**Understanding Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)**

The term, SEBD, refers to those students who present with disturbing and/or disruptive behaviour that interferes with their own and others’ social functioning and academic engagement. Their behaviour may be termed ‘acting-out’ (disruptive) or ‘acting-in’ (showing withdrawal and/or avoidance).

Although not always the case, many students with SEBD come from socially deprived or disrupted family backgrounds. Emotional difficulties are often an associated feature of both ‘acting-in’ and ‘acting-out’ types as either an underlying or outcome factor.

SEBD include:

* difficulties in sustaining attention
* serious and persistent impulsiveness
* difficulties regulating physical movement
* verbal and/or physical aggression towards other people
* violent and destructive behaviour
* oppositionality and uncooperativeness
* extreme fearfulness
* avoidant behaviour
* withdrawn behaviour
* feelings of low self-worth and hopelessness

In the school setting these might manifest, for example, as:

* defiance of staff
* persistent rule breaking
* bullying others
* being a victim of bullying
* disruptive behaviour in lessons
* truancy
* refusal to engage in learning tasks
* failure to complete learning tasks
* disaffection

**Positive behaviour management strategies**

| **Strategy** | **Pupils' response** |
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| **Choice** | Gives pupils some control over the situation; is less likely to initiate point-blank refusal. |
| **Take-up time** | Allows pupils not to lose face. Watching and waiting is, in a way, issuing a challenge. We need to be clear about expectations. |
| **Partial agreement** | Yes, you may have been talking about your work, but I would like you to...' |
| **When-then direction** | This is trying to avoid the negative - 'No you cannot go out because you have not finished your work' becomes 'When you have finished your work, then you can go out'. |
| **Privately understood signals** | For drawing the class together or to monitor the noise level. Build in sharing times. Reflect upon intervention in terms of teaching and learning as against control intervention. |
| **Tactical ignoring** | May be appropriate for attention-seeking behaviour. This could be an example of secondary behaviour so try to focus on the primary behaviour by concentrating on the pupil and not the behaviour. Ignore the 'target' pupil but praise the nearby pupil. If target pupil changes their behaviour, praise them. |
| **Redirect behaviour** | By reminding the pupils what they should be doing and trying to avoid getting involved in discussions about what the pupils are doing wrong. It may be possible to focus their attention on the required task. |
| **Consequences and sanctions** | These should be thought out in line with school policy and be implemented clearly and consistently. |
| **Deferred consequences** | When a pupil misbehaves, stating that you will deal with the issue later removes the 'audience', i.e., the rest of the class who are watching the drama unfold, and also avoids a possible confrontation. Dealing with a pupil in a one-to-one situation is more likely to have a positive outcome. |