Nurturing Inverclyde

Getting it Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community

Through Promoting

Positive Relationships

and

Positive Behaviour

in our Education Establishments

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1. Background/introduction

This policy is the work of an authority-wide steering group. Members of the group are:

Janet Leicester	Head teacher
Elsa Hamilton	Quality Improvement Manager
Tom Tracy	EIS union representative
Gerry Mitchell	Health and safety officer
Mairi McFarlane	Head teacher
Angela Edwards (chair)	Head of Inclusive Education, Culture and Corporate Policy
Sally Peel	Depute Head teacher
Louise McVey	CLD officer
Joan McLennan	Social worker
Bill Crossan	Principal Teacher
Eileen Stewart	Head teacher
Paula Dudgeon	Depute Principal Psychologist
Willie Todd	Head teacher
Hazel Mitchell	Head teacher
Steve Halkett	Head of Centre
Margaret Nash	Scottish Government
Dougie Smith	Development Officer
Lesley McCabe	Depute Head teacher
Elizabeth Robertson	Development Officer

Following an audit of all Heads of establishments it was assessed that there was a need for a behaviour policy to exist at authority level in order to support a coherent approach to this area of learning.

Effective and shared policy guides actions in organisations. In establishments where relationships and behaviour are positive, there are open lines of communication between staff members and an agreement that they are collectively responsible for learners' behaviour.

This document gives establishments a shared view of policy and best practice in promoting positive relationships and behaviour. It includes examples of existing good practice in the authority to demonstrate how the policy might be put into practice. It also includes reflections from our young people.

This policy aspires to challenge and support leaders and staff into consistently promoting positive relationships and behaviour across all our establishments

2. Rationale

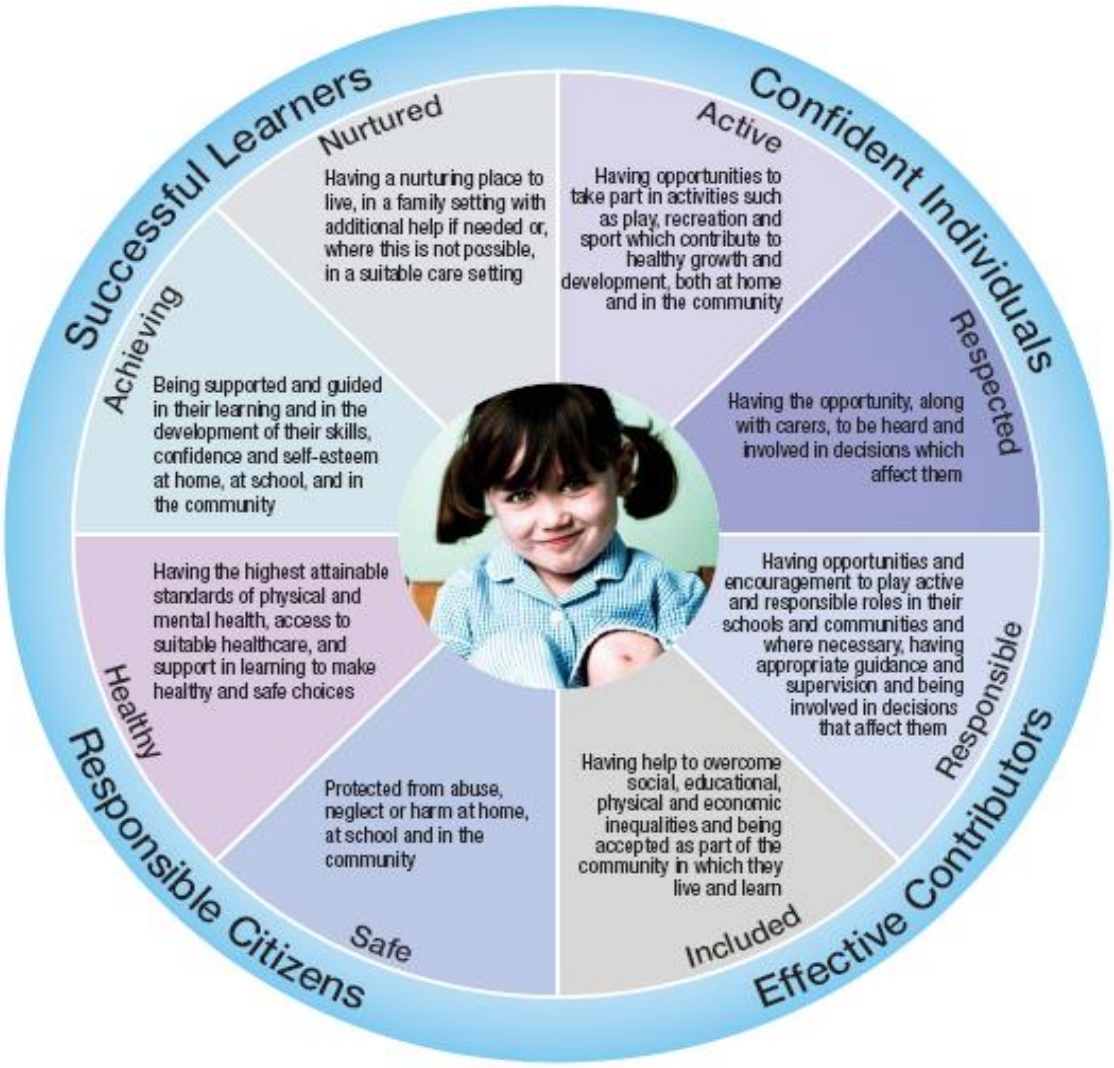
'Curriculum for Excellence cannot be delivered without good relationships and positive behaviour. Children and young people should feel happy, safe, respected and included in the learning environment and all staff should be proactive in promoting positive behaviour in the classroom, playground, and wider learning community. Underpinning this is the emotional health and wellbeing of staff.' **Curriculum for Excellence**

The development of a positive learning environment is essential if effective learning and teaching is to take place within an educational establishment. Effective learning and teaching is also dependent on the nurturing of positive relationships through the daily interactions between staff and learners and between learners themselves.

The policy is based on a set of core principles identified by the group which permeate all aspects of the guidance: ***Respect, empathy, aspiration, inclusion, resilience, empowerment, nurture, trust, fairness and unconditional positive regard.***

Inverclyde Council has developed a vision of creating a 'Nurturing Inverclyde' where we 'Get it Right for Every Child, Citizen and Community'.

Through this policy we strive to support the achievement of the core outcomes associated with 'GIRFEC.' All aspects of this work will lead to our learners being:



"I feel confident about dealing with conflict because I have a better understanding of other people's emotions" Inverclyde learner

3. Purposes/aims

The agreed purposes and aims of this Positive Behaviour, Relationships Policy are to:

- Value every child and develop a climate of mutual respect in all our establishments
- Maintain high expectations of the children/young people themselves, schools, support services and the community.
- Bring the work of all agencies together to encourage a partnership approach to promoting positive relationships and behaviour
- Promote early intervention.
- Demonstrate that relationships are at the heart of an excellent school
- Promote positive teaching and learning environments across all establishments
- Include all our children and young people in their schools and communities
- Improve achievement and attainment
- Actively promote the development of nurturing establishments and communities
- Ensure staff develop an in-depth understanding of emotional and behavioural issues
- Provide high quality staff development opportunities
- Establish a strategic and authority wide lead in this area
- Teach children and young people the social skills needed to interact positively with others.
- Promote an ethos of empathy and understanding of all children, young people and their families
- Reflect constantly on our practice in order to improve interventions and outcomes

4. Context and Approach

Legislative context

The policy is set within a strong legislative context. The table below states the policy's purpose in supporting the relevant legislation:

Legislation/guidance	Policy link
Standards in Scotland's Schools etc ACT 2000	The policy is based on the 'presumption of mainstream.' This principle is supported through the policy by ensuring almost all of our pupils maintain mainstream placements.
Additional Support for Learning act 2009	Challenging behaviour may arise from any of the 4 identified barriers to learning in the act: learning environment, health and disability, family circumstances and social and emotional. The policy will support learners facing these barriers.

The policy is also driven by 3 key National guidance documents:

Guidance	Policy Link
Curriculum for Excellence (CfE)	Health and well-being experiences and outcomes are embedded in the delivery of this policy. The CfE principles are also strongly supported.
Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)	The ultimate aim of the policy is that it supports learners to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected and responsible and included. This is embedded in both the development and delivery of the policy through a culture of partnership working
Included, Engaged and Involved (IEI)	The policy aims to prevent exclusions. If exclusions happen our procedures are based on IEI guidelines.

This policy recognises and affirms the successful practice already being adopted across many of our educational establishments to promote positive relationships and behaviour.

The policy was developed through looking as 3 key aspects of promoting positive relationships and behaviour. These are: preventative, responsive and partnerships. Each area essentially overlaps but the approach allowed the group to structure the policy appropriately.

Within each aspect the following approaches are covered:

Preventative

- Environment
- Teaching, learning and curriculum delivery
- Leadership
- Attitudes/mindsets

Partnerships

- Parents
- Learners
- Other agencies and community

Responsive

- Assessment
- Individual support planning
- Dialogue
- Strategies
- Debriefing
- Reporting
- Exclusion

Summary

When children and young people are nurtured, guided and encouraged, they learn to behave appropriately in a variety of social and educational settings and develop positive relationships. They achieve healthy emotional growth, acquire social understanding and learn the necessary social and inter-personal skills that will enable them to succeed. Children and young people who face barriers to learning and development require help, support, strategies and understanding, within a calm, controlled environment.

Educational establishments are complex structures within which a range of staff support the learning of pupils. This policy seeks to help staff to work alongside partner agencies, to effectively support all learners and to develop resilience/emotional literacy in all pupils as a fundamental aspect of their curricular experiences.

Our approaches are based on a common philosophy:

Relationships lie at the heart of the learning process and are fundamental to improving outcomes for all our children and young people.

5. Preventative Approaches

"In any whole (authority) approach, there will be an emphasis on preventative approaches, such as negotiation, problem solving and interpersonal and communication skills" (Nelson)

As an authority, Inverclyde takes a holistic view of promoting positive relationships and behaviour and uses every possible opportunity across our educational provisions to teach the skills required for this through all subjects, conversations and our day to day interactions with children and young people.

"Behaviour" must be considered in the same way as any other area of the curriculum where staff would assess, plan, teach, differentiate and evaluate in order to ensure that pupils achieve the skills required. This work sits at the heart of the Health and Wellbeing curriculum, particularly the aspects that are 'The Responsibility of All.'

Environment

In promoting positive relationships and behaviour it is essential that a playroom, class, playground or whole establishment environment is conducive to meeting needs and preventing any challenging behaviour from occurring.

When considering the best possible learning environment for children and young people, staff should consult environmental/attitudinal checklists (**App 1a/b**) and monitor and adapt accordingly. These checklists can also be used as a self-evaluation tool in this area of work.

A summary of key questions for practitioners are listed below. These can be used as a checklist of positive practice and can also be used to stimulate professional dialogue.

- Is the playroom/class uncluttered and well organised?
- Are areas clearly marked and signposted?
- Is the lay out and type of furniture appropriate? (heights of tables and chairs etc)
- Are there attractive, learning focused displays on view?
- Are group dynamics/seating set to allow for the most successful interactions to take place?
- Is it appropriate to have personal work stations/time out space in the classroom or establishment?
- Are there any sensory issues affecting pupil behaviour e.g., colour, light and noise/pitch levels?
- Do staff speak in a calm, non-confrontational way?
- Are establishment values/codes of conduct displayed around the establishment in pupil friendly forms?
- Are general good practice strategies in place e.g. daily schedules, signposting for all?

In one Inverclyde school, class daily plans and routines are clearly displayed and accessible for all, including cover staff. This ensures a consistent approach in all classes and children are less unsettled by a change of staff.

In the playground

- Are suitable activities available?
- Is training in place for mentors?
- Are buddies/mentors used successfully?
- Do playground staff interact with pupils?
- Are there quiet/safe haven spaces available?
- Are children and young people encouraged to sort out problems with each other through restorative approaches or peer mediation?
- Can a resolution been found to “interval difficulties” before returning to class?

Teaching /Learning and Curriculum Delivery

In all Inverclyde Educational Establishments every measure is taken to deliver an enabling and stimulating curriculum. Using active, contextualised and meaningful approaches to teaching and learning will stimulate interest and minimise opportunities for negative interactions.

Personalisation in curriculum delivery may be required in order to establish positive work patterns and engage children and young people with their learning environments.

Relationships between curriculum delivery and behaviour are well documented and within our authority we have examples of some very imaginative curriculum delivery centred on pupils’ interest and needs.

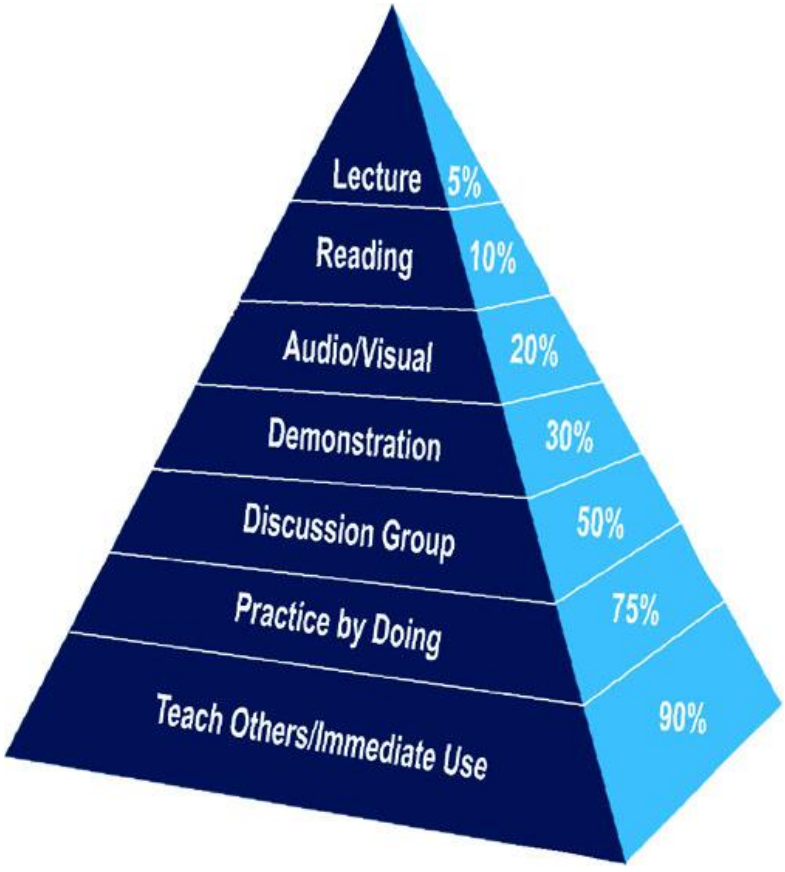
All children follow a personal learning pathway, but for some this may be a very bespoke learning plan and programme.

“I feel good because I can sort out hard situations by myself and I can help younger pupils in the school by talking to them.” Inverclyde learner

A pupil in an Inverclyde High School had low attendance and was being persistently excluded. Following a multi-agency review the MCMC team became involved and worked with the school and authority to establish a suitable Personal Learning Pathway. Taking account of prior learning and individual needs a programme was organised to be delivered elsewhere. The programme worked from the learner's strengths and involved Expressive Arts and work experience components. In addition another agency worked to return the pupil successfully to a school environment.
The pupil has now returned to school and has re-engaged with learning using the PLP within the school environment.

Another pupil in an Inverclyde Primary followed a flexible time-table allowing him to 'opt-in' to class activities which he felt would be successful. He created his own PLP. His time was gradually increased in class at other times and he is now back in class full-time.

It is useful to note George's (1995) average retention rates by levels of learning



The Importance of Play / Active Learning

"The benefits of play are both immediate and long term, and contribute to all aspects of children's health and development including their physical and mental well-being, their educational development, brain development, and opportunities for language development, spatial and mathematical learning, creativity, and identity formation" (Coalter and Taylor 2001)
Well planned active learning should provide opportunities for :

- progression in learning and the development of skills
- engaging and challenging children's thinking
- investigating and exploring
- consolidating learning
- focussed learning and teaching
- fun and enjoyment

Building the Curriculum 2 'Active Learning in the Early Years' describes the importance of active learning approaches across the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence.

Staff in schools should ask the following key questions about their curriculum delivery:

- Are children and young people encouraged to have high expectations and a 'can-do' attitude to their learning?
- Is the curriculum planned carefully in order to meet learners' needs?
- How can support staff be involved in planning to meet pupil needs and support the delivery of the curriculum?
- Is teaching and learning carefully matched to previous experiences of children and young people?
- Are different outcomes/achievements equally valued?
- Are lessons well structured?
- Are learning intentions created and shared with children and young people?
- Are resources matched to need?
- If IEPs are required are they appropriately challenging and do they demonstrate progression in learning?
- Is the curriculum delivered using a range of approaches?
- Are children and young people encouraged to participate using responsive planning?
- Are staff reflective - consistently asking: "could this lesson/activity/interaction be improved"?
- Do staff share best practice?
- Is full account taken of children and young people's comprehension levels?

Explicit teaching of skills

Health and Well-Being Curriculum

'The responsibilities of all include each practitioner's role in establishing open, positive, supportive relationships across the school community, where children and young people will feel that they are listened to, and where they feel secure in their ability to discuss sensitive aspects of their lives; in promoting a climate in which children and young people feel safe and secure; in modelling behaviour which promotes health and wellbeing and encouraging it in others; through using learning and teaching methodologies which promote effective learning; and by being sensitive and responsive to the wellbeing of each child and young person. Practical responsibilities include understanding of anti-discriminatory, anti-bullying and child protection policies'
Health and wellbeing across learning: responsibilities of all: principles and practice

The aspects of the Health & Wellbeing curriculum which are everyone's responsibility sit at the heart of this policy and principles.

Health and wellbeing is not just about encouraging children and young people to eat well and to exercise: it encompasses a much broader, holistic approach. At the heart of health and wellbeing is the capacity to form and sustain good personal, social and working relationships. When children and young people have good relationships, they are more likely to feel confident about their learning, have higher self-esteem, to show resilience when faced with personal challenges and to show respect for others. An educational establishment in Inverclyde has developed a robust, tested and tried approach to teaching these experiences and outcomes. (**App 2**). Their model is transferrable to all establishments and to different levels. It supports the principles of explicitly teaching children and young people the skills required to develop positive relationships and behaviour. It can be adapted to suit different contexts.

"The earliest years of children's lives are critical to their future development. Scientific evidence tells us how future health and wellbeing are determined by the ways children's brains develop.
Inequalities experienced by parents and their own lifestyles such as drug and alcohol use can harm their children. Support for families that improves children's mental and physical health and life prospects is needed. This must continue through an education system that develops in young people the qualities of resilience and adaptability, together with aspirations and the capacity to go on learning and developing throughout their lives." Equally Well (2008)

Nurturing and restorative approaches

Inverclyde Council Education Services adopts a nurturing and restorative approach to promoting positive relationships and behaviour in our establishments. Staff development continues in this area and over time we expect all schools to adopt this approach. Inverclyde education staff will be trained in: *attachment theory, nurture approaches, restorative approaches and solution oriented methods*. Although all schools will have access to the training, establishments can begin to use restorative and nurturing approaches making use of basic principles and suggested resources.

Nurture staff, the PRPB working group and Educational Psychology Services can all be contacted for advice and guidance.

The adoption of Rights Respecting Schools practices also supports the principles of restorative approaches.

In one Inverclyde Primary, where they had embedded a 'Rights Respecting School' culture, well beyond accreditation and awards, support staff commented that they could not remember the last time they had intervened in a playground fight.

Key principles of nurturing approaches

- Attachment Theory can help us understand our most vulnerable pupils
- With a greater insight into the meaning and implications of pupils' emotional and social difficulties, a school's capacity to respond to pupils changes.
- Early childhood experiences affect a child's response to education. Understanding this can enhance our ability to work with learners affected by relationship damage
- Nurturing approaches can repair some of this damage and allow pupils to achieve more fully
- Whole school Nurturing approaches achieve this at a systemic level meets our responsibilities outlined in GIRFEC.
- Through nurturing approaches learners can grow and develop their resilience and emotional ability to form relationships and deal with difficult situations.

'In p4, my friend and I fell out because we were playing tig. We were shouting at each other because we kept going for each other. We took some cool time to calm down and then we talked about it. We managed to get a win/win ending by ourselves because our teacher had taught us skills to deal with difficult situations.'

Key principles of Restorative Approaches

- Being responsible for one's own actions and their impact on others
- Respecting other people, their views and feelings
- Empathising with the feelings of others
- Being fair
- Everyone in school being actively involved in decisions about their own lives
- Returning issues of conflict to the participants
- Willingness to create opportunities for reflective change in pupils and staff

Why Use Restorative Approaches?

Pupils seek fairness from adults who are dealing with behavioural issues. Whether they are a perpetrator or a victim, their focus is not on winning or losing, but on trusting in a fair process. Restorative approaches help teachers ensure that pupils, staff and parents can be part of a fair process, while helping all involved to understand the impact of their behaviour on others.

Restorative approaches can:

- Manage the varied expectations of behaviour standards which exist among all school staff
- Help develop a Whole School positive ethos
- Encourage members of the school community to effectively resolve and learn from conflict in a way which maintains relationships or terminates them in a positive way
- Support any necessary sanctions by processes of learning and reconciliation

How Can Restorative Approaches Be Used?

Restorative Approaches can be used at different levels at school:

- As **preventative** – to promote positive relationships within the Whole School Community
- As **responsive** – and repairing when difficulties arise

As part of support and intervention for more long-term and persistent difficultiesThe approach involves including an individual in finding a solution to the problem. Instead of asking **'Who's to blame and how are we going to punish them?'** focus is put on reasons, causes, responsibilities and feelings. Those involved are asked questions such as **'who has been affected and how?'** and **'How can we put it right and learn from this experience?'**

(Extracted from Education Scotland website)

Leadership

Positive leadership in the implementation of this policy is essential for securing its success. Leaders of establishments at a range of levels have responsibility for setting the tone in promoting positive relationships and modelling desired interactions.

Traditional behaviour management approaches often see leaders 'fixing' behavioural problems. A shared and collective approach is much more sustainable and stops practitioners from being de-skilled in this area. It is of course essential that leaders are able to offer staff support with difficult situations but it is also important that opportunities are taken to increase staff skills in this area.

In an Inverclyde Primary the SMT had worked hard with staff on embedding restorative approaches and positive behaviour management in all classes.

Leaders were seen as facilitators not 'fixers'.

After 2 years referrals to SMT fell by 50%.

Attitudes/mindsets

As an authority it is recognised how important staff attitudes are in preventing challenging behaviour and fostering positive relationships.

Staff attitudes provide positive modelling for children and young people.

"Attitudes are infectious, is yours within catching" (*Anon)*

In one Inverclyde primary the school uses an attitudinal checklist as part of the quality calendar process. The attitudinal checklist allows staff to self-evaluate and benchmark against expected ways of working.

"I feel better when we come to an agreement and get the chance to hear everyone's side of the story. I also feel reassured that I get the chance to clear the air with someone without a teacher interrupting." Inverclyde learner

6. Partnership Approaches

"What do we live for, if not to make life less difficult for each other?"
(Eliot)

Having a supportive, collegial ethos is essential to the positive relationships and behaviour in an establishment or authority. Building a supportive ethos with other partners or educational establishments takes time. It is important that there is a recognition that behavioural issues are best dealt with from a shared perspective.

Key principles of effective partnership working include:

- Open and honest communication
- Inclusive attitudes
- Acceptance and understanding of different experiences, values, backgrounds and perspectives
- Mutually supportive
- Being able to recognise and work to each other's strengths and challenge each other appropriately
- The development of shared goals
- A common purpose and everyone aware of the big picture
- Being able to talk about what they are doing, seeking opportunities to coach each other and give feedback

'We have been taught skills in our school to help us deal with hard issues and because we deal with the situation we feel more grown up.'
Inverclyde learners

Parents as core partners

Parents and carers are an educational establishment's best resource in terms of understanding a child and their needs.

The Parental Involvement Act (2006) states that parents, carers and families are by far the most important influences on children's lives. Parents who take on a supportive role in their children's learning make a difference in improving achievement and behaviour. Their support can play a vital role at all stages of education. When parents and schools work together, children and young people do better. The active involvement of parents in the life of the school can help promote a learning community in which pupils can engage positively with staff and their peers.

Staff will benefit from developing positive partnerships with parents by involving them in all decisions affecting their children's education and learning. A relationship of mutual trust and respect can enable effective communication that supports both parents and teachers.

It is important when dealing with children and young people's more challenging behaviour that parents feel supported and not 'blamed' by the establishments. Families come from very diverse experiences and circumstances and it is important for staff to remain non-judgmental and open when working with parents.

In an Inverclyde Primary School parents who often did not appear at more traditional events were invited to take part in a shared craft activity in the Nurture Room with their child. In the same school certain families were invited to a 'tea' organised by children to celebrate their achievements. Through this non-judgmental approach some very isolated families began to re-engage with their child's learning. As a result learning and behaviour both improved.

Some examples of parental involvement to improve behaviour might be:

- Direct involvement in planning to improve outcomes/behaviour
- Parent workshops/drop-ins
- Voluntary work
- Reviews
- Informal calls/texts/activities
- Nurture sessions

A specialist establishment in Inverclyde provides a series of workshops for parents and staff on emotional literacy. This increases understanding of approaches with parents and staff learning together.

A school recognises that behavioural and emotional difficulties do not exist on their own. A parents group has been set up in an Inverclyde Primary School to help families support their children with literacy difficulties. The group recognises that literacy difficulties can be familial and it aims to assist parents with their own literacy difficulties.
This model has been presented at an Education Roadshow.

Children and Young People as core partners

"The social context within which young people live has been changing significantly in recent years. All young people are subject to new, sometimes insidious pressures; many may experience temporary difficulties as they grow up; some suffer from real deprivation and do not enjoy the kind of supportive relationships which they need to feel safe and to benefit fully from their education. In this changing context it is vital that we continue to re-appraise established practices and find new ways of providing effective support to all pupils."
***Support in Scottish Schools*, HMIE**

While ensuring that children are guided within protective boundaries engagement with children and young people around the principles of positive relationship and behaviour is essential.

Some key questions for staff to ask when involving learners in planning to meet behavioural needs or involving learners in restorative practices might be:

- What are we aiming to achieve?
- Where have we got to so far?
- What will children and young people get out of it?
- Are we prepared to involve children and young people from the start?
- Are we being honest and open with the children and young people?
- What are our expectations?
- Are we prepared to give up some power?
- Are we prepared to take some criticism?

"I feel confident that my friends will help me avoid difficult situations."
Inverclyde learner

In a secondary school in Inverclyde young people are involved in the team which creates their individual support plan. The young people gain insight into how their behaviour is perceived and can work with staff to suggest ways of improving. Targets and approaches can be agreed.

In several primary schools in Inverclyde children are encouraged to talk about how they are feeling as part of the school policy on 'daily check in'. Children learn to express their feelings and understand the feelings of others in a safe setting.

Children in an Inverclyde school are using PAthS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) to share their feelings and regulate their behaviour.

External agencies and the community as core partners

> ***"In order to develop shared values and understanding of the needs of children and young people, and to maximise the response to those needs, partnership working involving parents/carers, education, social work, health, voluntary agencies and other professions is essential."***

Better Behaviour, Better Learning, The Discipline Task Group, 2001

In one Inverclyde school the staff work closely with community youth groups to reward activities and achievements both within and outwith school. Achievements are recognised and news shared across the communities. The reward system is a shared one.
The empowering sense of community with the school at the centre successfully promotes the philosophy; 'it takes a village to grow a child'.

Meaningful partnership with appropriate agencies and the community can support the promotion of positive relationships and behaviour.
Key partners who can support this are:

- Educational psychologists
- Clinical psychologists
- Speech and Language therapists
- Social workers
- Youth workers
- Community learning development officers
- Police
- Home link workers
- Outreach support
- CAHMS
- Third sector e.g. Barnados

Each of these partners need to be fully aware of the schools vision and values and expected practice. When at its most successful partnership working can result in 'a team around the child/group/class' being formed to meet needs.

Partners can participate in whole school planning and where appropriate be involved in the following:

- Whole establishment development work
- Reviews
- Specific teaching
- Diversionary activities
- Learning partnership
- Support to families
- Personal Learning pathways
- Training
- Exclusions
- Assessment

In several educational establishments in Inverclyde, inter-agency assessments take place to inform judgements regarding young people's level of understanding and comprehension.
Appropriate approaches are then used to support individuals based on a true understanding of their intent and communication abilities.

Staff in a secondary school ran a bespoke activity group with youth workers to support an individual pupil moving from P7 to S1. The pupil successfully made her transition and is well integrated into S1.

Communication

As well as opening up shared communication with partners it is crucial for positive relationships and behaviour that internal staff teams communicate in a purposeful and productive way.

Staff might access some of the following vehicles to discuss/communicate around behavioural issues and needs.

- Whole establishment and departmental meetings
- Leadership team meetings
- Internal/external transition meetings
- Individual behaviour planning
- Interactive reviews
- Open meetings
- Informal communication
- Debriefs

Informal Communication

Informal communication is also important amongst staff. However, there can be nothing more demoralising for someone who has just had a difficult session/period with children and young people to hear someone else in the staffroom make the killer statement “he wasn’t like that when I had him” or “I never had any problems with that class” (Roger 2000)

Far more helpful, is the member of staff who suggests something that has worked for her e.g. “I know they can be difficult, but sometimes this works…….”

Staffroom conversations play an important role in our overall attitude to behaviour. The more positive, humour-filled and solution focused these are the most successful of our approach to behaviour will become. Staff can support each other to de-personalise situations

‘This is part of our job and treating it as a professional challenge is far more effective than taking it personally and reacting’ (Teacher, Journey to Excellence)

7.Responsive Approaches

Through the careful application of preventative and positive measures it is hoped that the need to "respond" to specific behaviours will be greatly reduced. There will always be occasions where situations escalate and a "response" is required. This section details some proactive responses which should assist in avoiding confrontation and restore calm.

Responsive elements will include:

- Assessment
- Individual support planning
- Dialogue
- Debriefing
- Internal incident sheets
- Authority critical incident sheets
- Consequences
- Exclusions

Assessment

One of the most commonly asked questions, regarding pupil behaviour is, "why". Why does a child or young person act in a particular way? It is essential to have a full understanding of the possible reasons behind particular behaviour if appropriate, sustainable and longer term interventions are to be put in place.

Prior to any assessment it is essential staff have a sound understanding of children young people's emotional and learning needs.

A child's emotional literacy or development will vary depending on environmental and intrinsic factors. This will clearly impact in the child's ability to interact with others or have a positive relationship.

This may be perceived as inappropriate behaviour and may occur within a range of contexts.

This might include:

- Frustration related to a range of additional support needs.
- Environmental, family issues
- Health needs
- Difficulty interpreting social situations
- Communication difficulties
- Trauma or bereavement responses
- Change or loss

Behaviour is essentially everything we do or say. People use behaviour to communicate a view, need, desire or preference. We must continually assess what needs are being communicated and adapt learning environments, teaching and demands accordingly.

Assessment procedures will include:

- Having a holistic knowledge of the child – "knowing our learners", when staff have a thorough knowledge of a child, their emotions and triggers it is often possible to prevent difficult situations from an early entry point to avoid escalation
- Gathering as much information from as many different sources and partners as possible
- Looking for strengths, interests and motivators
- STAR - (Situation, Trigger, Action, Response) assessment sheets

(**App 3**)

The STAR approach will be the preferred approach to behaviour assessment in Inverclyde. If used appropriately it can be an effective assessment tool in all sectors,

In an Inverclyde Nursery staff were having difficulty meeting the needs of a learner with significant emotional issues. They kept saying 'it's unpredictable/we can't find a trigger'. The Headteacher decided to do a STAR assessment over a period of 3 weeks. At the end of the designated time spell the STAR sheet showed a distinct pattern, where most behaviours occurred at transition times, between play activities or first thing in the morning. A support plan was drawn up, giving low demand activities with one person first thing in the morning and signalling transitions with a familiar song.

It is essential that behaviours or responses that are causing a particular concern go through the STAR assessment process. Possible triggers may then be more systematically identified. It can be all too easy to consider that behaviours are unpredictable and without obvious cause. It is only by using this evaluation tool that this can be judged.

In the majority of cases this method will allow for an objective and quantitative collation of behavioural triggers. The information gathered can be used to inform discussions, debriefs and the delivery of individual behaviour plans.

Also informing assessment processes would be internal incident forms (**App 4**), critical incident forms (APP 5) and solution focussed meeting minutes.

Individual Support Planning

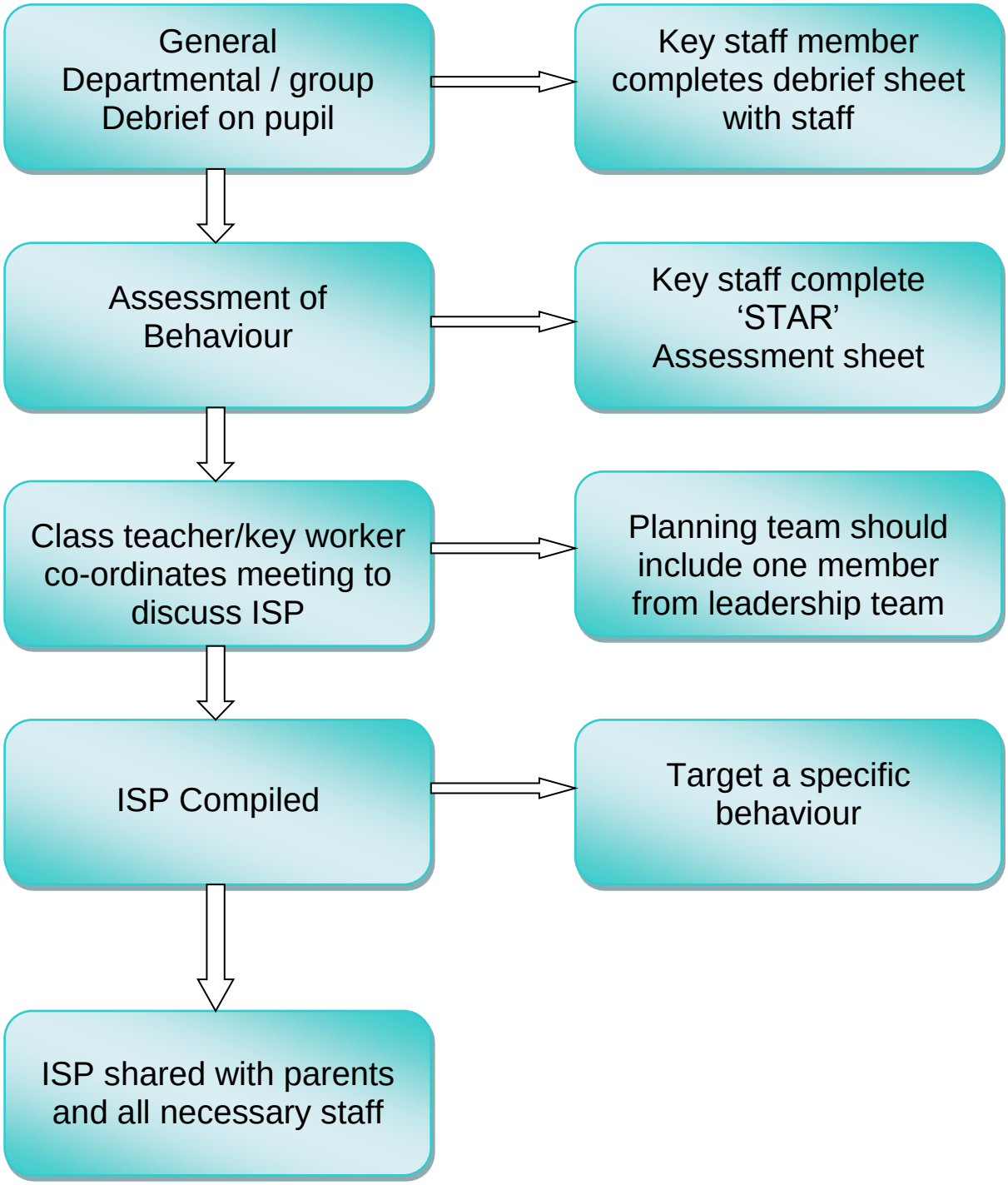
When used properly the individual support plan can be one of the most effective tools we possess. We have children in any educational establishment with differing abilities, medical conditions, experiences and resilience levels. Just as we plan carefully and individually to teach any other area of the curriculum so we must do the same with behaviour. The individual support plan helps us to do this.

Why use an individual support plan?

- Provides individualised consistency
- Ensures specific targeted intervention
- Helps to identify strategies which might support the child at home as well as in school.
- Becomes part of the behavioural assessment process
- Prioritises a strong focus for staff discussion and teamwork on behavioural issues
- Becomes a preventative measure
- Allows for reflection and review
- Provides a vehicle for recognising positive changes.

In an Early year's establishment when planned support strategies were put in place with a clear review date recorded, staff started to notice small improvements about the child's behaviour. This led to more positive attitudes surrounding the child and his family. Staff adopted a 'no blame' approach with the parents as they worked together on the identified strategies in his plan.

Procedures for compiling ISP



Senior Managers monitor ISPs throughout the establishment

Dialogue

A helpful list of basic dialogue dos and don'ts should assist in considering appropriate communications when responding to difficult situations. This list is not exhaustive nor is it in any particular order.

DOs	DON'TS
Listen Actively.	Shout.
Give time.	Ask why – most children can't tell you!
Say as little as possible.	Challenge or confront when a child is acting out or distressed.
Be solution focussed.	Judge
Remind child of their strengths.	Use sarcasm.
Use 'When_ _ _ then'.	Makes threats you are unlikely to carry out.
Use language of shared concern e.g. 'I can understand you must be upset just now …'	Change goal posts.
Model appropriate tone, body language.	Dismiss child's viewpoint.
Use other pupils as models and state these positively.	Over-react or become highly emotive Place blame.
Compromise – be prepared to show that you are looking for a way forward that is acceptable to all concerned, one where everyone feels they are a winner.	Get into win/lose battle scenarios.
Give a way out – always make sure the child has a face saving way out of the situation. ('Maybe it was a bit hot in here' 'You look as though you have a headache' etc!).	Go over previous difficulties in every new situation.
Talk about anything other than the concerning behaviour	Ask lots of questions.
Paraphrase the child's statements	Bombard child with your opinion on the situation.
When appropriate, indicate choices available and consequences. Be prepared to say sorry if you have made a mistake. Respect any opportunity a child takes to apologise. We are in the business of re-engagement as quickly as possible.	Refuse to accept a child's apology. If a child is being returned to class by another member of staff to apologise, then accept this quickly and move on.
Use assertive statements e.g. 'I need you to _ _ _ thank you' and allow for pick up time. (Geoff Moss 2004).	Lack confidence in your communications.
State desired behaviour positively (ALWAYS state what a child should be doing, not what he shouldn't).	State a negative e.g. 'Don't run' this is far more effective a direction if stated simply as 'Walk'.

DO'S	DON'TS
Use the technique known as norm of reciprocity (Rob Lang): Make a deliberate friendly gesture 'Tomorrow I will give up my break to help you with this' 'I'm going to lend you a special pen of mine'. It is hard to be angry with someone who is offering to do you a favour.	Personalise.
If appropriate make an admission that you 'can see they have a point'	Take the high moral ground.
Ask for their help e.g. 'I've never dealt with this before (even though you clearly have!), what would you do if you were me'? 'If I came to you with this problem how would you advise me?'	Give up!

Staff in an Inverclyde Primary decided collectively to stop raising their voices. They could still be assertive but only through very calm voices. Staff initially saw an increase in low level behaviours. They persevered and within only 3 months, referral rates, internal incidents and exclusions had all dropped. Staff reported a much more relaxed and calm atmosphere throughout the school.

"I have learned skills in coming to an agreement and using the correct tone of voice, it really helps sort out difficult situations." Inverclyde learner

Useful Strategies

- Redirection – ignore the behaviour and quickly redirect, then tackle the difficult behaviour at a less challenging time. Never just 'ignore' – there must always be an attempt at redirection, otherwise the behaviour will merely escalate
- Minimise dialogue – often it is better to say very little and be non-reactive if a child is extremely distressed
- Non-confrontational, calm and confident approach at all times. Children/young people pick up very quickly on any sense of staff anxiety or hesitance.
- Actively listen to what the child is saying. When you listen you stay controlled, while showing real concern which will help the child take control of the situation.
- Offer to write down what the child is saying about an incident. This gives the child/young person the opportunity to have his/her thoughts recorded and can be a good way of slowing things down and de-escalating a difficult situation.
- Carefully gauge level of eye contact. Insisting on this may be unhelpful and cause a situation to escalate
- De-personalise all negative interactions. You are doing your job – do not take any insult personally
- Unless a whole class are involved, any interventions should be done as privately and quietly as possible.
- If appropriate remove the rest of the class and potential audience
- Changing staff can sometimes help a situation. A fresh face, different voice can often distract a child into changing a particular behaviour pattern. This is never a reflection on one person not coping, but merely another form of redirection which can assist a situation
- Time-limited 'time-out' preferably within, but occasionally outwith the class. Always alert someone else to the fact that a pupil is outwith the class setting. The use of controlled time-out tokens can support learning here
- Ask another member of staff to have a pupil in his/her class for a short period of time – this may break a pattern
- It is always better for a member of staff to manage situations successfully within their own learning environments. Sometimes it may be necessary to call for assistance from another member of staff or a member of the leadership team. (PT, DHT or HT). It can also be useful for a promoted staff member to take the class while the teacher deals with the child/young person experiencing difficulties. This will allow for more sustainable solutions within an existing relationship to be found.

Consequences
Consequences for specific actions should be seen as constructive, relevant and as short as possible. They should always included an element of teaching and be fit for purpose e.g. It is pointless to exclude a child for truanting.

Withdrawal from curricular trips (during usual establishment hours) or subjects which are perceived as "preferred" will not be appropriate consequence. The only exception to this would be if there was a health and safety issue.

"Everything can be taken from man but one thing: the last human freedom – to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances to choose ones own way' (J McClure 1995).

It is well researched and that the more punitive and finger pointing, the stance taken for a young person with challenging behaviours, the more the person feels entitled to deny a demand or request.

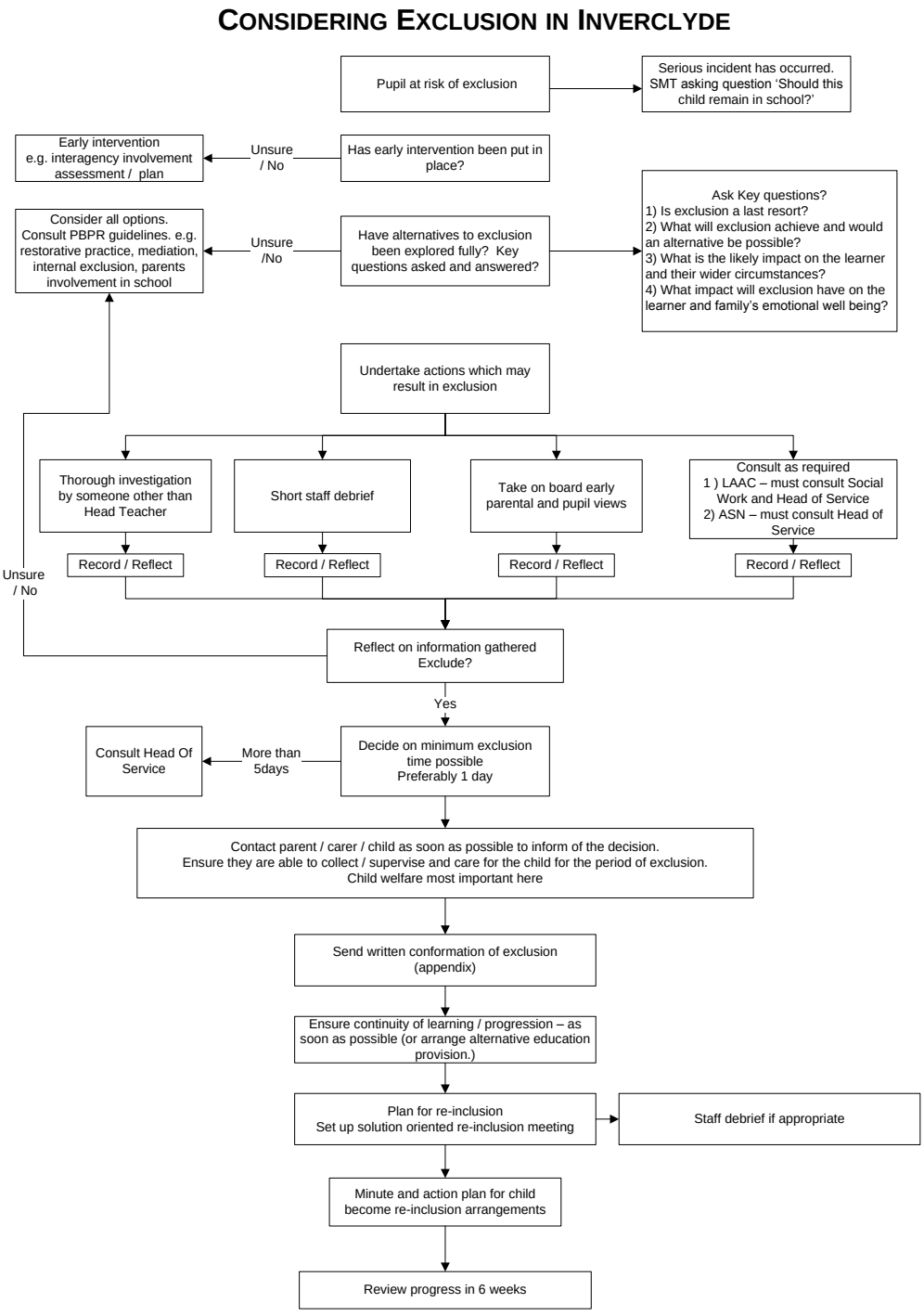
Consequences could include:

- Points in achievement scheme merits/demerits are allocated and discussed and evaluated with a learner.
- Writing an apology letter/picture
- Loss of break/leisure to complete a community task or reflective activity. (any loss of break must involve purposeful learning)
- Completion of pupil contract/agreement
- Involvement in restorative dialogue
- Participation in a shared resolution activity
- Completion of pupil reflection sheet

In an Inverclyde secondary school staff stopped using punishment exercises and detentions. They are using the merit/referral systems to analyse behaviour patterns and involve learners in the decisions they are making. Staff must make time to let pupils know when they have received a merit or referral and why. The dialogue about this is the most important aspect.

Exclusion

Guidance on exclusion is attached as an appendix (**App 6**). The flow chart below gives an at a glance overview of procedures.



'I used to get kept in all the time and once I got excluded. It didn't really bother me. Then my school started doing this restorative thingy. It was much harder to have to talk to someone, say you're sorry about what happened. Then you had to be friends. I stopped getting into fights.' **S1 pupil in Inverclyde**

Reflective Practice

An important aspect of responding to behaviour is the need for constant reflection on our own practice.

The use of “should’ve, would’ve, could’ve” type thinking following incidents will allow staff to consistently consider what else they could have done to improve or prevent a negative outcome. We are always learning and by reflecting on our practice we will ensure our approaches remain flexible enough to meet the ever changing needs of our learners

When reflecting on challenging behaviour you may want to consider:

- Have you talked over the issues with a colleague?
- Have you been observed by a colleague and received depersonalised feedback?
- Have you observed a colleague working with the same individuals and/or groups who are presenting you with challenging behaviour?
- Have you considered asking a colleague to be a mediator between you and the young person/people to bring problems out into the open and look for a shared solution?
- Have you involved pupils in discussing what you and they can do differently/better to improve the situation?

Debriefing either following a critical incident or where a series of concerns have emerged for a child can be a useful way for staff to share issues, reflect on what happened and consider difficult options. (**App 7**)
Debriefs can be completed by the establishment alone or with Educational Psychology Services.

Over time this will become a useful form of self evaluation in this area of work.

Another important part of staff reflection and debriefing is for staff to express feelings about an incident. Working with challenging behaviour can be difficult and staff should be aware of support mechanisms available. This includes a referral to Occupational Health who offer a counselling service if this is appropriate.

Monitoring and evaluating

The Positive Relationships, Positive Behaviour Working Group will continue to meet in order to monitor the policy, plan training and be available as a reference point to establishments seeking advice. Members of the group may change as time passes.

Exclusion and attendance rates are already rigorously monitored at both school and authority level. These are both strong indicators of how well we are promoting positive relationships and behaviour across the authority.

Conclusion

The Positive Relationships, Positive Behaviour Scottish Government team state that Curriculum for Excellence cannot be delivered without good relationships and positive behaviour. The starting point for learning is a positive ethos and climate of mutual respect and trust based upon shared values across whole school communities where everyone can learn and work in a peaceful and safe environment.

In addition, the breadth and personalisation of Curriculum for Excellence, along with the support it affords, will be transformational in helping to create peaceful and positive learning environments with more opportunities for children and young people to be engaged and motivated in relevant and enjoyable learning.

Nurturing Inverclyde…… COSLA Gold Award 2013

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