



Strengthen the classroom and the wider school environment

Behaviour support and student management are key aspects of teaching. Teachers and other school professionals are constantly required to respond to challenging, difficult or emotionally 'needy' students on a day-to-day basis. The following strategies can be used as part of general teacher practice or more formally through the establishment of individual learning plans, behaviour support plans, student management plans or whole school management plans.

For guidelines, templates and more information on writing behavioural support plans, created by the Victorian State Government, Department of Education and Training, [click here](#).

Teacher strategy
1. Set clear consistent expectations and rules across the school.
Purpose. To build a positive student culture. When school staff work together consistently, articulating and following clear and reasonable rules and expected behaviours, most students will also adopt these behaviours. New misbehaving students will find well-adjusted students who are unwilling to participate in poor behaviour. To engage with others successfully they will need to self correct and adopt the school's positive behaviour culture.
Action. Have clear student management, effective welfare structures, specific learning difficulties provision, focused and appropriate learning expectations, and parenting resources in place.

Teacher strategy
2. Know students as individuals.
Purpose. To build positive teacher student relationships. Teaching can be tailored to maximize the use of individual student's strengths, interests or passions, increasing student engagement and performance.
Action. Build on the student's special interests, strengths or passions by linking requests you have of them with an area of their strength or interest.

Teacher strategy
3. Identify a student's frustration cues, known triggers and use previous experience to avoid, reduce or minimize problem behaviours.
Purpose. To identify warning signs in order to react quickly and effectively and reduce the likelihood that the student will display or maintain challenging behaviours.



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Action. Does the student act in a predictable way prior to problem behaviours arising, or react to specific events such as tests, other students' comments, or loud noisy learning environments. Identify those issues and what is effective for that student in terms of preventing, reducing or modifying the situation, to help reduce problem behaviour.

Teacher strategy

4. Record communications with parents in a designated book, file or electronic document.

Purpose. To record information about meetings. This can remind you about the content of previous discussions with the parents and be used in future meetings as an account of what has occurred.

Since you are dealing with many students, the log will support your memory, and provide evidence of discussions.

Action. Take and keep notes of parent meetings, including the time and date, what parents have said, actions taken and planned. These notes must remain confidential in a locked filing cabinet or password-protected computer and not contain defamatory language.

Teacher strategy

5. Know where parents can go for help.

Purpose. To promote a well-resourced parent community with access to high quality information and local support, who are then better placed to have their needs and their children's needs met.

Action. One staff member or team can develop an easily accessible parenting resource kit for the school for use by parents and teachers, and promoted in the newsletter. The kit can include brochures, quality websites, that parents can access around common issues such as those on *Raising Children Network*, and lists of nearby services including, where relevant, welfare, financial, health, tutoring, counselling and other assistance.

If necessary, refer parents to the principal, school psychologist or special needs coordinator for further assistance.

Teacher strategy

6. Organise workshops or publish articles in newsletters for parents

Purpose. To educate parents on common issues of concern. This also helps to reduce teacher time in meeting individually with parents to discuss common concerns.



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Action. Run a night-time seminar for parents by a teacher, school psychologist, or external expert on 'Helping children and adolescents make and keep friends' or 'How to help children and adolescents with anxiety and depression'.

Alternatively a newsletter article may cover *The impact of over-parenting on resilience*. For more information see the Psych4Schools free ebooklet on *Working with helicopter parents*.

Teacher strategy

7. Ensure teachers are consistent, and also make appropriate allowances for additional needs students.

Purpose To ensure all teachers recognise that students who have additional or special education needs require additional discipline and/or welfare steps or procedures in response to problem behaviours.

Remember, these students cannot be expected to behave or cope with the school day in the same ways as the 'average' child.

Action. Ensure school discipline and/or welfare policies formally document additional discipline and welfare; and that all staff are familiar with the policies and steps used for additional needs and special education needs students.

Teacher strategy

8. Always use natural and logic consequences.

Purpose. To assist in changing the student's future behaviour through the use of natural and logical consequences, for example, if a student does not complete their homework, a clear and logical consequence would be that they stay inside for part of lunchtime until the homework is completed.

Action. Use natural and logical consequences that seek to resolve the problem and help restore the harm caused by a student's behaviour.

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