes acceptable behaviour and positive attitudes. The fact that behaviour and attitudes of this nature are regularly celebrated within the school reinforces this point. All pupils have a need for positive affirmation, and schools should not take the positive behaviour of the majority for granted. Similarly, it is important that pupils realise that their good behaviour is noted and acknowledged, just as instances of poor behaviour are challenged and responded to by sanctions.

53. There are a number of non-verbal rewards which may be found to be acceptable endorsements of good behaviour and positive attitudes. Rewards of this nature occur in everyday social interactions between teachers and pupils, and might include smiling, nodding, the thumbs-up sign or a handshake.

54. Examples of verbal acknowledgements of good behaviour might include overt or unobtrusive words of commendation, depending on the circumstances and the age of the pupil, praise from other pupils, written comments in workbooks, end-of-session reports or notes sent home to parents. The power of such praise should not be underestimated. While it may not be sufficient in itself to manage or moderate behaviour, it is always necessary.

55. Younger pupils often respond well to more tangible rewards, such as stickers, stars, 'smiley faces', badges or small material rewards, such as pencils or sweets, or some form of public recognition for the number of points gained for good behaviour, helpfulness or effort. Older pupils may respond better to less obtrusive forms of recognition, and to material rewards such as book tokens, vouchers for music or sports shops or tickets to the cinema or leisure complex. Sponsorship from local businesses might be sought, perhaps through the local business-education partnership. All rewards, however, should be commensurate with the behaviour exhibited,

and provide just enough incentive for the behaviour to be repeated.

56. At all ages, pupils often respond positively to being given positions of responsibility within the class, about the school or within extra-curricular activities. The development of pupils' Records of Achievement, both as a formative process and as a tangible acknowledgement of degrees of success within and beyond the curriculum, has the potential for making a significant contribution to positive relationships in school. Not to be forgotten, either, is the degree of intrinsic satisfaction which pupils can derive from work which is well done, well presented and of which they are proud. Being permitted to illustrate, where appropriate, or word process their work can contribute powerfully to this feeling and act as a positive incentive.

### Staff Assignment 7

Working in groups, identify what you consider, in the light of paragraphs 51-56 and your own experience, to constitute effective and appropriate rewards of non-verbal, verbal and tangible kinds. Relate them appropriately to the desirable behaviours identified in Staff Assignment 5.

57. Sanctions, too, are an integral part of a school's behaviour policy. They help to uphold the rules and procedures, they provide pupils with the security of clearly-defined boundaries and, in so doing, they encourage appropriate and acceptable behaviour. It is important to ensure that pupils are fully aware of the conditions which will lead, in all likelihood, to the imposition of sanctions.

58. Sanctions should:

- ✓ be fully understood by all staff (teaching and non-teaching), pupils and parents;
- ✓ be applied by the staff in a fair and consistent manner;
- ✓ be applied as soon after the offence as possible, not impulsively, but in a calm and measured manner;

- ✓ be proportionate to the offence;
- ✓ defuse, rather than escalate, the situation;
- ✓ focus on the misdemeanour, rather than the pupil;
- ✓ allow the pupil to save face, and encourage a more positive attitude in future;
- ✓ take account, as necessary, of the age and degree of maturity of the pupil and any special educational needs he or she may have, the home background and any other relevant circumstances.

59. Sanctions should not:

- ✗ be applied to entire classes or groups of pupils, when the guilty parties have not been identified;
- ✗ degrade pupils, or cause them public or private humiliation;
- ✗ involve physical force.

Inappropriate and counter-productive sanctions which should not be used include sarcasm, mimicking the pupil, making unfavourable comparisons with brothers or sisters or criticising the parents. They also include over-reacting, making threats which cannot be carried out, or backing the pupil into a corner, either verbally or physically.

60. Teachers know that a quiet, firm reprimand is often more effective than a public display of temper, and is much less stressful. The pupils should be in no doubt as to why they are being punished, and what would have constituted a more acceptable form of behaviour. They should have an opportunity to reflect on their misdemeanour, understand its effect on others in the school community and, as appropriate, make some form of reparation. They should also be encouraged to develop a more positive attitude, and appreciate the benefits of so doing to others and also to themselves.

61. Sanctions which schools have found useful include the following:

- ✓ withdrawal of privileges, for a fixed period or permanently;

- ✓ restriction of access to extra-curricular facilities or activities for a period<sup>9</sup>;
- ✓ completion of additional work to complement or reinforce current studies (not lines);
- ✓ carrying out a useful, low-level task in school, such as collecting litter;
- ✓ a system of detention with suitable notification for parents, adequate supervision and appropriate work set;
- ✓ a reporting system which allows staff and parents to monitor the behaviour, attitude and response to authority of a particular pupil over a given period;
- ✓ the referral of a troublesome pupil to a senior member of staff for reprimand;
- ✓ the temporary removal of a pupil from his/her peers into another class or, where one exists, to an internal referral/learning support unit;
- ✓ in extreme cases, suspension, or expulsion following suspension.

Occasionally a pupil may be asked to leave the class for misbehaviour. In such circumstances the teacher should indicate exactly where the pupil is to go; this should be somewhere where there will be supervision. Unless it is for a very short period (normally no more than 10 minutes) the teacher should set work to be done.

62. Parents need to be involved, in partnership with the school, in securing and maintaining their children's good behaviour in school, although they will not, of course, expect to be informed about every trivial misdemeanour. Schools must therefore decide the level of poor behaviour, or the degree of seriousness of a particular incident, which will warrant notifying parents of the matter, including the sanction which has been

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*9 Note: care should be taken to ensure that any restriction of a pupil's access to facilities, activities or services does not detrimentally affect his or her access to the curriculum or place the pupil at an educational disadvantage in comparison with his/her peers.*

imposed and the reason for it, and/or arranging a meeting to discuss the pupil's behaviour (see Staff Assignment 5).

### Staff Assignment 8

- ◆ Working in groups, identify what you consider, in the light of paragraphs 58-61 and your own experience, to constitute effective and appropriate sanctions.
- ◆ Examine critically the sanctions currently available in your school, and judge whether they are effective. Propose other options where appropriate.
- ◆ Relate your revised set of sanctions appropriately to the graded examples of undesirable behaviour you developed in Staff Assignment 5, so that the sanction is proportionate to the misdemeanour.

### Policy review

63. Like any school policy, the behaviour policy should take account of current needs and be reflected in current practice. As such, its effectiveness and application should be considered by the staff, or perhaps a designated group of staff, on an annual basis. Their objective should be to determine whether the approaches and procedures advocated are being successful in encouraging positive attitudes on the part of the pupils, keeping unacceptable behaviour to a minimum and creating a climate within the school which is conducive to sound relationships and effective learning and teaching. A succinct report on the findings should be submitted to the Board of Governors, to inform their consideration of how they are fulfilling their own responsibilities in this regard.

64. Where weaknesses are found, a review will be necessary. All of the staff, teaching and non-teaching, and the pupils and Governors, should contribute to this review. Pupils can be consulted, for example, through School Councils, or in Circle Time or PSE lessons. Where significant changes are contemplated, parents should also be consulted, and, in any event, should be consulted periodically (say every 3 years).

## CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

65. Effective classroom management is a prerequisite for creating a climate conducive to effective teaching and learning and to raising standards of achievement. Most teachers are highly skilled in classroom management, and it is generally true that the more experience they have, the more skilled they become. To ensure that classroom management is effective throughout the school, the staff as a whole will find it useful to take the time to consider, discuss and reach a consensus on what constitutes effective practice; all teachers can then engage in an evaluation of their own practice against the agreed practice. It should then be possible to identify any shortcomings and, over time, to correct these, with or without support from within the school or from external bodies. The Principal should assist in this process by regularly monitoring the effectiveness of classroom management within areas of the school, and members of the senior management team and, in post-primary schools, heads of department should be prepared to offer advice and support.

66. An effectively-managed classroom requires far more than simply attention to discipline. The behaviour of the pupils will directly reflect the relationship which the teacher has with them, the effort that has gone into preparing for the lesson, and the fitness for purpose of the teaching approaches used. The Inspectorate's document "Evaluating Schools" includes criteria against which teachers can review and evaluate their practice. In order to assist teachers, the next three paragraphs each begin with a reference to a relevant section of "Evaluating Schools", followed by a number of related indicators of good practice.

### The ethos

"The ethos, or the distinctive character and atmosphere of a school, reflects the extent to which the school, under the principal's leadership, promotes the all round development of its pupils within a caring community."

67. Teachers can help to create a positive, caring ethos within the classroom by:

- ✓ actively promoting good relationships with the pupils:
  - arriving punctually to lessons;
  - receiving the pupils in a friendly, welcoming manner;
  - engaging the pupils in informal conversation before the start of the lesson;
  - addressing the pupils by their first name;
  - ensuring that learning takes place in a secure, attractive environment;
- ✓ actively promoting the personal and social development of the pupils:
  - providing opportunities for all pupils to have the degree of challenge and support which will help them learn, and to experience success;
  - allowing pupils to co-operate with one another on shared tasks;
  - encouraging pupils to exercise choice, act responsibly and show initiative;
  - providing regular feedback to the pupils, as a class and individually;
  - giving praise and encouragement as appropriate;
  - welcoming and respecting the suggestions and opinions of the pupils.

## Planning and preparation

"Planning can be considered effective when there are clear and realistic objectives for teaching and learning within a broad and balanced programme."

68. Teachers can further help to ensure that their planning is effective by:
- ✓ taking into account the time, accommodation and resources available;
  - ✓ arranging the classroom environment, including layout, to minimise the possibility of common behaviour problems occurring;
  - ✓ using a range of teaching strategies and tasks appropriate to the pupils' differing abilities;
  - ✓ devising activities which will challenge the pupils, and, importantly, enable all routinely to experience a measure of success;
  - ✓ ensuring continuity and progression in the pupils' experiences;
  - ✓ using prior achievement and the outcomes of assessment to influence the nature and level of the tasks;
  - ✓ making full use of resources available within or adjacent to the school;
  - ✓ devising practical tasks which enable the pupils to gain relevant experiences at first hand.

## Teaching approaches

"Teaching can be considered effective when it incorporates methods which accord with the situation and the time available, and which meet the needs of the pupils."

69. Teachers can further help to ensure that their teaching is effective by:
- ✓ having realistically high expectations informed by knowledge of the pupils;
  - ✓ calling the class to order without fuss and starting the lesson on time;
  - ✓ providing a brief summary of the work of the previous lesson before progressing to the next stage of learning;
  - ✓ giving clear instructions and making sure that they are understood by all;
  - ✓ matching tasks to the range of needs and abilities of the pupils;
  - ✓ pacing the lesson, so that the work is covered and best use is made of the time;
  - ✓ incorporating periods of silent working to help the pupils to apply themselves and to concentrate on the task;
  - ✓ moving about the classroom, anticipating needs, monitoring and extending the pupils' work and maintaining order without disturbing the pupils' application and concentration;
  - ✓ using a suitable range of questions to challenge all the pupils and to provoke thoughtful responses;
  - ✓ asking questions in a way which probes pupils' understanding in order to inform the next steps in teaching and learning, while discouraging a whole-class response;
  - ✓ encouraging the pupils' thinking skills and responding thoughtfully and constructively to suggestions and responses which challenge 'the accepted way of doing things';
  - ✓ giving positive feedback on achievements and behaviour;
  - ✓ avoiding lengthy writing on the blackboard with their back to the class;

- ✓ setting appropriately targeted homework to reinforce lessons, and marking it constructively so that pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve;
- ✓ bringing the lesson to an orderly and satisfying conclusion, in a way which consolidates what has been achieved and looks forward to the next stage in learning.

## Routines

70. Well established and clearly understood routines, which the pupils associate with a particular member of staff or subject, provide them with a secure, orderly and familiar framework within which to work. These routines help to avoid uncertainty, confusion and inappropriate behaviour. While classroom routines are important for everyone, they are of particular importance, and should always be adhered to, for any pupil in the class who has autistic spectrum disorder, including Asperger's Syndrome. Routines which teachers have found helpful include the following:

- ✓ a system which enables the teacher to get to know and remember the pupils' first names;
- ✓ a procedure for lining up outside the classroom, entering, moving about and leaving in an orderly manner;
- ✓ a familiar arrangement of furniture, materials and equipment, which enables the pupils to move about the classroom and access resources quietly and with the minimum of fuss;
- ✓ the regular involvement of pupils in everyday tasks, such as collecting and distributing books and other materials, and recording information on a wall chart or computer database;
- ✓ a policy for setting out written work, to encourage neatness and care;
- ✓ consistency in the marking of written work, to help pupils understand their mistakes and be able to correct them, using clearly established procedures;

- ✓ a means of ensuring that materials and equipment distributed to the pupils at the start of the lesson are returned at the end.

### Staff Assignment 9

- ✓ Working in groups, identify, in the light of paragraphs 67-70 and your own experience, a number of features of effective classroom management.
- ✓ Then, in plenary, through discussion, try to arrive at an agreed set of indicators of good classroom management.
- ✓ Finally, critically review your own practice against the agreed indicators, identify any deficiencies and identify means by which these might be rectified.

### Staff Assignment 10

Working in groups, draw up a checklist to use in assessing the classroom environment in order to reduce possible behaviour management difficulties.

## Roles, responsibilities and support

71. Individual teachers need to feel part of a team, and to know that support, if needed, is readily available. Such support can come from:

- ✓ another member of staff teaching in the same year group or Key Stage;
- ✓ in the case of a post-primary school, another member of staff in the same department;
- ✓ a more experienced colleague; or
- ✓ a member of the senior management team.

Teamworking in this way is just as effective as a mechanism for recognising and commending good behaviour in pupils, as it is when used as a sanction for poor behaviour.

72. Beginning teachers, in particular, will find it useful to learn from observing the practice of a respected colleague, and senior management should facilitate this as part of their responsibility for promoting staff development. Initially, the beginning teacher may feel that he or she has to role-play when managing behaviour in the classroom, but, with time and experience, the role becomes natural and skills improve.

73. An over-dependence on colleagues to help in managing pupil behaviour can diminish a teacher's confidence and self-esteem, and will reduce his or her authority in the eyes of the pupils. However, it should be recognised and accepted by all members of staff that occasionally they may need to seek support in behaviour matters. Every member of staff should feel confident and secure about asking for support, and, equally, about giving it when requested. The responsibilities of the senior management team in this regard should be clearly defined, and the protocols for referral in behaviour management should be known by all staff.

74. All staff are likely to benefit from an opportunity to reflect on their current practice, to determine whether it is fully effective and in accord with the school's policy on behaviour. It may be that some staff's classroom management skills would be improved through a period of support and guidance, either from within the school or from a member of the Education and Library Board's Curriculum Advisory and Support Service (CASS) or Behaviour Support Team. In virtually all schools there will be a continuing need among the staff for professional development in this area, and the necessary resources, in terms of time, expertise and materials, need to be made available.

### Staff Assignment 11

Working in groups, identify, in the light of paragraphs 71-74 and your own experience, ways in which you could, individually or collectively, provide support for a colleague having difficulties in dealing with pupil behaviour.



## DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR

75. The consistent implementation of a positive behaviour policy by all of the staff can have a significant and sustained effect on the promotion of good relationships and positive attitudes and the prevention of unacceptable behaviour. It should be recognised, however, that, even in schools with the greatest commitment to promoting positive attitudes, and in the classrooms of the most effective teachers, instances of difficult and disruptive behaviour will arise. The manner in which teachers respond to and manage situations of this nature will often determine whether the problem is contained and the situation is defused, or whether it develops into a more serious and, at times, more threatening incident.

### Staff Assignment 12

Working in groups, read and discuss the following dialogue between teacher and pupil. Then, based on the guidance in this document and your own experience, identify how the teacher was able to contain and defuse a potentially difficult situation.

### Dialogue 1

<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>John, could you remove the earphones please?</i>
<i>John:</i>	<i>[No response]</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>[Louder] John, could you remove the earphones please?</i>
<i>John:</i>	<i>What?</i>
<i>Teacher:</i>	<i>I asked you to remove the earphones.</i>
<i>John:</i>	<i>What for?</i>

*Teacher: Because I'm talking to the group, and you can't hear what I'm saying.*

*John: I'm listening.*

*Teacher: John, you can't listen to two things at once. Take off the earphones.*

*John: I can.*

*Teacher: John, I'm not arguing with you. Please take off the earphones.*

*John: Why are you always picking on me? You never pick on any of them. [Pointing to others in the group.]*

*Teacher: John, take off the earphones, and we can all get on with some work.*

*John: Aye right. You never answer when you know you're wrong.*

*Teacher: John, we can talk about your concerns later on. We have work to do, and we're wasting time. Now will you please take off those earphones, and we'll get on?*

*John: I never get doing nothing I want; everybody else gets doing what they want. I'm not coming back to this crappy place.*

*Teacher: John, can we talk about this later? I wouldn't like you to leave, because you have a lot to offer the group, and you are doing well here. Let's take off the earphones and get on.*

*John: Why can't I wear them? They're not annoying nobody.*

*Teacher: I've already explained why you can't wear them. Let's get this work done, and then you'll be able to start your art project.*

*John: Can I wear them when I'm doing my art?*

*Teacher: Well, if you pay attention to this lesson and get the work done, I don't think that'll be a problem. So let's take off the earphones and get the work done.*

*John: [Slowly removes the earphones]*

### Staff Assignment 13

Working in groups, read and discuss the following dialogue between teacher and pupil. Then, based on the guidance in this document and your own experience, identify how the teacher allowed things to escalate and develop into a serious situation. Finally, suggest how he/she should have acted.

### Dialogue 2

*Teacher: Anne, what are you doing?*

*Anne: Nothing.*

*Teacher: Exactly, you haven't done a thing all day. I want to see that work finished before you leave here today.*

- Anne: *Aye, sure.*
- Teacher: *And don't be so cheeky, madam. Get on and do that work, and get that chewing gum out of your mouth.*
- Anne: *What?*
- Teacher: *Get that chewing gum out of your mouth.*
- Anne: *What chewing gum?*
- Teacher: *You know rightly what chewing gum. Get it out of your mouth.*
- Anne: *I'm not chewing anything.*
- Teacher: *You are!*
- Anne: *I'm not. Anyway, why are you always picking on me?*
- Teacher: *I'm not always picking on you.*
- Anne: *Yes you are. You never pick on them. Like last week.*
- Teacher: *Last week?*
- Anne: *Aye. You blamed me for messing about in the toilets, and everybody was messing about, and it was my coat that got wet.*
- Teacher: *You started it, so it was your fault.*
- Anne: *It wasn't. I wasn't even there, when all the water was being thrown about. I only came in at the end.*
- Teacher: *Oh yes, you're always innocent. You're never in the wrong. It's always somebody else's fault.*

- Anne: *I own up if I'm in the wrong.*
- Teacher: *Own up? You never own up to anything.*
- Anne: *Oh aye, you would know. [Under her breath]  
Silly sod!*
- Teacher: *And don't be so cheeky. No wonder you got  
thrown out of your last school.*
- Anne: *I did not get thrown out, so that's where you're  
wrong.*
- Teacher: *Typical, you can't even admit the truth.  
Everybody knows what happened.*
- Anne: *I left because I was accused of stealing money.  
And for your information the police didn't  
even interview me, because they knew I didn't  
take the stuff.*
- Teacher: *That's not the reason you were thrown out,  
and you know it.*
- Anne: *Oh aye, and what was the reason?*
- Teacher: *You know as well as I do.*
- Anne: *I don't even know what you are talking about.*
- Teacher: *You know the reason. I heard you boasting to  
Charlene yesterday about it.*
- Anne: *I didn't talk to Charlene about anything.*
- Teacher: *Do you think I'm deaf as well as stupid?*
- Anne: *And are you calling me a liar?*
- Teacher: *Do you really want me to answer that? You  
wouldn't know the truth if you tripped over it.*

*Anne: Oh, sod off! You ...!*

*Teacher: Right, that's it. I've finished with you. Get out of here.*

*Anne: I'm not going anywhere.*

*Teacher: You're going all right. I'm not teaching a foul-mouthed brat like you.*

*Anne: You try and make me.*

*Teacher: [Goes and grabs Anne by the shoulder]*

*Anne: Get your hands off me you ...! You've assaulted me! I'm going to report you to my social worker. And I've got all these witnesses!*

### Taking a positive approach

76. Most teachers have found that taking a positive approach accords with their role as educators, and is more likely to succeed in resolving conflict and defusing a potentially difficult situation. Here are some of the more important features of such an approach, as illustrated in the two dialogues above.

- ◆ Whatever strategies are used to modify or manage behaviour, it is the quality of the relationship between pupil and teacher which will ultimately determine the success or failure of the strategy employed.
- ◆ If teachers decide to take issue with pupils over some aspect of their behaviour, they should not cloud the issue by allowing themselves to become sidetracked into dealing with other manifestations of indiscipline which become evident. It is preferable and more effective to deal with one issue, the primary issue, at a time.

- ◆ Teachers should focus on the behaviour at issue and not on the pupil. It is inappropriate to comment critically about a pupil's character, especially in front of other people, and this will inevitably lead to a worsening in relationships. For the same reason, teachers should avoid sarcasm, ridicule, reference to past misdeeds and comparisons with other pupils or siblings, which, at the very least, will cause resentment.
- ◆ When attempting to reduce or eliminate unwanted behaviour, teachers should identify and encourage behaviour of a more positive kind to replace it, especially if the latter is incompatible with the former (just as sitting quietly and concentrating on one's work is incompatible with wandering about the classroom and disturbing the concentration of others).
- ◆ The reduction or elimination of undesirable behaviour depends for its success on a healthy balance between punitive measures and the generous reinforcement of positive, co-operative behaviour. Loss of approval is likely to succeed only if the teacher withdrawing it is generally held in high regard by the pupils.

### An analysis of disruptive behaviour

77. An understanding of possible reasons for different types of disruptive behaviour can help teachers to deal with it more effectively. The following analysis is based on work by Linda Albert<sup>10</sup>.

#### The Pupil Seeks Attention

What does the pupil do?	She talks out of turn, shouts out in class, hums, bangs her book shut, drops her book, blows bubbles with gum.
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<sup>10</sup> See Report on the MBW Discipline Project (1995)

Why does she do it?	She lacks attention from adults; she does not know how to seek attention any other way; she knows such behaviour will attract attention.
What does she want?	She wants to be accepted by the teacher and the class.
What does she need?	She needs to learn how to attract attention acceptably: to attract attention for positive attitudes and behaviour.
How does the teacher cope?	The teacher should make it clear that this behaviour is not acceptable, and minimise the attention given to it, while consciously highlighting any instances of good behaviour by the offending pupil and other pupils.

### The Pupil Seeks Power

What does the pupil do?	He loses his temper, engages in heated arguments.
Why does he do it?	He knows his rights, but not his responsibilities.
What does he want?	He wants to assert himself, to be independent, a leader.
What does he need?	His anger needs to be defused; he needs to be granted rights with responsibilities.

How does the teacher cope?	The teacher should attempt to defuse the situation, to detail the consequences of such behaviour, to offer alternatives.
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### The Pupil Seeks Revenge

What does the pupil do?	She is silent, sullen, introverted; she is hurtful and abusive to those around her in a non-verbal, verbal and, possibly, physical manner.
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Why does she do it?	She believes the hurt and resentment she feels are resolved by aggression and antagonistic behaviour.
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What does she want?	She wants to protect herself by hitting out.
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What does she need?	She needs to experience a caring relationship, to learn how to express her feelings acceptably.
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How does the teacher cope?	The teacher should explain the consequences of aggressive behaviour on both the victim and the aggressor, listen sympathetically to the pupil, build up a relationship, seek help from a member of staff with counselling experience, consult with the parent.
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### The Pupil Seeks to Avoid Failure

What does the pupil do?	He appears to be pressurised, fails to complete work, procrastinates, feigns disability, loses control.
Why does he do it?	The work set does not match his abilities; he is placed in the wrong group; the teacher's (or his) expectations are unrealistic; he is a perfectionist; he is too competitive.
What does he want?	He wants to avoid failure or the possibility of failing.
What does he need?	His emotional problems need to be addressed; he needs reassurance, to be more assertive, to have good relationships with the teacher and other pupils.
How does the teacher cope?	The teacher should bolster the pupil's self-confidence, emphasise the pupil's successes, provide extra help, break down the work set into smaller segments, explain that it is normal to make mistakes, that people learn from their mistakes.

### Staff Assignment 14

Working in groups, read and discuss the analysis of different types of behaviour described above. Then, using the guidance given and your own experience, make a similar analysis of a recent instance of disruptive behaviour which one of the group has witnessed.

## Other factors extraneous to the pupil

78. While the above analysis will help in understanding the types of disruptive behaviour, understanding the underlying circumstances which may have given rise to such behaviour can also often help the school to deal with it. For this reason, sound relationships and open communication between the school and the home are vital. Difficult home or community circumstances, where a child may have suffered bereavement or abuse, or been exposed to, or a victim of, domestic violence, fighting, verbal or physical attacks of a sectarian, racial or homophobic nature, drug abuse, divorce, separation or the prolonged and painful illness of a close family member, can cause distress, trauma and psychological damage which in some cases can take many years to come to terms with.

79. Often, a young person's trauma or anxiety manifests itself in altered behavioural patterns, such as inability to concentrate, sleeplessness, a falling-off of standards of work, depression, unpredictable outbursts or withdrawal, or physical symptoms such as loss of appetite or skin irritations. It is therefore essential that any personal information about a pupil which could have a bearing on his or her behaviour or medical condition is shared, in confidence but promptly, with all the teachers who teach the pupil, and any other member of staff (or other person) who may be in charge of the pupil in a supervisory capacity.

80. Bullying can also be a cause of symptoms such as these, as can child abuse (see paragraph 142), and schools need to be particularly alert to these as causes. The needs of children and young people in emotional distress are discussed in more detail in paragraphs 140-145.

81. It should also be remembered that some young people are carers: through circumstances beyond their control, they are responsible for looking after an ill or disabled adult, and/or younger siblings, and carrying out the daily household tasks that, in other homes, an adult would assume. It is important for all staff to be discreetly aware of these young people's circumstances, so that they can be supportive and understanding when other, more immediate, priorities in their pupils' lives have to prevail.

82. It should also be borne in mind, however, that disruptive behaviour in class may have its origins in the class itself, rather than in the pupil. Some honest reflection may prove salutary:

- ◆ Does the pupil behave this way in other classes?
- ◆ Might the pupil have learning needs that are not being met - could his/her behaviour result from frustration?
- ◆ Are the tasks that the pupil is being asked to complete appropriate to his/her abilities?
- ◆ Is the programme of work in this subject interesting and varied enough to suit him/her?
- ◆ Are the teaching approaches interesting and varied enough, and do they suit the way this pupil learns?
- ◆ Is there a clash of personalities between this pupil and me, and am I doing anything that is contributing to it? How can I make our relationship better?

## COPING WITH AGGRESSION

83. No matter how skilfully and sensitively they are managed, a small minority of pupils will occasionally engage in aggressive behaviour, which threatens the safety of other pupils and staff. Dealing with aggressive or confrontational behaviour is extremely harrowing and stressful for any teacher, no matter how skilled or experienced. The reasons for these outbursts may be beyond the teacher's field of influence, and may derive from severe emotional or psychological problems. Confrontations can develop quickly and from seemingly innocuous exchanges, as in the example in Dialogue 2 on page 45.

84. In any aggressive or confrontational situation it is much more effective, and considerably less stressful, if members of staff learn to recognise the triggers which signal a potential confrontation and attempt to avoid it (while retaining control of the situation), or to reduce the impact of it.

### Defusion and de-escalation

85. Defusion and de-escalation are valuable strategies used to prevent or to reduce the impact of confrontations or aggression. They form part of a spectrum of dealing with difficult behaviour, depending on the seriousness of the incident:

defusion  de-escalation  crisis management

86. Defusion techniques are most useful as soon as the teacher identifies early warning signs or 'triggers' which indicate that a problem is likely to develop. The most frequently used strategies are:

Interruption: the teacher interrupts the undesirable behaviour

Redirection: the teacher re-directs the pupil(s) to an acceptable task

Distraction: the teacher tries to distract the pupil's attention to something else

Humour:	the teacher tries to lighten the situation by introducing humour*
Ignoring:	the teacher chooses to ‘tactically ignore’ the behaviour.**
‘Slow down’ approaches	the teacher talks in a slow, deliberate voice using calming gestures to manipulate the responses of the individual and to slow down the pace of the interaction, eg “Let’s consider that possibility for a moment...”

A combination of the strategies above can be used successfully:

Interrupt → re-direct → praise appropriate behaviour

87. Despite best endeavours, however, the situation may deteriorate, or indeed start from a position where defusion is not a sufficient response. When confronted with aggressive behaviour, teachers have found the following approaches generally to be helpful:

- ✓ keep the emotional temperature as low as possible and address the pupil calmly and quietly;
- ✓ use the pupil’s first name frequently;
- ✓ maintain eye contact with the pupil (but avoid staring, which may be perceived as confrontational);

\* The use of humour in this sort of situation is not a straightforward issue. It is often helpful, but it needs to be used sympathetically and sensitively, and without any edge of irony or sarcasm: there are risks that an individual who is becoming angry, or who is already angry, may perceive that he/she is being made to look foolish or patronized or not being taken seriously, and this is likely to escalate rather than defuse the situation.

\*\* This may be an appropriate strategy for some behaviours, eg attention-seeking, and in some situations; but the situation needs to be judged: it may have a counter-productive effect if others in the class begin to support or copy the undesirable behaviour. Obviously it is not appropriate if a pupil is acting in an aggressive or dangerous manner.

- ✓ avoid any sudden gestures or movements which might be interpreted as aggressive, as this will raise the emotional temperature;
- ✓ avoid the temptation to humiliate and exact public retribution from the pupil, and if possible enable him/her to withdraw graciously without losing face;
- ✓ identify in advance reliable members of the class who may be sent to summon help.

88. De-escalation strategies are designed to calm an agitated or angry person by ‘taking the heat’ out of a situation or an interaction. Individuals who are angry or upset – adults or children – tend to speak loudly and rapidly and make decisions quickly. Reacting in the same way tends to escalate the conflict. It is therefore important to speak slowly and deliberately, using calming gestures. Some specific strategies are outlined below.

### Assertive “I” messages

Assertive “I” messages help you control what you are saying. They have three elements:

- ✓ unacceptable behaviour is described in a non-blameful way;
- ✓ concrete, tangible effects of the behaviour for you and others present are clearly stated;
- ✓ you describe how you feel.

Assertive “I” messages are less confrontational to the angry pupil, and help the teacher to remain in control.

For example: “If you shout at me or keep interrupting me, I can’t do my job properly, and that is unfair to other pupils in the class, and we all get annoyed.”

### “Broken Record” Technique

The “broken record” technique (as used by the teacher in Dialogue 1 [page 43]) is a useful strategy to help maintain focus on the original issue and avoid getting sidetracked into the pupil’s agenda. It is especially useful when a pupil is slow to respond, fails to respond or refuses to respond to an instruction or request. The teacher merely repeats his/her initial instruction or request and does not respond to any irrelevant issues (“red herrings”) the pupil may introduce.

### Active listening

Active listening is a useful technique to help clarify the problem while at the same time communicating to the pupil that you are taking his/her concerns seriously. (The angry pupil’s attempts to communicate may well be muddled and confusing.)

For example: “You’re annoyed because you think you’re being unfairly treated.”

### Acknowledge the pupil’s anger

Acknowledging anger again helps to communicate that you are empathizing with the angry pupil and genuinely concerned to help him/her resolve the problem.

For example: “I can see that you’re angry.....”

## Physical restraint

89. The responsibility of staff in dealing with a potentially aggressive pupil is always to safeguard the other pupils and themselves, and also to consider the safety of the offending pupil. It may be necessary to use

physical restraint on a pupil, in order to protect all concerned, including the pupil, and to avoid damage to school property; the Department's Circular 1999/9, on the use of reasonable force<sup>11</sup>, offers guidance on dealing with situations where pupils need to be physically restrained.

### Coping with one's own feelings

90. Teachers and pupils experience a range of emotions during and after confrontations of this nature. Teachers have most frequently reported feeling the following emotions:

- ◆ anger, because one pupil has been monopolising their time and preventing the work of the class from proceeding in a planned and orderly manner;
- ◆ fear, of aggression from the pupil or their own aggressive impulses, and fear of verbal or physical abuse and the consequent loss of respect and standing;
- ◆ embarrassment at the public nature of the confrontation and at their failure to maintain control and good order;
- ◆ sadness, regret and, possibly, a sense of shame that they did not handle the situation more effectively<sup>12</sup>.

91. The tendency is for teachers to react instinctively and, perhaps, impulsively to these situations. Teachers have found it helpful to have a planned and agreed response to such behaviour, and to internalise and select from a number of stock phrases likely to lower the emotional temperature on both sides. Such phrases might include:

- ✓ “Alice, I understand that you're feeling angry.”
- ✓ “Gerry, let's talk about this quietly.”
- ✓ “Jim, we can work this out without shouting or getting angry.”

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<sup>11</sup> Circular 1999/9: Pastoral Care: Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force to Restrain or Control Pupils, 8 March 1999, published as Appendix 10 to the Department's booklet *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection*, March 1999

<sup>12</sup> from "Confrontation Situations and Teacher-Support Systems", Robert Pik, in *Problem Behaviour in the Secondary School*, ed Gilham Croom, Helm, London 1981

## The aftermath

92. After the incident, when everyone has had an opportunity to calm down, it is often of great help, to both, for the teacher to talk through what happened with the pupil, calmly and without any sense of recrimination, in an attempt to avoid a repetition. The discussion might cover:

- ◆ Why did the situation arise in the first place?
- ◆ How could we have handled it differently?
- ◆ What have we both learned from it?
- ◆ What should we do if similar circumstances arise again?

Such a discussion may well not prevent a recurrence, but experience suggests that the agreed agenda which emerges from it may help to resolve the next confrontation a little more easily.

93. In the wake of situations of this nature, it is helpful for the teacher to compile a brief report, describing the events leading up to and during the incident, the steps taken to defuse the situation and restore order, the outcome of the steps taken and the nature of the follow-up.

94. Debriefing is also important. It is of great benefit for the teacher to talk over the incident with an experienced colleague, to help think through how it was handled and identify what has been learnt that might make it easier to deal with a similar situation next time. Senior colleagues should always make time for debriefings, either when they are approached or as soon as possible thereafter, ideally the same day. This is an important part of their support role, and should be formalised within the school's pastoral care procedures.

### Staff Assignment 15

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 83-94. Then, based on this guidance and your own experience, draw up a set of strategies for coping with aggressive behaviour in your school, including a bank of defusing and de-escalating comments which staff can use.

## Where an incident results in an injury

95. Where an incident of this nature results in a member of staff or a pupil being injured, help should be summoned and first aid should be administered immediately. The injury should be reported to the Principal and recorded promptly in an incident report. The injured person should be seen by a doctor as soon as possible, either at a hospital Accident and Emergency Department or by the injured person's own doctor. In the event of a Police investigation, the doctor will be asked to provide evidence as to the nature of the injury. If a pupil is injured, the parents should be notified immediately. A member of staff who is injured should be advised to seek advice from his or her trade union.

96. Details of the incident recorded should include:

- ✓ the name of the person injured;
- ✓ the apparent extent of the injury;
- ✓ the names of those involved in the incident, where it took place, and the time and date;
- ✓ what was done in terms of first aid, and who administered it;
- ✓ if the injured person is a pupil, the time when the parents were notified, and how this was done;
- ✓ where and when the injured person was seen by a doctor (when or if known);
- ✓ whether the incident was reported to the Police, and, if so, the name of the person who reported it and the station where it was reported.



## DEVELOPING AN ANTI-BULLYING CULTURE

97. Bullying occurs in all schools. Recent research<sup>13</sup> carried out in a representative sample of 120 schools in Northern Ireland found that, in the schools surveyed, 40% of primary pupils and 30% of post-primary pupils claimed to have been bullied during the period of the study (March 2000 - June 2000). 5% of primary pupils and 2% of post-primary pupils reported that they had suffered bullying for several years. The research also revealed that a quarter of the primary pupils surveyed, and 30% of the post-primary pupils, admitted to having taken part in bullying themselves during the period of the study. All the evidence indicates that bullying happens in the best regulated schools, and is not age- or gender-specific, although sometimes it is underplayed by schools and teachers. The fact that incidents have not been reported to staff does not mean that they are not happening, and there is no room for complacency.

98. Schools have a significant role in the emotional and personal development of their pupils, and this section aims to help schools to:

- ✓ recognise bullying,
- ✓ develop an anti-bullying culture consistent with its positive ethos, pastoral care policy and whole-school policy on good behaviour, and
- ✓ develop a specific anti-bullying policy to support it.

It also offers help in dealing with bullying firmly and positively when it happens, with an eye to preventing it happening again.

### What is bullying?

99. The Department's publication *Pastoral Care in Schools: Child Protection* defines bullying as "deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself".

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*13 School bullying: the impact on pupil marginalisation and underachievement (draft report), Collins, McAleavy and Adamson, Further and Higher Education Research Unit, University of Ulster*

At the level of the individual, it is an attack on his or her right to be safe at school; at school level, it is an attack on its ethos. While repetition gives bullying its oppressive and frightening quality, individual incidents of bullying are also important, and should be recognised and dealt with as such: for teachers to dismiss an incident as ‘one-off’ runs the risk of its happening again.

100. Like all forms of abuse, bullying thrives on secrecy, the reluctance of the target to talk about it, and the reluctance of responsible adults to acknowledge its existence. Bullying is in contravention of children’s right to protection from all forms of violence, both physical and mental. It also infringes their right to education and to freedom from torture and inhuman and degrading treatment under the Human Rights Act 1998. It can make pupils’ lives miserable, can make it next to impossible for them to concentrate on their work, and can sometimes push them into truancy. In extreme cases in recent years it has led to young people taking their own lives.

### Forms of bullying

101. Bullying can range from hurtful teasing to serious physical harm. Forms of bullying in school can include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- ✓ hitting, kicking, pinching, throwing things or using implements to cause deliberate injury to another pupil;
- ✓ spitting at or threatening a pupil;
- ✓ racist, homophobic, sectarian or other offensive name-calling;
- ✓ taunting or disparaging a pupil, his/her abilities or achievements, physical appearance or way of talking, or his/her family;
- ✓ sending unpleasant notes;
- ✓ extortion of money or items of property;
- ✓ spreading rumours and malicious gossip about a pupil, including about the pupil’s family;

- ✓ deliberately damaging or destroying a pupil's belongings or food;
- ✓ not talking to a pupil or not letting him/her join in activities;
- ✓ locking a pupil in a room or cupboard.

102. The form of bullying most commonly recognised is that perpetrated by one or more pupils against their peers. It should also be recognised, however, that pupils can bully teachers, verbally or physically, and this is equally unacceptable. Bullying of pupils by teachers can also take place, in the form of persistent and vindictive sarcasm, regularly holding a pupil up to ridicule, or making disparaging comments about his or her abilities, achievements, appearance or family, physical chastisement, or inappropriately severe punishments for misdemeanours. Such bullying behaviour is an abuse of the teacher's position and is unacceptable.

103. Sometimes it will be claimed that 'I was only bantering', or 'it was just a bit of fun'. When the target pupil is hurt or distressed by the actions, and the person responsible either knows this and carries on, or does not care about the effects of his or her actions on the other pupil, the line between harmless teasing and bullying has been crossed.

### When does bullying happen?

104. Bullying can occur at any time during a pupil's school career, and, indeed, may extend into life after school: studies have shown that young people who bully at school, and get away with it, are more likely to continue to bully in the workplace. It is the responsibility of all schools to create a secure and caring ethos within the school within which those who are vulnerable will feel able to come forward and confide in staff. Schools need to ensure that every pupil knows which members of staff to talk to about bullying, and at what times they are available. The willingness of staff to help, their appreciation of the sensitivities involved, and their roles and responsibilities, need to be reinforced with every year group, every year.

105. While bullying can and does happen in any year group, there is some evidence of an increased incidence of bullying when pupils transfer from primary to post-primary school. It is important, therefore, for the receiving school to make it clear from the outset to pupils and parents that bullying

is not tolerated, and that any instance of bullying must be reported by the pupil who is the target, or by any pupil who happens to witness it. During the induction period for newly transferred pupils, bullying should be a topic for discussion, with clearly-defined avenues of support for pupils who find themselves to be targets. The school should aim to create a culture wherein every pupil is respected, valued and cared for, and so sees it as his or her responsibility to stand against bullying - by reporting it, by supporting their peers when bullying happens, and, as appropriate, by learning the mediation and resolution strategies that equip them to play an active part in preventing bullying from happening.

### What pupils need to recognise about bullying

106. Pupils need to understand:

- ✓ that they have a right not to be bullied at school;
- ✓ that it is the bully who has the problem, not them, and they are not somehow to blame if they are bullied;
- ✓ that they are not alone, despite what the bully may have done or said to make them feel so;
- ✓ that they cannot - and are not expected to - deal with a bullying situation by themselves, and they need to get help;
- ✓ that they need to speak out, and should trust the teachers to take their concerns seriously and to support them;
- ✓ that they have personal responsibilities - to tell, if they become a bully's target, and to help and protect any other pupil who is being bullied.

107. It also needs to be recognised that bullying may not take the form of overtly aggressive, violent or frightening behaviour. It can be a calculated, repeated series of apparently minor incidents (eg 'accidental' shoves, tripping, wetting of clothing in toilets, dropping packed lunch on the ground, hiding of schoolbag, workbooks etc), so that, when challenged, the bully can make the incident seem trivial, and appear affronted and even victimised him- or herself. Pupils should therefore be encouraged to keep

a diary or log of incidents in which they felt they were being threatened, even if they felt at the time that they were unable to speak to anyone else about it: such a log could later, when they feel more able to speak about it, demonstrate a number of incidents, or a regularity and pattern of behaviour, which, evidentially, becomes compelling. Some schools have also found it useful to keep a log of reported bullying incidents: this too can provide valuable evidence of patterns<sup>14</sup>.

### Making it easier for pupils to talk about bullying

108. If bullying is to be tackled effectively in schools, it is imperative that all pupils know that staff are accessible, that they will listen carefully and sympathetically to their concerns, that they will take into account the pupils' own views on how best to help them, and that they will initiate an appropriate course of action. In primary schools, the pupil's obvious avenue for support is to the class teacher, who should make sure that he or she either makes time immediately to listen to the pupil's concerns, or arranges a more suitable time, if possible the same day. In post-primary schools opportunities for pupils to raise their concerns could be arranged at certain times in the week, when appropriate members of staff are routinely available, or as an integral part of the PSE programme.

109. First and foremost, however, it is vital that the school develops a culture in which pupils are confident about expressing their views, and know that their views are listened to, respected and acted upon. Where pupils are used to being consulted about aspects of school life (such as behaviour, school rules, the organisation of the school day, or extra-curricular activities) they will feel more secure, individually, about raising particular worries and concerns.

110. Sometimes, however, despite best endeavours, children can be reluctant to approach a member of staff about their worries. Schools should ensure that pupils are made aware, in discussion and by information prominently displayed on notice boards, of organisations outside the school which they can contact to talk about bullying. Contact names and addresses are included in Appendix 5. It may also be of help to offer pupils a

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<sup>14</sup> Paragraphs 105 and 106 are based on the work of Tim Field, co-author with Neil Marr of *Bullycide: death at playtime, an expose of child suicide caused by bullying*, Success Unlimited, 2001

Statement of Confidentiality along the lines of the following example, to reinforce the message that the staff are there to help, and to encourage pupils to come forward to discuss their concerns:

### Need someone to talk to?

- ◆ If you have something important to talk to staff about,
- ◆ if you are worried about something that is happening to you, or to someone you know,
- ◆ if you need help, or if you need to know how to get help,

the staff are here to listen and to help - they will try to do what they can.

- ◆ If you are worried about telling things in confidence, tell the staff - they will understand. If they are concerned about your safety, or someone else's, they may need to share this with others, but they will always tell you first.

- ◆ If you are still unsure about talking to a member of staff, you can telephone

 **Childline (NI)** on 0800-1111

 **NSPCC** on 0800-800500, textphone 0800-056-0566

 **Youthline** on 0808-808-8000 (4pm-9pm)

These calls are free, and they will not show up on your phone bill. They will help you work out what to do next.

111. Talking about bullying in class, for example in Circle Time (see paragraphs 114 and 115 below) or, at post-primary level, as part of a planned PSE programme, can offer opportunities for individual children to expose their concerns, as well as for the teacher to emphasise some important messages and for all the pupils to understand better the issues

involved. Through discussion, involving the whole class, pupils need to be made aware of their right not to be bullied, and what they themselves can do as bystanders to stop bullying incidents taking place and protect their peers. Teachers will need to manage such sessions carefully in order to ensure that, while every child has the opportunity to be involved, no child is put under pressure or distressed by the discussion.

### Staff Assignment 16

- ◆ Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 108-111 above. Then, from your own experience, discuss whether the pupils at your school feel able to talk to staff about bullying or other confidential matters.
- ◆ What, in your view, might make pupils reluctant to seek the help of staff?
- ◆ What more can you do to encourage pupils to come forward when they need help?

### Encouraging class discussion

112. The following paragraphs offer some practical suggestions about contexts, techniques and strategies that can be used to stimulate discussion about bullying; some, indeed, are suitable for behaviour issues more generally. For further guidance, a list of some publications which schools may find helpful is provided in Appendix 2. Because some of the techniques mentioned may require additional training, schools will also wish to seek help from their ELB Curriculum Advisory and Support Service and/or its Behaviour Support Team.

113. Class-based activities which may be adapted in order to focus on various aspects of bullying include the following.

- ◆ Through creative writing, pupils might be encouraged to describe their own experiences of bullying, as target or witness, and to examine and evaluate their feelings at the time. Pupils without personal experience to offer can be asked to describe an imaginary situation, perhaps casting themselves as the target.

- ◆ Through discussion of novels which depict instances of bullying, the pupils might, in small groups or pairs, explore the behaviour and motivation of the bully and possible reasons why the character concerned had become his or her target, and consider what advice they would offer to this character. Then, in plenary, the pupils might be asked to suggest measures to combat bullying.
- ◆ Through drama and role-play, pupils who are confident, assertive and forceful might be asked to act out the role of a pupil who is the target of a bully or bullies and vice-versa. This experience will help them to appreciate better the other pupil's point of view. Within the security of their assumed role, pupils can be less guarded and self-conscious, and thoughts and feelings which have lain beneath the surface are sometimes brought into the open.
- ◆ Through art, younger children might be able to express emotions and convey experiences which they are unable to put into words. Older pupils might be asked to depict what they consider to be the characteristics of a typical bully or target, which, in turn, could lead to a discussion on stereotypes.
- ◆ Pupils might be asked to investigate the school premises, and to identify any areas which might facilitate bullying and measures which could be taken to lessen the likelihood of it occurring.
- ◆ Pupils could undertake a survey into recent instances of bullying, to ascertain when and where they occurred and how many pupils were involved and their ages, in order to identify any frequently recurring features.

114. Circle Time: like Quality Circles (see paragraph 116), Circle Time was first introduced into industry as a means of improving the quality of the goods produced by encouraging personnel at all levels to suggest ways of improving working procedures. It can be adapted for use at all levels in primary and post-primary schools. Schools which use it report that, when used regularly and frequently as part of a planned programme of personal development, it can promote good relationships and positive attitudes.

115. Circle Time affords the opportunity for teacher and pupils to discuss issues in a non-threatening environment, where everyone's views are

heeded, respected and valued. As the name suggests, the pupils sit in a circle with the teacher and take part in activities such as co-operative games, role-play and drama (sometimes using puppets or masks) and other tasks involving listening and talking, designed to promote enjoyment, confidence and a healthy exchange of views. The length of Circle Time sessions will depend on the time available and the age, maturity and abilities of the pupils. In the context of promoting positive behaviour, Circle Time sessions could address topics such as desirable and undesirable behaviour, classroom routines or school rules, as well as bullying.

116. **Quality Circles:** Quality Circles are similar, but not identical, to Circle Time. The concept was first introduced in Japan in the 1950s, and is now used throughout the world by major industrial companies. They have also been used successfully by groups of teachers and, latterly, by groups of pupils. The principal features of a Quality Circle are that it:

- ✓ meets regularly to address a specific topic (in this example, to suggest more effective ways of tackling bullying);
- ✓ is made up of volunteers working under a trained leader; and
- ✓ is small, comprising some 5-8 members.

117. Through their involvement in a Quality Circle, the pupils have an opportunity to use their experience and knowledge to achieve something worthwhile on behalf of the school. Their involvement also helps to develop in them a greater sense of responsibility, a more positive attitude to school, and enhanced self-esteem. If, however, the efforts of the Circle are to be successful, its members should have some training in problem-solving techniques. The training received and the practice in using such techniques are further contributions to the pupils' personal and social development.

### Staff Assignment 17

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 112-117. Then, based on the suggestions offered and your own experience, suggest other class-based or group activities to focus the pupils' attention on bullying and how to prevent it happening in your school.

## How can the school help prevent pupils becoming targets for bullies?

118. Being popular, and being able to communicate effectively, reduce the likelihood of being bullied. Research indicates that pupils are less likely to be bullied if they are:

- ✓ self-confident, and assertive without being aggressive;
- ✓ physically robust;
- ✓ socially aware and in accord with accepted norms;
- ✓ flexible, unselfish and co-operative;
- ✓ modest, unassuming and willing to recognise achievement in others.

119. In their daily contacts with pupils, teachers can work at developing these attributes in pupils who lack them, focusing most particularly on self-confidence and self-esteem. This will reduce the possibility of the pupils' being bullied, and, perhaps even more importantly, it will also reduce the likelihood of their becoming bullies; and it will also help their personal development more widely and improve their motivation.

Every teacher needs to focus on fostering self-confidence and self-esteem: in every pupil, in every lesson, every day.

## Signs and symptoms

120. In spite of a positive and supportive climate within the school, pupils may still be reluctant to report instances of bullying, perhaps because they are fearful of the consequences. It is often left to an observant parent or teacher to detect signs of emotional distress in the pupil and, in time, to identify bullying as its cause. Parents and teachers must, therefore, be vigilant at all times for such signs, for example:

- ◆ reluctance to travel home on the school bus, and insistence on being collected by their parents. Pupils who are being bullied

may not walk home at the same time as other pupils, may look for excuses to stay later in school, or may look for different routes to and from school;

- ◆ they may seek reasons for not attending school, or begin to play truant;
- ◆ they may lose possessions, such as pens and books, and their workbooks may be destroyed or the work in them defaced. Items of school uniform and games kit may be mislaid, glasses may be damaged and packed lunches spoiled;
- ◆ being continually in need of money. Pupils who are being bullied may tell their parents that they have lost money or used it for unusual purposes. In reality, it may have been stolen or used to placate the bully;
- ◆ trying to avoid going out to play at break or lunch times and, if persuaded to, remaining close to an adult supervisor;
- ◆ they may ask to sit with someone else in class, or try to avoid contact with certain other pupils.

(This list is not exhaustive and there may, of course, be other causes for such behaviour.)

### Supporting the child who has been bullied

121. If, in whatever circumstances, a teacher is alerted to the possibility of bullying, it will be necessary to deal with it firmly and sensitively, and with the necessary degree of priority. Teachers should listen sympathetically to, and take seriously, what the pupils who have been targeted by the bullies have to say. They should assure the bullied pupils that they are not in any way to blame (unless, unusually, there is good reason to believe that this is not the case), and ask them what they would like to see happening to resolve the situation - and, importantly, what they think would only make it worse. Support and protection should be promised, and agreement reached with them on an appropriate course of action. Bullying, especially when serious or prolonged, can have lasting emotional and psychological ill-effects, and a distressed pupil should be offered support from a

sympathetic teacher. In serious cases, it will be necessary to offer the pupil counselling, either from an appropriately trained teacher or arranged through an outside body.

122. Recent research has shown that peer interventions are highly effective in addressing bullying. Setting up a 'buddy' system, involving other children in the class, has often been shown to be effective in protecting bullies' targets and drawing them into a supportive group: a structured version of this, the 'Circle of Friends' approach, which some schools have found very effective, is described below. It is also often helpful to arrange for older pupils to befriend younger, more vulnerable children in the playground, one of the most likely locations for bullying at both primary and post-primary levels. Support and training is available for schools interested in training young people in peer mediation techniques, or strategies such as the 'no blame' approach or a restorative justice model.

### Circle of Friends

123. 'Circle of Friends' is an inclusive approach for developing a support network of friendship, involving class peers, around an individual who is becoming isolated in class or in school. It was initiated in Canada in the 1980s and was originally used as a strategy to help children with physical and medical difficulties become and feel more included within mainstream educational environments. Since then it has been adapted and applied to children with a range of special educational needs such as emotional and behaviour difficulties, Asperger's Syndrome and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD).

124. The basic approach is as follows. A facilitator from outside the school (eg an educational psychologist) who has worked with the child obtains consent from the child and his/her parents to operate the scheme. He/she will then address the whole class group on relevant issues, eg friendship, the need to support each other, and asks for volunteers to take part in the project. The volunteers meet on a weekly basis and report how they have helped the 'focus child' and how they plan to do so in the forthcoming week. The approach can be used to enhance a range of social skills such as:

- ✓ friendship-making
- ✓ alternatives to aggression

- ✓ classroom survival skills
- ✓ dealing with feelings.

### Dealing with the bully

125. As well as ensuring that pupils who are bullying are dealt with in accordance with accepted school policy and procedures, it will be necessary to work with these pupils to try to help them change their unacceptable behaviour. Bullying behaviour should be treated in the same way as any other form of behavioural difficulty, and addressed through the 5 stages of the Code of Practice. An appropriate teacher (the class teacher, or a Form Tutor or teacher with responsibility for pastoral care) should in the first instance talk calmly and dispassionately with them, asking them to think about, and talk about, the implications of their behaviour for the pupil who was their target, probing for any underlying reasons, and seeking assurances that it will not be repeated.

126. Since research has shown that a high proportion of bullies were themselves, or remain, the victims of abuse, the school must consider whether the child protection procedures need to be instigated for the bully. If the school decides that these procedures are not warranted, the school still needs to consider how best to work with the bully to change his or her behaviour. This can involve talking his or her behaviour through with the bully, to allow him or her scope to think about and understand his/her own motives and encourage more socially acceptable behaviour. It should also involve discussion with the pupil's parents, to help identify any relevant background information and secure their support for the remedial action to be taken. Depending on the circumstances, it may be necessary to move directly to Stage 2 and discuss the matter with the SENCO and to put a behaviour programme in place to address the bullying pupil's behavioural problems.

127. If the outcome of the bullying incident involves the bully and the target being separated, for classes, break-time, lunch-breaks and/or leaving time, the school should be prepared for the possibility that inaccessibility may move the bully to pick another target. This possibility should be borne in mind, without leading to oppressive supervision, as the bully's group is supervised during the school day.

## Dealing with bullying as it happens

128. It will be necessary for staff to devise and agree strategies for dealing on the spot with instances of bullying witnessed by a member of staff - teaching or non-teaching. In such circumstances, staff should:

- ✓ defuse the situation by separating the target from the bully or bullies;
- ✓ disperse any bystanders;
- ✓ act firmly in a measured manner, avoiding any sudden movements which might be construed as aggression. If physical restraint is necessary, it should be applied in accordance with the guidelines set out in Circular 1999/9;
- ✓ indicate clearly to the bullies that the school does not tolerate bullying under any circumstances, and that they will be dealt with later;
- ✓ provide reassurance, support and protection for the pupil who was the target, and set the soonest possible time (if not immediately) for the responsible teacher to discuss with him or her what happened, the background, and what should now happen to make things better.

129. Actions subsequent to the incident, consistent with the SEN Code of Practice, will include:

- ✓ in addition to administering sanctions to those responsible in accordance with agreed procedures, the instigation of Stage 1, or, with the SENCO, Stage 2 of the Code. In either case, this should include the appropriate teacher (for example, class teacher, Form Teacher, Year Head) talking through with the bully or bullies the nature and implications of their behaviour, and encouraging them not to take part in any form of bullying in the future.

- ✓ arranging for pastoral support from a sympathetic teacher to be provided for the pupil who was the target, and for the bully (if they so wish);
- ✓ in serious cases, offering the target pupil, and the bully, counselling, either from a trained teacher or from an outside body;
- ✓ consulting with the parents (of both the bullied pupil and the bully) and informing them of any action taken or contemplated;
- ✓ compiling a brief report of the incident, the action taken and its outcomes, and any follow-up activity undertaken.

130. It can also be helpful for staff to agree on responses to bullying which they consider to be unsuitable. For example, when confronted with evidence of bullying, teachers should not:

- ✗ minimise its importance or ignore it;
- ✗ assume the matter will resolve itself in time;
- ✗ allow or encourage the pupils to attempt to sort things out by themselves;
- ✗ challenge or threaten the bully with physical violence;
- ✗ act in a manner which might appear aggressive and escalate the situation<sup>15</sup>.

131. Bullying is often reported to a school by parents. Such complaints should be met openly and sympathetically, investigated promptly and thoroughly, and responded to within a promised number of working days (usually not above 10 unless there are special circumstances such as school holidays which intervene). Where the complaint is made in writing, the school should always respond in writing, even if this is to confirm a conversation.

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<sup>15</sup> Paragraphs 129 and 130 are based on the NSPCC booklet 'Tackling Bullying'

## Staff Assignment 18

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 128-130. Then, based on the guidance given and your own experience, devise and agree a set of procedures for your school for dealing with bullying, whether suspected, reported by a parent or witnessed. Your procedures should attempt to address not only the needs of the bullied pupil, but also those of the bully or bullies and the whole school community. It should also include arrangements for how the school will deal with and respond to a parental complaint.

## Case Studies

132. The 'No Blame Approach'<sup>16</sup> is one strategy which some schools have found helpful in tackling bullying. The 'No Blame Approach' is a participative, non-punitive approach which lets the bully know that he or she has been found out. It was designed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson (Lucky Duck Publishing).

133. The 'No Blame Approach':

- ✓ takes firm, clear, cohesive action
- ✓ does not allow bullies off the hook
- ✓ supports the pupils who are being bullied
- ✓ makes it clear to bullies that all bullying behaviour has to stop immediately
- ✓ is a long-term approach
- ✓ involves the bullies' peer group
- ✓ focuses on changing the behaviour of the bully and those who collude with him/her either tacitly or openly.

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<sup>16</sup> Paragraphs 132-135 and Case Study 1 - 'Denver's Story' are taken from the Southern Education and Library Board's publication "Challenging Bullying Behaviour - A Practical Guide for Schools".

134. It works because it:

- ✓ recognises the importance and power of group processes and makes use of them
- ✓ is straightforward and needs no obscure or mysterious expertise
- ✓ is user-friendly for busy teachers.

135. The following case study shows how the 'No Blame Approach' helped a primary school to resolve effectively an incident of bullying behaviour.

### Case Study 3: Denver's Story

Denver's mother approached the school principal as she claimed that Denver, aged 10, was being bullied on his way to and from school and in the playground. It was claimed that Denver was being called insulting names and not being included in other children's play. He was reluctant to come to school and complained of feeling ill every day.

#### Step one - Interview the bullied pupil

Denver was invited by the identified teacher to write down how he felt about the situation and how it affected him. As his writing skills were weak, he dictated a letter to the special needs co-ordinator, with whom he had a reasonably good relationship. In the letter he explained how a boy who had formerly been his best friend was now tormenting him, along with some other former friends. He felt isolated, and was having nightmares. He was also afraid to go out of the house, claiming that these boys were waiting for him. The teacher explained the 'No Blame Approach' to Denver.

#### Step two - Convene a meeting with those involved

The principal discussed with Denver which pupils should be spoken to in order to try to stop the bullying. A group of six children were identified. This included two children who were

still friendly with Denver. Denver agreed that the principal could read his letter to the group.

### Step three - Explain the problem

The children were invited to the principal's office to help solve a serious problem. It was explained that they were going to have a letter from Denver read to them.

### Step four - Exploring the problem

When the principal finished reading the letter, the bullies looked decidedly shamefaced, though denied that there was a problem. It was again explained that this was a serious problem for Denver and that it was important for everyone in the group to think of a way to solve it, but no one would be blamed.

### Step five - Finding solutions

Each member of the group was asked what s/he thought s/he could do to help make life more pleasant for Denver. Initially the main protagonists were flippant. However, the rest of the group began to sympathise with Denver's plight. Suggestions made included:

"I could walk home from school with him."

"Stay away from him."

"Stop calling him 'Denver the last Dinosaur'."

"Ask him to play with me."

"Call for him in the morning."

### Step six - Taking responsibility

The group were thanked for their sensible and mature contributions. It was agreed that they would meet the principal a week later to see how things were going.

### Step seven - Reviewing the situation

At this meeting all agreed that they had tried to solve the problem. The principal met briefly with Denver each day for the next three weeks. Denver indicated that things were much better. Although the main bully had not made any constructive suggestions as to how he could help the situation, he now leaves Denver alone, as he knows that others will no longer condone his behaviour. Other members of the group have made a positive effort to help Denver, as they had suggested, by walking him to and from school and including him in their activities.

Denver's mother is happy with the outcome and reports that he no longer complains of feeling ill to try to avoid coming to school.

### Staff Assignment 19

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 132- 135 and Case Study 1. Then, based on your own experience, decide whether this or similar strategies might be applied to identified instances of undesirable behaviour in your own school.

136. The second case study describes a situation which was not resolved quite so satisfactorily. It illustrates some of the issues schools and parents face in recognising and responding to a bullying situation. It is offered to stimulate discussion, and is followed by some questions to prompt debate.

### CASE STUDY 2: GEMMA'S STORY

Gemma, who is 15 and now in Year 11, has attended an all-girls' High School since Year 8. She is an only child, somewhat overweight, and suffers from asthma. There have been

incidents on and off since she started - name-calling, possessions going missing or being damaged - episodes of bullying which have caused her parents to visit the school to complain. Although assurances were given that the matter would be dealt with, her parents feel that their concerns have not been taken as seriously as they would have liked, and that the principal and the staff now regard them as over-protective and something of a nuisance. Staff have said at consultation evenings that Gemma brings a lot of trouble on herself: she makes little effort to take part in school activities or to fit in with other girls, complains a lot, adopts a superior attitude at times with others, and can be boastful about her possessions and privileges.

In December, just before the Christmas holiday, Gemma's parents found her tearful and moody but could not find out the reason for this. After Christmas they had great difficulty getting her to return to school. Her asthma was worse than it had been for a long time and she was claiming to be sick every morning. Then the mother of a friend rang the family to report that she had learned from her daughter that Gemma had been bullied throughout the last term, following an incident with another girl, Rachael. When her parents quizzed her about this, Gemma broke down and told them the following story.

The girl had been calling Gemma names, and for once Gemma had reported this to the form teacher. Rachael had been questioned by the form teacher, but denied that anything had happened. She reacted to this by attacking Gemma in the playground, and threatened her with 'a real hiding' if she reported her again. Gemma's possessions started to disappear, and Rachael and her friends had taken to calling her 'Miss Piggy'. They had put her 'on a diet' by taking her lunch box out of her locker each day and emptying it.

Gemma's parents reported this to the school. The matter was investigated, and Rachael and three other girls were suspended for a week and given 'a severe warning' about their behaviour.

In February, when the girls returned to school after the suspension, the pattern of bullying changed. Other girls were not allowed to talk to Gemma or associate with her. Rachael and her friends made pig-like grunts every time they were near her, and developed a system of unspoken gestures which Gemma and the rest of the class knew to represent Miss Piggy. Gemma's health deteriorated, and in May she was admitted to hospital with severe breathing difficulties. Gemma confided her distress to a hospital social worker, who informed her parents and the school of the continuing nature and severity of the problem.

Gemma's parents sought an appointment with the principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Governors. They demanded that action be taken against the girls concerned, and expressed dissatisfaction at the way the principal had handled the problem. An undertaking was given that the girls concerned would be suspended and given 'a final warning'. The school would also make it a condition of their return to school that they be referred for specialist counselling to try to modify their attitudes and behaviour.

The principal offered to move Gemma to another class. Gemma's parents demanded that the other four girls be moved, since it appeared to them that Gemma, as the victim, was being punished by having to move. The principal did not feel able to accommodate this demand because, being a small school, she would find it 'impossible' to fit four other girls into other classes in the year. She offered to help Gemma's parents find another school for her if they did not wish her to move to another class within the school. This compounded their feeling of injustice, since, in their view, Gemma would be punished even more by having to adjust to a new school and new friends. They also pointed out that most of the coursework she had completed during the year would not have been transferable to another school. In the end, feeling they had little alternative, they agreed that Gemma should change class from the following September.

## Staff Assignment 20

Working in groups, read and discuss Case Study 2, and, based on your own experience, consider the following questions:

1. Did the school show appropriate concern about Gemma's problems from the outset?
2. Did they fulfil their primary obligation to ensure Gemma's safety - physical and emotional?
3. Did they deal appropriately with the current bullying episodes when they first came to light in January? Could these have been handled better? If so, how?
4. Throughout, did the school succeed in striking a proper balance between the needs of the bullied pupil and those of the bullies?
5. At the May meeting, where did the principal's priority lie between administrative difficulties and Gemma's needs? What were her other options? In her place, how would you have sought to meet Gemma's parents' concerns?

## The Anti-Bullying Policy

137. A preventative approach to bullying, in its most successful form, takes place within an ethos in which pupils are respected and valued as individuals and where their self-confidence and self-esteem are fostered routinely. A climate of openness, consultation and participation, in which pupils' views are sought, listened to and respected, will do much to build the kind of sound working relationships in which behaviour is no longer an issue and bullying is not tolerated either by staff or by pupils.

138. All schools should have a clearly-enunciated anti-bullying policy. This needs to be integral to their policy for pastoral care, and set in the

context of their positive behaviour policy and related closely to, or integrated with, their child protection policy. Like other policies, the pupils and all the staff should have contributed to it, and all accept and implement it in a consistent manner. It is particularly important that pupils are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the anti-bullying policy. Such a policy should include the following key components:

- ✓ A definition of bullying and an indication of the various forms it can take;
- ✓ A statement that all pupils have a right to be taught in a secure, caring environment, free from the threat of psychological and physical abuse;
- ✓ An unequivocal rejection by all members of staff of all types of bullying and a commitment by them to make a continuing and concerted effort to eradicate it from the school community;
- ✓ A statement that all pupils have a responsibility to behave in a caring manner towards other members of the school community, to help create a climate where bullying is not accepted, and to report to staff any suspected or witnessed instances of bullying;
- ✓ An undertaking to:
  - investigate thoroughly any reported or suspected instances of bullying;
  - listen to, consult, protect and support the victims at all times;
  - take all necessary steps to identify those responsible, deploy appropriate sanctions, and give them help to change their behaviour; and
  - report back, fully and promptly, to any parent who has raised with the school a concern about bullying;
- ✓ A description of the positive measures taken by the school to create a climate inimical to the concept and practice of bullying;

- ✓ A description of the ways in which the school will respond to bullying, including the sanctions which will be taken against those responsible;
- ✓ A commitment to consult with and to inform pupils and parents fully about the policy and procedures in place to combat bullying.

139. The following is one example of an anti-bullying policy<sup>17</sup>. It is not intended to be definitive, but is offered to promote discussion.

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Definition

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, or it may be unintentional. It may be perpetrated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

### Forms of Bullying

- ◆ Physical violence, such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil;
- ◆ Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it;
- ◆ Using offensive names when addressing another pupil;
- ◆ Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family;
- ◆ Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements;

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*17 This example is based on material contained in "Bullying in Schools and What to Do About It" by K Rigby, 1996.*

- ◆ Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil;
- ◆ Excluding another pupil from a group activity;
- ◆ Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.

### The School's View

This school is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. It is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

### The Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- ✓ foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- ✓ demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- ✓ discuss bullying with all classes, so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens;
- ✓ be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
- ✓ listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- ✓ report suspected cases of bullying to [name of teacher and post, eg our designated teacher for child protection/head of pastoral care];

- ✓ follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken;
- ✓ deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.

## The Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- ✓ refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity;
- ✓ intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so;
- ✓ report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- ✓ not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

## The Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- ✓ watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying;
- ✓ advising their children to report any bullying to [name of a member of staff/ specific post in school/their class teacher], and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils;

- ✓ advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying;
- ✓ being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken;
- ✓ keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying;
- ✓ informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- ✓ co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

### The Responsibilities of All

Everyone should:

- ✓ work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

### Staff Assignment 21

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraph 138 and the example of an anti-bullying policy. Then, based on the guidance and example and your own experience, draw up an anti-bullying policy for your school.

Alternatively, examine your school's existing policy, identify any deficiencies and propose possible improvements.



## PUPILS IN NEED OF HELP

### Pupils who are emotionally distressed

140. When behaviour is being discussed within the school context, the needs of pupils not engaging in disruptive or otherwise anti-social behaviour are sometimes overlooked. Yet some pupils may be in a state of emotional distress because of stressful or traumatic events in their personal lives such as bereavement or abuse, or difficulty in coping with social pressures arising from the group setting, or as a result of a personality disorder (see also paragraphs 78 and 79). As we have seen previously, a common cause of emotional distress is bullying.

141. The most common manifestations of emotional distress include:

- ◆ sleeplessness
- ◆ inability to concentrate
- ◆ a falling-off of standards of work
- ◆ difficulty in making or sustaining friendships
- ◆ aggression
- ◆ violent or unpredictable outbursts or tantrums
- ◆ attention-seeking
- ◆ difficulty in making and sustaining friendships
- ◆ particularly in younger children, thumb-sucking
- ◆ tearfulness and depression
- ◆ withdrawal and reluctance or refusal to attend school or to attend certain lessons

and in more extreme cases

- ◆ psychosomatic symptoms such as incontinence, loss of appetite or eating disorders, skin irritations

- ◆ self-inflicted injuries
- ◆ obsessive or ritualistic behaviour.

142. When a pupil shows symptoms such as these, particularly if in combination or repeated over a period of time, it may be an indication that the child is suffering or has suffered abuse. Where a member of staff has a concern about possible abuse, he or she should immediately bring this to the attention of the designated teacher for child protection in the school. It may be decided to seek discreet preliminary clarification from the child's parents or carers in an attempt to find the likely cause, and (unless there is a concern that the child is being abused by a parent) to enlist their support in addressing the pupil's needs more effectively. After making such enquiries, the Principal, in consultation with the designated teacher and the SENCO, will need to decide whether child protection procedures need to be invoked, or whether there may be some other cause for the pupil's symptoms. At this stage, schools may find it valuable to seek the advice of the designated officer for Child Protection of the Education and Library Board, or the Diocesan Administrator of CCMS.

143. If abuse is discounted as a cause for the pupil's behaviour, and the symptoms persist, it may be considered appropriate to refer the matter, through the parent, to the family GP, to medical or other health support agencies, or to an education support agency, such as the Educational Psychologist or the Board's Behaviour Support Team, at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice. The school's policies for pastoral care and behaviour should make specific reference to the needs of such pupils and the responsibility of staff to explore, with the active support of the parents, all possible measures within the school context before seeking external help.

144. Where the school is aware that there has been a traumatic event in a pupil's life, whether within or outside school, counselling may be necessary, and the school may find it helpful to seek advice from the Education Welfare Officer. Where a traumatic incident befalls a pupil, or a group of pupils, in school or out, such as a road accident, assault or other serious criminal act, schools may find it useful to refer to "When Tragedy Strikes: Guidelines for Effective Critical Incident Management in Schools", which was produced jointly by the Irish National Teachers' Organisation and the Ulster Teachers' Union, and issued to all schools.

145. Pupils who are showing signs of distress may be lacking in a sense of self-worth and feel under-valued by other members of the school community. It is important, therefore, for teachers to try to enhance their self-esteem by, for example:

- ✓ creating opportunities for them to succeed, and celebrating their success;
- ✓ making sure that they are included and actively participate in group activities;
- ✓ encouraging other pupils to socialise with them and to co-operate with them in class on shared assignments.

### Staff Assignment 22

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 140-145. Consider whether any pupils in your school manifest symptoms of emotional distress. If this is so, consider what steps have already been taken to identify and address their needs, how successful these have been, and what further measures may be required. Note, in particular, any case where you feel that a different approach might have met, or might yet meet, with more success.

### Pupils with Special Educational Needs

146. If pupils are exhibiting behavioural difficulties, or any of the symptoms listed in paragraph 140 (particularly in combination), fail to respond to normal classroom and behaviour management strategies and/or demonstrably fail by a significant margin to realise their potential, serious consideration should be given to entering their name on the Special Needs Register in accordance with the SEN Code of Practice. The identification of need should be supported by evidence from, for example, standardised tests, the pupil's portfolio of work, assessment units or the teacher's assessment of classwork. An action plan, aimed at modifying the pupil's behaviour (as appropriate) and improving performance, is then drawn up in consultation with the SENCO.

147. While teachers will wish to consult the full Code of Practice, its three school-based stages are summarised below for convenience.

### Stage 1

- ◆ The class teacher informs the SENCO that there are concerns about a pupil's behaviour and attitude in class.
- ◆ The pupil's name is entered on the Special Needs Register.
- ◆ The evidence from various forms of assessment and other relevant background information on the pupil are collated.
- ◆ Targets are set and a programme of suitably differentiated learning is drawn up, aimed at modifying the pupil's behaviour and improving his/her performance.
- ◆ Arrangements are made to monitor and review the pupil's progress.

If, after at least two such reviews, the pupil fails to respond to the strategies employed at Stage 1, the class teacher, in consultation with the SENCO, institutes Stage 2 procedures.

### Stage 2

- ◆ The SENCO and the class teacher draw up an individualised Education Plan for the pupil, after reviewing and enhancing the information already collated and setting appropriate targets.
- ◆ The parents are consulted and informed of the school's concerns for their child and the strategies being employed to try to improve his/her performance.
- ◆ Arrangements are made to monitor and review the pupil's progress.

If, after at least two such reviews, the pupil fails to respond to the strategies employed at Stage 2, a decision is taken, in consultation with the parents, to institute Stage 3 procedures and seek the support of external agencies.

### Stage 3

- ◆ The SENCO and the class teacher decide on the form of external support required and a referral is made. If the referral is to an educational psychologist, the school will need to be able to demonstrate that all appropriate strategies have been employed in school without success before the decision was taken to refer.
- ◆ The agency or agencies consider the case, conduct any assessment necessary at this stage and provide advice and support to the teachers or directly to the pupil or to both.

148. Throughout the process, it is important to compile records and keep them up to date in as much detail as sensibly possible (there is guidance on record-keeping in the Code of Practice and from Education and Library Boards). Records of information gathered at the initial stage can help to identify patterns of behaviour which would not otherwise be evident. They also provide baseline data against which subsequent progress may be judged. Although an apparent lack of progress after considerable effort has been expended can be disheartening, reference back to the baseline data can sometimes indicate encouraging, albeit slow, movement in the right direction.

### Staff Assignment 23

Working in groups, read and discuss paragraphs 146-148. Then compare the guidance given with procedures in your school for identifying, assessing and making provision for pupils with special educational needs.

## Particular disorders

149. A number of particular disorders affecting the behaviour of pupils, such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) and autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), including Asperger's Syndrome, are normally diagnosed by medical specialists or by educational psychologists specialising in these areas. The behaviour of a child with AD/HD can be challenging because of the short attention span of such children and their difficulty in sitting still for more than very short periods. The behaviour of a child with ASD can often be demanding because of the way autistic children view the world and their difficulties with social interaction.

150. The parents of children with disorders of this nature are increasingly seeking to have provision to meet their children's needs made within mainstream schools. Even when medication is prescribed, as can be the case with AD/HD, the procedures outlined in the Code of Practice and summarised above still apply. Schools may obtain advice on these types of problems and their educational implications from the educational psychologists attached to their Education and Library Board, or medical officers or the Behaviour Support Team of the local Health and Social Services Trust.

## EXTREME BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

151. This guidance has highlighted the importance of creating a secure, caring climate in schools, and of promoting sound relationships, based on mutual respect, and positive attitudes to learning. A range of strategies and procedures are suggested for improving behaviour and attempting to deal with undesirable behaviour within the school and classroom context. However, despite the most skilled of interventions by teachers, there are some occasions when the behaviour, by its very seriousness, and often by its frequency, has to warrant more radical approaches, including extreme measures such as suspension and expulsion. To do otherwise would often jeopardise the safety and the education of the remaining pupils in the class. Such measures should be exceptional, and should only be instituted when all other strategies, aimed at retaining and educating the disruptive pupil within the normal class context, have persistently failed.

152. Recent local research<sup>18</sup> by the School of Education at Queen's University, Belfast, discovered that, while the majority of pupils were suspended only once, a small minority were suspended repeatedly. In 1996-97, some 2,631 pupils were suspended from our schools. In the same year, 76 pupils were expelled, and for these pupils, especially those in Years 11 and 12, there was little chance of pursuing their studies in mainstream education. The research also showed that too often pupils were being suspended inappropriately or for relatively trivial offences such as uniform rule infractions.

153. The legal responsibility for producing schemes for suspension and expulsion lies with Education and Library Boards in the case of controlled schools and with CCMS in the case of Catholic maintained schools. Voluntary grammar schools and grant-maintained integrated schools are responsible for drawing up their own schemes. These schemes are based on the provisions of the Schools (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995<sup>19</sup>. All schools are required to follow the procedures in the relevant scheme.

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*18 Report of the 1996-7 Northern Ireland Suspensions and Expulsions Study: Kilpatrick, Barr and Wylie, DENI, 1998*

*19 Schools (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (SR 1995 No 99), as amended by the Schools (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 (SR 1998 No 255), which provided that the maximum period of suspension should be 45 days in any school year, rather than 15 days in any term.*

154. The right to education is now enshrined in domestic law since October 2000 with the introduction of the Human Rights Act. Suspensions or expulsions from school may be interpreted as an infringement of that right if the reasons for the action taken are not well founded.

### Suspension

155. Only the principal of a school or his/her representative has the authority to suspend a pupil, in accordance with the procedures set out in the relevant scheme. The decision to suspend a pupil should be taken only in the following circumstances:

- ◆ when to allow the pupil to remain at school would pose a serious threat to the health and safety of the pupils or staff in the school;
- ◆ after a range of alternative strategies to modify the pupil's behaviour and encourage more positive attitudes have been tried and have repeatedly failed;
- ◆ in response to a serious breach or breaches of the school's discipline policy;
- ◆ after all the relevant facts and the evidence to support the allegations have been examined;
- ◆ after the pupil concerned has had an opportunity to put his or her side of the case, and others involved have had an opportunity to give their version of the events;
- ◆ at a time when a responsible adult is available at home to receive the pupil.

156. The principles of natural justice must apply in all cases where suspension or expulsion are being considered. A key consideration must therefore be whether the punishment is proportionate to the offence. A pupil should not be suspended solely for any of the following reasons:

- ✗ poor academic performance;
- ✗ minor misdemeanours, such as failure to do homework or to bring dinner money;

- ✗ poor punctuality;
- ✗ truancy;
- ✗ pregnancy;
- ✗ failure to comply with regulations governing the wearing of school uniform, jewellery or hairstyle, unless the pupil's behaviour is a blatant and persistent act of defiance in face of repeated attempts to change his/her behaviour;
- ✗ offences which occur outside school hours and off the school premises, unless they occur during a school activity;
- ✗ offences committed by the pupil's parents.

157. In the case of an incident involving a number of pupils, it is important for the school to deal with all fairly, although not necessarily equally, to avoid the appearance of victimising certain individuals or groups of pupils. Group suspensions should not be meted out unless the school is completely satisfied that all members of the group are equally at fault.

158. Schools should monitor their use of suspension, to ascertain whether any patterns are emerging linked to any of the following factors, and, where necessary, institute remedial action in the relevant area of provision:

- ◆ pupils with specific learning difficulties or other identified needs;
- ◆ particular groups of pupils or classes, or particular members of staff;
- ◆ particular areas of the curriculum or times of the day or week;
- ◆ the absence of staff and the deployment of substitute teachers.

159. A principal may suspend a pupil for up to 5 days, which may be extended, with the approval of the Board of Governors and in accordance with the relevant scheme. A pupil may be suspended for, at most, 45 days in a school year. The length of the suspension should accord with the offence and take individual circumstances into account. It should be as short as possible, since the longer pupils are out of school, the more difficult

it is for them to re-integrate. During the suspension the school remains responsible for the education of the pupil, and work should be set, collected and corrected. After the suspension the pupil should be encouraged to make a fresh start, and arrangements should be in place to ensure that work missed is covered.

160. The school should attempt to liaise effectively with the parents of any pupil suspended, prior to, during and after the suspension, as their co-operation will help to ensure that work set during the suspension is completed, that the pupil re-integrates into school successfully and that his/her attitude is more positive in the future.

161. The practice adopted by some schools of suspending pupils 'informally' is illegal. ('Informal' suspension takes place where a pupil is sent home and told not to return until, for example, offending behaviour is rectified, or a parent attends for a meeting.) All suspensions must be carried out in accordance with current legislation and the terms of the relevant scheme. In all cases, the parents must be informed formally of the suspension, and the Education and Library Board must be notified. In the case of Catholic maintained schools, the Diocesan Administrator of CCMS should also be notified.

### Staff Assignment 24

In groups, read and discuss paragraphs 155-161. Then compare the guidance given with the procedures followed in your school for suspending pupils, in order to identify and rectify any anomalies.

## Expulsion

162. Expulsion is an acknowledgement by the school that it can no longer provide for a particular pupil. The decision to expel a pupil, therefore, is never taken lightly, and can only be applied to pupils who have already been suspended in circumstances similar to those described in paragraph 155. It is particularly important, in accordance with Article 12 of the UN

Convention on the Rights of the Child, that the pupil him- or herself should have an opportunity to be involved and heard during the decision-making process. The procedures for expelling a pupil must accord with current legislation and the terms of the relevant scheme.

163. As for suspension, expulsion is not an appropriate sanction for misdemeanours such as those listed in paragraph 156.

164. Prior to the expulsion of a pupil, the principal is required to hold a meeting for the purpose of consulting with the parents, the Education and Library Board, CCMS (as appropriate) and the Board of Governors about the future education of the pupil concerned. The fact that the parents do not attend does not invalidate the meeting. Every effort should be made to arrive at satisfactory plans for the future education of the pupil. Pupils have a right to remain in school until formally expelled, unless they are suspended. Schools should not, therefore, suggest that the parents should transfer their child to another school, unless formal procedures have been instituted. The parents must be informed that they have the right to appeal against the expulsion to an independent appeal tribunal, and be told how to do this. If it is found that the school has not complied fully with current legislation and the terms of the relevant scheme, the appeal will be upheld.

### External support: Behaviour Support Teams

165. The need of schools for occasional access to external expertise and support to help them deal more effectively with individual pupils or groups of pupils who persistently engage in seriously disruptive behaviour, is acknowledged in “Promoting and Sustaining Good Behaviour: A Discipline Strategy for Schools”. All Education and Library Boards have Behaviour Support Teams capable of providing, on request, the following type of support to schools:

- ✓ advice on programmes for modifying pupil behaviour and, in certain cases, short-term support for individual pupils;
- ✓ advice on developing whole-school approaches to discipline and classroom management skills;
- ✓ advice on how to respond quickly and effectively to serious incidents.

166. Special school staff with expertise in dealing with children with emotional and behavioural difficulties can also provide practical advice and support to mainstream schools in dealing with the needs of particular children.

### Withdrawal units

167. Some schools have established their own 'in-house' withdrawal units, sometimes also referred to as learning centres or support units, where they can place pupils quickly for short periods to provide a place of calm, and more intensive, individualised learning support to help pupils cope with the demands of the mainstream classes.

### Pupil referral units

168. A small minority of pupils may need a period of specialised provision away from mainstream education, aimed at breaking an entrenched cycle of disaffection, disruptive behaviour and under-achievement. Pupil referral units operate in all Board areas and in agreed circumstances suitable pupils may be placed there for a period of intensive support. The following key principles govern the setting up and operation of units offering such places:

- ✓ Placements are for a fixed, short-term period of one, two or at most three terms.
- ✓ Pupils attending such units remain on the rolls of their parent school.
- ✓ Staff of the unit and the parent school work together to try to ensure continuity and progression in the pupil's learning.
- ✓ Work in the unit focuses on the need to manage and, if possible, modify the pupil's unacceptable behaviour.
- ✓ Following the pupil's attendance at the unit, there is a planned and structured programme to assist his/her re-integration into school.

### Education otherwise than at school (EOTAS)

169. For a small number of pupils, normally older post-primary age pupils, the failure of persistent efforts to engage and support them within school may indicate that a placement in an education or training setting outside school is required. This may be appropriate for those who are seriously and unmanageably disruptive within school, as well as persistent absentees. Such placements can be organised through the Education and Library Board. All such placements should ensure that the young person receives a curriculum focusing on the basic skills, and includes other subjects and opportunities for work experience as suits their aptitudes and interests. Courses should as far as possible lead to accredited qualifications. Schools should not remove a young person's name from the register until written confirmation has been received from the Board that the young person has been accepted for a place.



## DEALING WITH PARENTS WHO ARE ANGRY OR UPSET

170. Parents have rights and responsibilities with regard to the education of their children, and schools need to liaise closely with them and gain their support in matters relating to their children's behaviour and academic progress. Most parents want their children to do well at school, and are keen to support the staff, even when their children have been found guilty of infringing school rules and regulations. Indeed, the good behaviour of the vast majority of pupils in our schools is, in large measure, due to sound foundations laid in the home and the supportive attitude of their parents.

171. Occasionally, however, teachers are required to deal with parents who, for whatever reason, are angry, emotionally distressed and, possibly, abusive. Such experiences can be most unpleasant for the teacher concerned, since the parent will not readily listen to reason, may call into question the professional competence and personal integrity of the teacher, and may threaten administrative or legal action. In extreme cases there may be threats of physical violence. It is, therefore, important for staff, collectively, to devise and agree possible strategies and procedures for dealing with such situations. Although any of the strategies outlined on pages 55-57 for use with aggressive pupils can be equally effective with adults, the following approach has been found helpful, and is offered for consideration and to promote discussion.

### Step 1

The teacher first tries to calm down and slow down the parent by quietly acknowledging, in a sympathetic and understanding manner, that he/she is clearly upset, without, at this stage, challenging the facts or attempting to defend what may or may not have happened, as in:

"I hear what you're saying, Mr Magill. You feel that Lorraine has been treated unfairly. I am sure this is very upsetting for you."

The teacher should avoid appearing unhelpful and bureaucratic, as in:

"This is not my area of responsibility, and Mrs Reid isn't here today."

### Step 2

Having succeeded in calming down the parent, the teacher tries to focus on the problem, by inviting the parent to describe what happened, by actively listening carefully to his/her account of events and noting down any salient facts.

### Step 3

The teacher reassures the parent that the matter will be thoroughly investigated, and, within an agreed time-frame, he/she will be invited back to the school to hear the results of the investigation and to be informed of any course of action that is contemplated. A further reassurance is given that all the pupils in the school are of equal importance, and that the well-being, happiness and academic progress of each individual are of paramount importance to the staff.

172. Where staff have notice of the meeting, it is important for them to be well briefed and prepared for any interview with a parent, and to ensure that both parties are informed of the agenda in advance. When faced with, or likely to encounter, a parent who has reacted angrily or emotionally in the past, a teacher may find the following guidance helpful. The teacher should:

- ✓ interview the parent in a quiet setting with another member of staff present;
- ✓ address the parent formally by name, and use his/her name frequently;
- ✓ speak in a moderate tone and avoid raising the voice;

- ✓ avoid excessive gesturing with the hands, as this may appear threatening; and
- ✓ keep a record of the meeting, including, in particular, what action by the school was promised.

173. After the interview, the teacher should inform any other member of staff whose responsibility it will be to take any action arising from the meeting. Just as in the aftermath of dealing with a display of aggression by a pupil, it will also be important for the teacher to de-brief to a senior colleague on the course that the interview took, how it was handled and whether there were any lessons to be learnt for any subsequent occasion.

174. The great majority of parents act reasonably and supportively, even when their children are in trouble. Their main concern is to help resolve any problem, and enable the school to continue to provide a good education for their children. The behaviour of a small minority of unreasonable parents should not be allowed to influence the school's perception of the value of maintaining effective home/school links.

### Staff Assignment 25

In groups, read and discuss paragraphs 170-174. Then consider and agree possible strategies for dealing effectively with parents who are angry or emotionally distressed.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Promoting Positive Behaviour:  
Northern Ireland Regional Working Group

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## Appendix 2

**PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR: ORDERS,  
CIRCULARS, OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS,  
REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING**

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Circular 1999/9: Pastoral Care: Guidance on the Use of Reasonable Force to Restrain or Control Pupils, DENI, 1999

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The Education and Training Inspectorate:

## SURVEY OF DISCIPLINE IN A SAMPLE OF SCHOOLS (1996-98)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In its published reports on primary and post-primary schools the Education and Training Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) comments on ethos and refers to relationships, behaviour and, where appropriate, indiscipline. In the period 1992-96, 776 inspections were carried out in the primary and post-primary sectors; more than 5,000 teachers were observed in the primary sector and over 14,000 lessons were seen in the secondary sector. In the view of the Inspectorate, the pupils' behaviour was poor in just 23 of the schools visited. In these schools the poor behaviour of a small number or a minority of pupils was having an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

1.2 The Inspectorate has acknowledged in various reports that in a small number of schools, especially in the post-primary sector, there are pupils who provide a considerable challenge, even to the most experienced teachers. For example, in its report on Non-GCSE Provision (DENI 1991), paragraph 2.6 draws attention to a small number of pupils whose behaviour is constantly and seriously disruptive. Such pupils normally constitute less than 5% of the enrolment, but they require a disproportionate amount of the teacher's attention and time. A small number of teachers admit to a general lowering of standards in their classes because of the poor conduct of these pupils, which often manifests itself in bad language and forms of disruptive behaviour. Only the most able and experienced of teachers are able to motivate and retain the interest of such pupils, often at the expense of reduced provision for the remaining pupils in the class.

1.3 In 1996-97, as part of its review of discipline in schools, the Inspectorate visited a sample of 14 schools and discussed with principals the extent and nature of instances of indiscipline and the action being taken to deal with them. In the autumn of 1997-98, a further three primary and

seven post-primary schools were visited, with separate discussions being held with principals, members of the senior management teams (SMTs), senior teachers with curricular and pastoral responsibilities, newly appointed teachers, and pupils. The list of schools visited appears as Appendix II to this report and the aide-memoire used by the Inspectorate is included as Appendix I. In each school, the Inspectors focused on the policies and procedures in place for dealing with disruptive pupils. For the purposes of the survey, schools were asked to respond to questions with two types of pupil behaviour in mind:-

A disruptive and unmanageable

B disruptive but manageable

In this report, pupils whose behaviours were described in this way are grouped for ease of reference as A and B.

## 2. THE EXTENT OF INDISCIPLINE

2.1 The schools were asked to reflect on the number of pupils in Groups A and B, on whether they were in a particular year group or ability range and whether they came from similar family backgrounds or geographical areas. The schools were also asked to consider whether disruptions occurred at a particular time of the day, week or year or were associated with particular members of staff or subjects. A number of issues emerged from the feedback received from schools.

### 2.2 The Proportion of Disruptive Pupils

2.2.1 Discussions took place with principals about the proportion of disruptive pupils in each school. The range and number of disruptive pupils are set out in the table below:-

	A		B	
	Disruptive & Unmanageable		Disruptive but Unmanageable	
	Percentage of Enrolment	Number of Pupils	Percentage of Enrolment	Number of Pupils
Primary	0-2.5%	0-4	8-13%	12-22
Post-Primary	2-4%	10-16	2-11%	10-90

2.2.2 While principals, senior teachers and members of the SMT were often in agreement in terms of the incidence and severity of disruptive behaviour, class teachers and newly qualified staff, by contrast, often expressed a different and more critical view. In addition, while the proportion of disruptive pupils was often small in percentage terms, the influence of numbers involved was significant, especially to the class teacher. The principals frequently reported having to spend a disproportionate amount of time dealing with a relatively small number of disruptive pupils.

## 2.3 The Year Group

2.3.1 In the primary schools pupils in Group A were reported to be in Years 6 and 7 and those in Group B were distributed across Years 1-7. There were variations from school to school in the post-primary sector: pupils in both groups were to be found in all year groups, although there was a preponderance in Years 10-12.

## 2.4 The Ability Range

2.4.1 Ability was not considered to be an important factor in relation to behaviour in the primary schools. In the post-primary schools, however, pupils of lower academic ability accounted for the vast majority of those in each group. In a few instances, individual teachers suggested that indiscipline was not confined to lower ability pupils.

2.4.2 In primary schools, all the pupils associated with Group A were boys, while both boys and girls were represented in Group B. In the post-primary schools, the pupils in either group were almost always boys. In the girls' schools, the percentages of the pupils in Groups A (2%) and B (6%) were small.

## 2.5 Family Backgrounds

2.5.1 There is no clear evidence to suggest that, where two or more children from the same family are at school together, disruptive pupils come from certain families. However, principals and their staff have different perceptions on this matter. Where there is perceived to be an association, parents are considered to lack the interest, the will and, in a few instances, the personal resourcefulness to guide their children and to support the school.

## 2.6 The Geographical Area

2.6.1 Disruptive behaviour is often strongly associated with certain geographical areas, particularly housing estates with high levels of social deprivation and unemployment. The schools reported that community tensions and disagreements, sometimes exacerbated by paramilitary influence or feuds, impinge upon the school and are a cause of disruptive behaviour, such as fighting among boys both within and outside school. Unhelpful attitudes and behaviour, which may derive from the wider community, adversely affect school discipline. A minority of schools cite the increasingly harmful influence of drugs. While all schools acknowledge the need for vigilance with regard to drugs-related issues, alcohol abuse is seen as a more commonly disruptive influence.

## 2.7 The Timing of Disruptions

2.7.1 Disruptive behaviour is generally not confined to specific times of the year. It may be less acute at the beginning and towards the end of the school year, but can be greater at times of renewed social unrest or recurring seasonal events. In the primary sector, schools reported that behaviour often deteriorated for those children whose fathers were in prison, following a visit to see their father. The existence of a weekly pattern is more evident, with disruptive behaviour most manifest in post-primary schools on Mondays, Fridays and at various times in the afternoon, such as lunchtime or the last period of the day.

## 2.8 Teachers and Subjects

2.8.1 In the view of the post-primary schools, there is no fixed relationship between a particular subject and indiscipline. An area of concern which emerged from the data was the correlation between frequent absences by staff and the incidence of indiscipline in classes taken by substitute teachers.

## 2.9 Absences by Staff

2.9.1 A number of the participating schools provided statistics on staff absences for the period 1994-97. Significant inter-school variations are evident. The causes of absence include attendance at in-service training (INSET) courses, secondment, maternity leave and illness, which was often

reported to be stress-related. In one school the average number of absences across all staff was 24 days in the school year. In most of the post-primary schools, the absence of a small minority of teachers was a cause for concern. Their absences were of a casual nature and lasted a few days each term. Such a pattern of attendance has an adverse effect on the pupils' learning. The primary schools did not consider occasional staff absence to be a cause for concern.

## 2.10 Suspensions and Expulsions

2.10.1 A number of schools provided information on suspensions and expulsions for the period 1994-97. The most common reason given was disruptive behaviour, including:-

- × the verbal and physical abuse of teachers by pupils,
- × fighting, physical assaults on/abuse of pupils by other pupils,
- × foul or abusive language,
- × theft,
- × an accumulation of minor offences in the school setting,
- × disobedience, refusal to work or conform to the school's standards of behaviour.

The responses indicate variations among the schools in the nature of disruption resulting in suspension.

## 2.11 Other Measures Taken

2.11.1 The staff in one of the primary schools supported colleagues in neighbouring classrooms by taking responsibility for disruptive pupils for a short time. In other primary schools, disruptive children were sometimes located, under supervision, in a spare classroom. The staff in post-primary schools often referred to the benefits of an on-site unit in which to locate disruptive pupils. Virtually all of the post-primary schools had identified an off-site unit for possible use for these pupils. The actual use made of such provision, however, was restricted by the perceived slow external referral procedure and the, often limited, capacity of the unit. Other measures

taken included increased inter-agency work, parental involvement, referral to an educational psychologist, use of a local youth forum and recognised training organisation, and detention.

### 3. THE NATURE OF INDISCIPLINE

3.1 Schools were asked if, among the pupils in Groups A and B, there were instances of the use of foul or abusive language, vandalism (including graffiti), disruption in class, bullying, verbal or physical assaults on pupils and teachers, theft, absenteeism and other similar behaviour. In the primary schools visited, most of these types of indiscipline were exhibited by pupils in Group B, while those in Group A were identified more by their physical assaults on other pupils and teachers. One primary school, with the knowledge and support of the parents, had helped to improve the behaviour of six children, identified as having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

3.2 The responses from the post-primary schools did not reveal substantial differences between the types of indiscipline exhibited by pupils in Groups A and B, for example:-

- i. the use of foul or abusive language was common to both categories, although not necessarily restricted to them. Verbal abuse of other pupils was also common;
- ii. disruptive and seriously disruptive behaviour in class was a major problem with a small number of pupils;
- iii. there was a high incidence of verbal and/or physical bullying of other pupils, only a minority of which was detected by the teachers;
- iv. physical assault by pupils on other pupils was frequently reported and was regarded by the schools as a serious problem. Fighting sometimes occurred outside school and was linked to tensions, strife and anti-social behaviour in the local community;
- v. the verbal abuse of staff by pupils was common, with female teachers more likely to be victims of offensive remarks than

their male colleagues. Physical attacks on teachers were rare, but the perceived threat of such attacks was reported in a number of schools;

- vi. absenteeism was generally higher among pupils in both groups; it was chronic among a small number of them;
- vii. while there were a few instances of graffiti and vandalism, these were not considered major causes for concern. Theft was largely petty in nature.

## 4. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INDISCIPLINE

### A. Whole-School Factors

#### 4.1 Inconsistencies in the Implementation of Agreed Policies, Procedures and Practice

4.1.1 Schools acknowledged occasional inconsistencies in their implementation of agreed whole-school policies, procedures and practice relating to discipline. Several of the primary schools and virtually all of the post-primary schools identified this lack of consistency as contributing to indiscipline.

#### 4.2 School Design

4.2.1 Many principals in the post-primary sector believe that the design of the school sometimes hinders the maintenance of discipline. A minority of schools report that pupils are frequently out of view and unsupervised, when, for instance, they move between classes or use corridors linking different blocks. Narrow corridors and small waiting areas cause unhelpful congestion.

#### 4.3 Movement Between Classes

4.3.1 In all of the post-primary schools, the movement of pupils between classes presented opportunities for misbehaviour. The schools accepted that such movement was inevitable, and did not outweigh what they saw as the advantage of teachers having their own (specialist) bases and of subject departments being grouped.

#### 4.4 Inadequate Out-of-Class Supervision

4.4.1 Although only a small minority of post-primary principals expressed concern about the adequacy of out-of-class supervision, this view was not always shared by their staff. A number of principals referred to the importance of good lunchtime supervision and the need for appropriate training for supervisors. Schools emphasised the contribution made by teachers to ensure good order when pupils are moving about the school or lining up outside a classroom. Some primary principals reported that they had removed indiscipline from the playground by supervising the children at break and lunchtime themselves.

#### 4.5 Other Whole-School Factors

4.5.1 The following factors were also identified as contributing to indiscipline:-

- i. the extent of the pupils' rejection of school and authority in general,
- ii. the trend, in a minority of post-primary schools, of an enrolment with larger numbers of lower-ability pupils,
- iii. the narrow range of teaching approaches,
- iv. staff absences,
- v. parental apathy and the adverse influence of the local community.

### B. Curricular Factors (Post-Primary Schools)

#### 4.6 The Range of Subjects and Appropriateness of Content

4.6.1 Schools differed in their views about what constituted an appropriate range of subjects for Years 10-12 and sometimes questioned the suitability of the programmes of study for the statutory subjects of the Northern Ireland Curriculum (NIC). The principals acknowledged that their views were influenced by factors such as the relationships between staff and pupils, the range and quality of the teaching approaches in use and

staff perceptions of the relevance of the various subjects. Schools differed in their views of the extent to which GCSE subjects were unsuitable for pupils with behavioural problems. A minority of such schools claimed that a hard small group of difficult pupils was apathetic or hostile to all subjects. More commonly, it was considered that weaknesses in their use of English restricted the pupils' access to other areas of the curriculum and inhibited progress generally.

#### 4.7 Less Popular Subjects

4.7.1 The subjects attracting the least favourable comments from principals were home economics, mathematics, modern languages and technology and design, generally because they were perceived as being too theoretical. The schools stressed the need to modify teaching approaches to ensure more practical experiences in these subjects. For other schools, curricular provision was not a major issue; rather lack of motivation, irregular attendance and social factors were felt to have the greatest influence on the behaviour and potential success of disruptive pupils.

#### 4.8 Extensions to the Curriculum

4.8.1 The schools had few suggestions to make in terms of alternative full courses or modules which disruptive pupils might find more motivating. A significant minority suggested that there should be a greater vocational dimension in the curriculum and more emphasis within specialist subjects on life skills. There were variations in the perceived suitability of the examination courses offered by different GCSE boards.

#### 4.9 Non-GCSE Examinations

4.9.1 The schools had introduced a number of internally and externally validated courses as alternatives to existing GCSE courses and in a few subjects which were not offered at GCSE level. Those schools offering GNVQ courses generally reported a good response from the pupils, but said that intermediate and even foundation level might be too demanding for lower-ability pupils and would not necessarily contribute to a reduction in disruptive behaviour. The issues of examination entry policy and the publication of examination results drew opposing responses: a number of schools felt that they were entering a minority of pupils for GCSE examinations, yet this was inappropriate as the pupils did not have a

realistic chance of success; others considered that too many pupils were being entered for non-GCSE examinations, and that some of these pupils could achieve grade awards in GCSE.

## C. Factors linked to Teachers

### 4.10 Classroom Management Skills

4.10.1 In the primary sector, weaknesses in classroom management skills are not regarded as a major cause of indiscipline. Many post-primary schools, however, identify a minority of teachers lacking in the necessary skills to cope with difficult pupils. Despite considerable support, a small number of staff are perceived as being unable or unwilling to modify or improve their teaching approaches. They are felt to be inflexible and often confrontational; they over-react to behaviour, deal inappropriately with difficult pupils and regret the loss of corporal punishment as a sanction. In addition, where schools depend on substitute teachers they see them as adversely affecting the implementation of their pastoral and disciplinary procedures. Teachers generally consider that further staff development and support are required to help them cope with the problems of indiscipline.

### 4.11 Lesson Planning and Preparation

4.11.1 The principals and their staff appreciate the importance of lesson planning and preparation in creating sound relationships, purposeful work and good behaviour. Almost all principals expressed confidence in the quality of their staff's planning and preparation; others voiced concerns about a small number of teachers; a few appeared uncertain about the quality of this aspect of their colleagues' work.

### 4.12 Teaching Approaches

4.12.1 Most of the principals believed that the use of an inappropriately narrow range of teaching approaches by a minority of their staff contributed towards indiscipline. A small number of principals, however, admitted that their knowledge of classroom practice was insufficient to enable them to make this judgement. It was reported that many teachers found it difficult to respond suitably to pupils who made it clear they did not want to learn.

### 4.13 Textbooks and Other Resources

4.13.1 The use of inappropriate textbooks and other resources was not regarded as a common contributory cause of indiscipline.

## 5. ACTION TAKEN BY THE SCHOOL

### 5.1 The Discipline Policy

5.1.1 All of the schools had a discipline policy, almost always drawn up in consultation with the whole staff and, on occasions, with contributions from the Board of Governors. This policy is available to staff and governors and often, as a set of school rules, to parents. A small number of schools reported that parents were invited to sign a discipline contract, which the schools considered helpful when the rules were breached by their children.

5.1.2 Perceptions varied on the extent to which schools implemented their discipline policy in a consistent manner. A majority, but not all, principals believed the policy to be implemented consistently by all members of staff, although this view was not always shared by the teachers. It was felt that staff, who failed to set appropriate standards at the start of the year in terms of general behaviour, attentiveness, the completion of homework and the quality of work expected, contributed to indiscipline in their own class and throughout the school.

5.1.3 In post-primary schools, the views held by principals and their staff on the effect of such inconsistencies varied. A significant minority of staff considered inconsistency to be a major cause of indiscipline, while others from the same school, including, sometimes, the principal, felt that it was of minor significance.

### 5.2 Whole-School Procedures for Dealing with Indiscipline

5.2.1 In almost all of the schools, there were whole-school procedures for dealing with indiscipline, which were clearly set out and agreed by staff. In the majority of schools, these procedures were considered to be followed thoroughly by principals and staff.

### 5.3 Pastoral Care

5.3.1 Virtually all of the post-primary schools expressed confidence in the contribution of their pastoral care system to maintaining good standards of discipline. The schools' arrangements for pastoral care and programmes, such as personal and social development (PSD), provide an effective structure for support, monitoring and intervention and contribute positively to good relationships. The staff involved have useful and supportive links with parents and external agencies. The schools differed, however, in the emphasis placed on development and prevention on the one hand, and on monitoring, intervention and response on the other.

5.3.2 The primary schools stressed the importance of fostering a good ethos; they acknowledged good standards in behaviour and work through praise and a variety of incentives. The introduction of strategies such as a breakfast club or daily homework club provided additional ways for the principal and staff to get to know the children, including those who were disruptive.

### 5.4 Staff Development and Support

5.4.1 There were few external INSET courses on discipline in the period 1992-97, and, in the schools visited, the provision of school-focused support in this area was patchy. In a significant minority of the post-primary schools, the staff participated in school-focused development within the Raising School Standards Initiative (RSSI). In a few schools, most of the staff had taken part in school-focused counselling courses or seminars on classroom management and teaching approaches. A small number of the Belfast schools had participated in a discipline project in the period 1992-94 under the aegis of Making Belfast Work (MBW).

5.4.2 Visiting speakers often contributed towards the formulation of discipline policies in the primary schools. In one instance, a school-focused seminar taken by a psychologist helped the teachers to develop strategies for managing children with behavioural problems and to build up a comprehensive library on the subject.

5.4.3 Newly qualified teachers (NQTs) normally attend induction courses run by the education and library boards (ELBs). In most of the post-primary schools, support for NQTs is provided by a designated senior

member of staff, by heads of department and, if the new colleague is a form teacher, by year heads. The support provided by heads of department for NQTs was of variable quality. In the best practice, however, the NQT was effectively supported by a programme of reciprocal class visits with the head of department and a carefully constructed timetable.

5.4.4 No clear pattern emerged about the arrangements made to ensure that pupils and staff were well informed about disciplinary procedures. The provision ranged from no formal arrangements to explanations of policies and procedures by senior staff. In the best practice, schools included reference to good conduct in the induction programme for new pupils and gave regular reminders to all year groups.

## 5.5 Parental Involvement

5.5.1 The extent and nature of the involvement of parents in helping the school to deal with behavioural problems varied considerably. In a minority of schools, it was reported that the vast majority of the parents were supportive and were, almost always, respectful in their dealings with staff, even when there was some doubt about their own child's involvement in an incident. Most schools, however, reported a lack of parental support. In a small number, the parents of Group B pupils were said to be supportive, while those of Group A pupils were not.

5.5.2 Whether a school seeks parental support often depends on the nature of the incident. In a number of schools, the parents were invited to discuss the offence, to collect those pupils who were suspended and to sign an agreement concerning their child's future behaviour and/or to countersign a daily report. A few schools made use of parental supervision in class with, reportedly, improved behaviour by the pupils concerned.

5.5.3 A few primary schools saw potential in providing opportunities to support the parents' involvement in their children's learning. In one school, the parents of younger children were invited to take part in school-based 'Read to Succeed' and 'Count on Success' courses. Using European Union (EU) funding, the school paid the course fees and a £40 award to those who gained a certificate. Another school was seeking financial support for a 'Lifestart' programme to help parents develop better parenting skills. An Open Learning project, based in the same school, had attracted a significant minority of parents.

## 5.6 Procedures for Re-Admission

5.6.1 Most of the post-primary schools had procedures for re-admitting pupils who had been suspended. A majority of principals required the parent and pupil to sign a written contract or to give a verbal assurance of improved behaviour, although others regarded this approach as unhelpful. The behaviour of pupils making this commitment is normally monitored by staff for periods of up to a few weeks. In a small number of schools, the parents are notified of the outcome of this monitoring.

5.6.2 In a few primary schools, the children rejoined their class on returning to school. In others, the parents were required to accompany them back to school and discuss with the principal the children's progress or proposals for the next stage in their re-integration.

5.6.3 Few schools had agreed strategies to help the pupils compensate for lessons missed during their suspension. Where such strategies were in place, they were not implemented consistently. Support for returning pupils, although often needed, was generally at the discretion of individual teachers. In one post-primary school, staff were expected to set work for pupils on suspension, but such work was not always submitted and corrected. The primary schools also set work to be completed during suspension, with varying degrees of co-operation from parents and children.

## 5.7 Support from External Agencies

5.7.1 The schools sought support frequently from the educational welfare service, the psychological service of the ELB, the social services and, occasionally, the probation service. A few schools enlisted help from the Royal Ulster Constabulary through its schools' liaison branch. One of the primary schools called upon the staff of a special school to help with disruptive pupils. Schools differed in their views on the level of support provided by the educational welfare service, the psychological service and the probation service. While the quality of their work was often commented upon favourably, many schools expressed regret about the long delay between request and response.

## 6. DISCUSSIONS WITH PUPILS (POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS)

The views of a representative sample of pupils were canvassed in the post-primary schools visited. The questions used by the Inspectors to guide their discussions with the pupils are included in Appendix 1.

### 6.1 Pupils' Knowledge of Policies and Procedures

6.1.1 The pupils interviewed had a general awareness of their school's discipline policy and of its associated rewards and sanctions.

6.1.2 The pupils accepted the need for a discipline policy and related practical measures, and, with only minor qualifications, accepted policy and practice in their own school. Most highlighted the importance of feeling safe at school. They spoke positively of the system of incentives and rewards in place, and agreed that sanctions were necessary; they accepted the feasibility of measures such as suspension and expulsion. In one school, the pupils considered that the use of conduct and report sheets helped to restrict indiscipline, especially if the teachers were thorough in their implementation of the procedures.

6.1.3 Without exception, the pupils reported that they perceived inconsistencies between members of staff in the application of discipline policies and procedures. They were critical of these inconsistencies, finding them unhelpful and confusing. A minority of teachers were judged to be too lenient, weak and lacking in firmness; they tolerated misbehaviour which then became established and worsened. Others were considered unfair and unpredictable in their response to indiscipline.

### 6.2 The Pupils' Views on the Causes of Disruption

6.2.1 The pupils' views on the causes and manifestations of disruption are given below.

#### i. Causes of Disruption

##### a. Teacher-Related

The pupils engaged in disruptive behaviour because:

- × the pace of the lesson was slow;
- × a significant minority of pupils found the work uninteresting, became bored and caused trouble, making it impossible for the others to study;
- × work on the blackboard was often poorly explained;
- × the teacher reacted too slowly to misbehaviour, allowed attention-seekers too much latitude or accepted insolent remarks;
- × a small number of teachers were perceived as ‘picking on’ or, conversely, ignoring certain pupils;
- × a few of the more experienced teachers were described as ‘tough’;
- × discipline was maintained in an inconsistent manner by staff;
- × a minority of substitute teachers were less effective in dealing with indiscipline than the permanent staff.

b. Pupil-Related

Pupils engaged in disruptive behaviour because:

- × they wanted to test out new staff or give female teachers ‘a hard time’;
- × they disliked or wanted to challenge the teacher;
- × they were seeking attention or wanted to be with the ‘in-crowd’;
- × they wanted to appear ‘hard’, to be ‘the boss’ or to exert ‘their rights’;
- × they disliked school and wanted to be elsewhere;
- × they could not stop talking; they wanted to avoid work;

- ✗ they had been put into detention; they wanted to be suspended;
- ✗ there was trouble at home;
- ✗ they were seeking excitement or wanted to annoy people;
- ✗ they wanted to belong to 'a gang'; there was peer pressure;
- ✗ they were seeking revenge for an out-of school incident.

ii. Manifestations of Disruption Included:

- ✗ name-calling and bullying;
- ✗ insolence, rudeness and foul or abusive language;
- ✗ graffiti and vandalism;
- ✗ 'showing off', distracting teachers and boisterous behaviour.

### 6.3 Pupils' Suggestions for Improving Discipline

6.3.1 The pupils' suggestions for improving discipline are given below. They are wide-ranging, with many specific to a particular school. The pupils felt there should be:-

- ✓ more effective supervision at lunch and breaktime and in corridors generally;
- ✓ somewhere to sit, talk or watch television at lunchtime and more activities for the pupils;
- ✓ a discrete social area for Year 12 pupils;
- ✓ greater parental involvement;
- ✓ greater range of curricular options with more practical work;

- ✓ some say for pupils concerning choice of teacher;
- ✓ more school trips and residential;
- ✓ greater emphasis on rewards; the giving of lines should cease;
- ✓ less regrouping of classes, for example, for physical education (PE) and PSD, especially where this leads to friction among the pupils;
- ✓ peer pressure to avoid smoking, bullying and the verbal abuse of teachers;
- ✓ assistance from senior pupils in dealing with disruptive behaviour;
- ✓ all teachers should deal firmly with trouble makers;
- ✓ disruptive pupils should be isolated and not be the centre of attention;
- ✓ the cost of malicious damage should be reimbursed by those responsible;
- ✓ teachers should listen more to what the pupils have to say, and provide more help with difficult work at lunchtime or after school;
- ✓ the school environment should be made more attractive;
- ✓ security cameras should be installed in the school.

## 6.4 Pupils' Views on Responsibilities

### i. The Pupils

6.4.1 The pupils' views on their own responsibilities are given below. Pupils should:-

- ✓ behave in a co-operative manner towards teachers and other pupils;

- ✓ refrain from giving teachers 'a hard time' and follow their instructions;
- ✓ keep the rules, and influence their friends to behave responsibly;
- ✓ not bring dangerous weapons into school;
- ✓ inform the teachers of instances of indiscipline and bullying;
- ✓ work harder; complete classwork, homework and coursework;
- ✓ discuss their personal problems with staff;
- ✓ welcome genuine visitors to the school;
- ✓ contribute to keeping the school tidy.

ii. The Parents

6.4.2 The pupils' views on the responsibilities of parents are given below. Parents should:-

- ✓ care for their children;
- ✓ be responsible for their children's behaviour, and ensure that they behave in a disciplined manner;
- ✓ ensure that their children are suitably prepared for school, with, for example, the required uniform and equipment;
- ✓ ensure that their children attend school regularly;
- ✓ ensure that their children travel safely to and from school;
- ✓ encourage their children to do their homework and reward diligence;
- ✓ take an interest in the school and support it if a disciplinary problem arises;

- ✓ be prepared to discuss any such problem with principal and staff.

## 6.5 Pupils' Views on the School's Pastoral Care System

6.5.1 In the main, the school's pastoral care system ensures that all pupils have access to a member of staff in whom they can confide and with whom they can discuss problems of a personal nature. Pupils interviewed described some form teachers as 'brilliant', but reported that those with 'bad' form teachers were 'stuck with them'.

## 6.6 Pupils' Views on the Curriculum

6.6.1 The pupils considered that factors such as lesson content, teaching approaches, relationships and classroom management, many of which were interrelated, impinged upon discipline. There were indications that subjects were liked or not liked because of the teacher; they were sometimes liked in spite of the teacher. Bad behaviour could become a feature of subjects taught by individual members of staff associated with indiscipline. Pupils following GNVQ courses were attracted to the different approaches to teaching and learning required by such courses. Pupils studying non-accredited subjects sometimes developed a more casual approach to learning. They also indicated that lack of success often contributed to indiscipline; for example, one pupil pointed out that 'if pupils think they cannot do them (subjects) then they just cause trouble'.

## 7. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SURVEY

7.1 Behaviour is satisfactory or better in nearly all of the primary and post-primary schools in Northern Ireland. In a very few schools, serious indiscipline by a very small minority of the pupils occupies an inordinate amount of the time and energy of individual teachers and members of the SMT.

7.2 Good schools are quick to identify the 5-15% of the pupils engaging in some form of disruptive behaviour; these schools implement effective policies and procedures, provide consistent support, involve the parents, and the staff share effective strategies and teaching approaches.

7.3 There is a lack of consensus in schools and in the wider community as to what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

7.4 There is a lack of consistency within schools in the implementation of agreed policies and procedures. Where indiscipline is most marked, this is commonly the key factor.

7.5 In a small number of the post-primary schools, staff absenteeism was contributing significantly to a deterioration in standards of behaviour. The attendance record of a few teachers was poor.

7.6 Indiscipline is associated largely with boys, particularly in Years 10-12, and with lower-ability pupils; it often arises within, reportedly, inadequate and dysfunctional families, in areas of high unemployment and social deprivation. A small number of schools report that strong allegiances to paramilitary and other local groups contribute to the indiscipline of a significant minority of pupils.

7.7 Indiscipline is often related to the difficulties experienced by individual teachers in motivating the pupils, in providing for them some sense of achievement and in coping generally with aspects of classroom management. These difficulties are often made worse by the poor language skills of the pupils.

7.8 The lack of co-ordination in the approaches of the various external support agencies and their reported inability to respond quickly in times of need are unhelpful and leave schools feeling isolated and without support.

7.9 Principals report on the increasing pressure on them from members of their staff and teacher unions for greater use of suspension and expulsion which makes it difficult to implement school-based responses to indiscipline.

7.10 In a number of schools, the frequent changes of staff who are able to deal effectively with disruptive pupils made it difficult to implement policy in a consistent manner.

7.11 The poorly designed accommodation in a few post-primary schools provides increased opportunities for misbehaviour.

## 8. ACTION NEEDED TO REDUCE INDISCIPLINE

The findings of this report, to a very large extent, support the action recommended by the Department of Education.

### 8.1 Action is required at inter-departmental and inter-agency level:-

- ✓ to provide schools with quick and effective access to a co-ordinated external support service, including, in particular, the educational welfare and psychological services;
- ✓ to ensure that the medical services communicate with schools and parents about the use of medication in dealing with hyperactivity and extreme behaviour.

### 8.2 Action is required by ELBs and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) in conjunction with schools:-

- ✓ to monitor and evaluate the provision for the very small number of highly disruptive pupils, and try to ensure that these pupils are integrated, as far as possible, into the school community;
- ✓ to reflect on the existing policies of ELBs and CCMS on suspensions and expulsions, the numbers involved and the provision made for the pupils while absent from and when returning to school, in order to share more effectively existing good practice through the Regional Training Unit (RTU) and the Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS);
- ✓ to provide guidance for schools on appropriate arrangements and procedures for suspending and expelling pupils;
- ✓ to provide teachers with advice, support and INSET on the management of behaviour, especially in the classroom;
- ✓ to identify and disseminate proven good practice in tackling indiscipline;

- ✓ to review and, where necessary, develop provision for internal/external support and guidance units for the very small number of highly disruptive pupils;
- ✓ to inform parents of their role in the promotion of good behaviour and the procedures available to schools for ensuring good discipline;
- ✓ to review the current functions of the educational psychology service, in order to ensure that schools have appropriate access to support guidance and diagnosis.

8.3 Action is required by higher education (HE) in conjunction with schools:-

- ✓ to ensure that initial teacher training (ITT) courses place sufficient emphasis on developing the skills of classroom management and the maintenance of good order.

8.4 Action is required by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA):-

- ✓ to review the programmes for home economics, mathematics, modern languages and technology and design and, where necessary, redress the balance between theory and practice in favour of the latter;
- ✓ to highlight and illustrate the extent to which the current NIC provides opportunities for the development of the vocational dimension and the pupils' personal and social skills;
- ✓ to review the range of examination courses presently on offer to ascertain their suitability for all pupils at key stage 4 (KS4).

8.5 Action is required by principals, SMTs and Boards of Governors:-

- ✓ to monitor more effectively the implementation of the school's discipline policy and procedures and its success in dealing with indiscipline from year to year;

- ✓ to clarify for all staff, pupils and parents what constitutes good and bad behaviour and what types of indiscipline should be recorded;
- ✓ to monitor the attitude and attendance of staff and consider the extent to which their absence contributes to discontinuity in the pupils' learning and to poor behaviour on the part of some; where absence is justifiable and/or unavoidable, the substitute teacher should ensure continuity in the provision of effective teaching and learning;
- ✓ to provide guidance on an appropriate curriculum and teaching approaches for unmotivated 14-16 year old pupils, with advice on how to deal with the seriously disruptive pupils.

In these and associated matters, teachers may begin to set their own professional standards through their involvement in staff development, target-setting, self-evaluation and quality assurance procedures.



APPENDIX I  
(to the ETI Discipline Survey)

**DISCIPLINE AIDE-MEMOIRE**

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_

Ref No: \_\_\_\_\_

Enrolment: \_\_\_\_\_

FTE Staff: \_\_\_\_\_

Discussion With: \_\_\_\_\_

Position in School: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. EXTENT OF THE DISCIPLINE PROBLEM**

a. Number of pupils who are disruptive and whose behaviour is unmanageable in school (Group A)

b. Number of pupils who are disruptive and whose behaviour is manageable in school (Group B)

c. Factors associated with disruptive behaviour:

	Group A	Group B
i. Year Group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ii. Ability range	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iii. Boys/girls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
iv. From certain families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v. Geographical areas	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vi. Specific time of year	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
vii. Particular day of the week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
viii. With a particular teacher/s	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Group A      Group B

ix. In particular subjects  
(Name the subject/s)



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

x. Other .....



d. Absences

i. Number of days teachers were absent for each of last 3 years

94/95	95/96	96/97

ii. Major cause of absence over the three year period

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

iii. Number of teachers, the reasons for whose absence give cause for concern

iv. Note the 3 major reasons for the absences (of the teachers at iii. above)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

v. Average pupil attendance for each of the last 3 years

94/95	95/96	96/97

e. Suspensions and Expulsions

1. Suspensions

i. Number of suspensions in each of last 3 years

94/95	95/96	96/97

ii. Number of pupils suspended in each of last 3 years

94/95	95/96	96/97



iii. Most common reason for suspension

\_\_\_\_\_

iv. Other major reasons for suspension

\_\_\_\_\_

v. Maximum duration of suspension

vi. Average duration of suspension

**2. Expulsions**

Number of pupils expelled during each of the last 3 years

94/95	95/96	96/97

f. Does the school have other ways of dealing with the problems caused by the pupils in the groups mentioned at a. and b. above?

1. On-site unit

Yes  No

2. Off-site unit

Yes  No

3. Other .....

Yes  No

**2. NATURE OF DISCIPLINE PROBLEM**

From the list below, identify those behaviours which the school associates with pupils in groups at 1a and 1b above:

		Group A	Group B
a.	bad language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b.	graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c.	vandalism	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d.	disruption in class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e.	bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f.	assaults on pupils		
	1. Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>







iii. Which subjects are considered to demotivate and are of least interest to the target groups of pupils?

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iv. Which subjects/modules does the school believe should be included in the curriculum for the target groups of pupils?

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v. Which, if any, subjects/modules has the school included to complement the elements of the compulsory curriculum at KS4?

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vi. Other adjustments that the school has made to the curriculum for the target groups of pupils:

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vii. Which, if any, forms of validation does the school use at the end of KS4, other than GCSE?

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viii. Other:

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c. Teacher Issues (Which, if any, of the following have a bearing on discipline issues in the school?)

i. Inadequate classroom management skills:

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ii. Insufficient planning and preparation for teaching:

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iii. Inappropriately narrow range of teaching approaches:

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iv. Inappropriate textbooks and resources:

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v. Other:

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4. ACTION TAKEN BY THE SCHOOL

a. Is there a discipline policy? Yes  No

b. If so, who was involved in devising it?

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c.i. Is the discipline policy implemented in a consistent manner by all the teachers? Yes  No

c.ii. If not, to what extent does the inconsistent implementation of the school's discipline policy contribute to the discipline problems presented by the target groups of pupils?

*In a minor way*  *In a major way*

c. To whom is the discipline policy available:

teachers? Yes  No

parents? Yes  No

Governors? Yes  No

other? Yes  No

d. Are there clear agreed whole-school procedures and structures for dealing with indiscipline? Yes  No

e. How are these procedures implemented by the teachers of the target groups of pupils?

*Effectively*  *Ineffectively*

f. Does the school record serious incidents of indiscipline? Yes  No

g. How does the pastoral provision contribute to maintaining good standards of discipline in the school?

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h. Identify the INSET courses focusing on discipline which teachers have attended:

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i. Outline the provision for staff development relating to discipline for:

i. the whole staff?

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ii. identified groups of teachers eg heads of year?

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j. Identify the nature of the support provided for probationary teachers with regard to disciplinary matters?

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k. Outline the induction arrangements with regard to disciplinary matters?

i. for staff:

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ii. for pupils:

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l. Does the school enlist support from the following external agencies?

	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Never</i>
EWS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychological Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Probation Service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

m. How are parents involved in helping the school deal with behavioural problems?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

n. What are the re-entry procedures for suspended pupils?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

o. What strategies, if any, are used to compensate the returning pupils for the teaching they have missed during their suspension?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## 5. POSSIBLE POINTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH THE PUPILS

- i. Do the pupils know of the school's discipline policy eg rules; rewards; sanctions; suspension; expulsion; bullying?
- ii. Having established that the pupils know of the school's policy, what are their views on its appropriateness?
- iii. Do the pupils believe that the school's policy is consistently applied?
- iv. What do the pupils consider to be the causes of disruptive behaviour in the school?
- v. What suggestions do the pupils have for improving discipline in the school?
- vi. What are the pupils' views on their responsibilities, and those of their parents, with regard to school discipline?
- vii. What are the pupils' views on the effectiveness of the school's pastoral support system/procedures in helping pupils who cause or suffer from discipline-related matters eg bullying; persistent class misbehaviour etc?
- viii. What are the pupils' views on the contribution of the curriculum to good/poor discipline in classrooms?

NB: Colleagues should not enter into discussion about individual teachers during these discussions.

APPENDIX II  
(to the ETI Discipline Survey)

The following primary schools were visited in connection with this survey:-

Botanic Primary School  
 Largymore Primary School  
 Old Warren Primary School  
 St Aidan's Primary School, Whiterock Road, Belfast  
 St Joseph's Primary School, Slate Street, Belfast  
 Wheatfield Infants' School, Alliance Road, Belfast

The following post-primary schools were visited in connection with this survey:-

Christian Brothers' Secondary School, Glen Road, Belfast  
 Craigavon Senior High School  
 Dundonald High School  
 Lisnasharragh High School  
 Monkstown Community School  
 Mount Gilbert Community College  
 Orangefield High School  
 St Breacan's High School, Waterside, Londonderry  
 St Brigid's High School, Carnhill, Londonderry  
 St Gabriel's Secondary School, Crumlin Road, Belfast  
 St Joseph's High School, Newry  
 St Joseph's Secondary School, Creggan Estate, Londonderry  
 St Patrick's Boys' Secondary School, Dungannon  
 St Patrick's High School, Banbridge  
 St Patrick's High School, Omagh

The following pupil withdrawal unit was also visited:-

The Hammer Youth Centre, Agnes Street, Belfast





## Appendix 4

**GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

CASS	Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (of the Education and Library Boards)
CCMS	Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
ELB	Education and Library Board
EOTAS	education otherwise than at school
ETI	Education and Training Inspectorate
EWS	Educational Welfare Service
HSST	Health and Social Services Trust
MBW	Making Belfast Work (now Belfast Regeneration Office)
NQT	newly-qualified teacher
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SEN	special educational needs







## Appendix 5

# CONTACTS AND HELPLINES

### Helplines:

NSPCC  
 Jennymount Court  
 North Derby Street  
 BELFAST BT15 3HN  
 Telephone: 9035 1135  
 Fax: 028 90351100  
 Free helpline 0900 800 500  
 Textphone 0800 056 0566  
 Web page [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

NSPCC Child Protection  
 24 hours call free  
 0800 800 500  
 Textphone 0800 056 0566

Childline NI  
 PO Box 1111  
 BELFAST BT1 2DD  
 Telephone: 028 9032 7773  
 Fax: 028 90818131  
 Freephone: 0800 1111  
 e-mail [NIreland@childline.org.uk](mailto:NIreland@childline.org.uk)  
 Web page: <http://www.childline.org.uk>

Contact Youth Counselling Services  
 2a Ribble Street  
 Newtownards Road  
 BELFAST BT4 1HW  
 Telephone: 9045 7848

Helpline: 'Youthline' 0808 808 800  
 (free; operates 4pm - 9pm)

### Other useful contacts:

Child Care (NI)  
 216 Belmont Road  
 BELFAST BT4 2AT  
 Telephone: 9065 2713

Children's Law Centre  
 3rd Floor, Philip House  
 124-137 York Street  
 BELFAST BT15 1AB  
 Telephone: 9024 5704  
 Advice Line: 9043 4242  
 e-mail [info@www.childrenslawcentre.org](mailto:info@www.childrenslawcentre.org)  
 Web page: [www.childrenslawcentre.org](http://www.childrenslawcentre.org)



Barnardos  
Childcare Office  
542-544 Upper Newtownards Road  
BELFAST BT4 3HE  
Telephone: 9067 2366  
Fax: 9067 2399  
Web page [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)

Save the Children  
Popper House  
15 Richmond Park  
BELFAST BT10 0HB  
Marketing & Fundraising:  
Telephone: 9062 0000  
Fax: 9043 1314  
Programmes Department:  
Telephone: 9043 1123  
e-mail [a.wells@scfuk.org.uk](mailto:a.wells@scfuk.org.uk)  
Web page: [www.savethechildren.org.uk](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk)

Kidscape  
2 Grosvenor Gardens  
LONDON SW1 ODH  
Telephone: 0171 730 330  
e-mail [contact@kidscape.org.uk](mailto:contact@kidscape.org.uk)  
Web page [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

NW Office:  
Spencer House  
18 Spencer Road  
LONDONDERRY  
Telephone: 7131 1486  
Fax: 7131 3279

Behaviour Management Team  
Thiepval House  
111 Church Street  
PORTADOWN  
BT62 3DB  
Telephone: 028 38393294  
Fax: 028 38393295

Parents Advice Centre  
Franklin House  
12 Brunswick Street  
BELFAST  
BT2 7GE  
Helpline: 028 90238800  
Fax: 028 90312475  
Office Tele: 028 90310891  
e-mail: [belfast@parentsadvicecentre.org](mailto:belfast@parentsadvicecentre.org)  
Web page [parentsadvicecentre.org](http://parentsadvicecentre.org)

## EDUCATION AND LIBRARY BOARD CONTACTS

	Chief Education Welfare Officer	Designated Officer for Child Protection	Contacts for Behaviour Support
Board			
Belfast	Mrs Maxine Devenney 9056 4289	Mrs Maxine Devenney 9056 4289	Bertie Stewart 9056 4035
Western	Tony McGonagle 8241 1411	Mrs Margaret Harte 8241 1411	Leader: Mrs Philomena McDermott 8241 1411 Team Leaders: Derry: Mrs Pauline McGeown, NW Teachers' Centre 7186 1116; Omagh: Mrs Josephine Hasson, Board HQ 8241 1411
North-Eastern	Mrs Margaret Shaw 2566 2563	Maurice Crozier 2566 2558	Coleraine: Joe Dwyer 7032 8462 Ballee/Antrim: Roger Goodlisse 2563 2717 Larne/N'abbey: Mrs Sheila Kennedy-Andrews 9086 2627
South-Eastern	Ms Kate Bridge 9056 6900	Mrs Kate Bridge 9056 6900	Colum Boal, Senior EWO 9056 6436 Joe Duffy, Senior Educ Psychologist 9056 6429
Southern	Ms Alex Barr 3751 2200	Ms Alex Barr 3751 2200	Mrs P Curran/Dr C Mangan, Thiepval House, 111 Church Street, Portadown BT62 3DB 3839 3294

