

### Pro-active Behaviour Strategies

These strategies are in no particular order. They may be useful when supporting children. This is not a definitive list but gives some suggestions.

### Staff Supports – General

- Using a behaviour chart to identify triggers / time when behaviour occurs / to gather more information in order to be pro-active in supporting the child
- Looking out for triggers and use planned strategies to support
- All strategies should be shared with all adults and consistently implemented
- Consistency
- Build positive relationships with children – “Catch them being good!” e.g. praising them when they show good manners
- Pass on good news (not just concerns) to others
- In difficult situations, the adult must be calm, clear and firm
- Make statements – do not ask why or argue with a child!
- Give take up time – presume they will do as you have asked
- Use consequences fairly and appropriately
- Keep language simple e.g. “Settling down” “Standing quietly”
- Always remain calm
- Encourage children to take ownership of their own behaviour
- Focus on the primary issue – don’t get caught up with sighs, tutting etc
- Acknowledge immediately if child co-operates with a request
- Avoid sarcasm, humiliation, scoring points etc, it is not about winning!
- Be assertive in a calm manner e.g. “I am not speaking to you like that.” in response to rude / offensive language
- Avoid bringing up previous incidents

### Staff Supports – Class

- Chunking / breaking the day / activity down in to manageable tasks or periods of time
- Give children areas of responsibility or jobs within the home
- Humour – if appropriate
- Provide thinking (processing) time
- Regular brain breaks or as required
- Planned ignoring (this is not condoning the behaviour but used in a planned way to de-escalate the situation which can be addressed with the child when they are calm)
- Tactically ignore attention-seeking behaviour – whenever possible!
- Establish familiar routines / structures
- Different way to complete work e.g. use of ICT, scribe
- Remove other children if necessary

Redirecting – guide the child towards a different, less stressful/more motivating activity this may help diffuse an emotionally charged situation. Even a subtle change in activity can sometimes achieve this.

- Offer child 2 choices – both of which are acceptable to you, a useful tactic to help a child out of a situation / to move them on
- Offer / suggest time out
- Walking breaks
- Provide an area for personalised space / quiet area / time out
- Distraction
- Use of sensory equipment / fidget toys / ear defenders
- Redirect the child from the environment
- Use child’s own interest to engage them or distract them from the situation
- Distraction / change of activity / giving responsibility can be effective
- Give children opportunities to cool off – away from an audience

Close Proximity – moving closer to a child (whilst respecting personal space) can help a child feel more secure. A light physical touch may also be reassuring.

- Adult support – standing / sitting near a child, offering help

Modelling – use calm, relaxed body language/tone of voice to model the behaviour you are trying to guide a child towards. Humour may help.

- Use a calm voice / calm manner and approach
- Use of positive role models by praising appropriate behaviour or someone who is doing what they were asked to do
- Mindfulness
- Use positive language whenever possible
- Treat all children with respect
- Be non-confrontational – tone / volume of voice, body language etc as children always hear the intention in how something is said
- Always try to repair and re-build relationships. Part amicably!

Prompting – use positive language to remind a child of what you expect them to do next. Avoid labelling the undesirable behaviour e.g. “Remember to walk here, thanks!” rather than “Don’t run!” Prompts may also be visual, such as an agreed signal discussed beforehand.

- Use of visual timers / countdowns
- Visual schedules / timetables / tasks boards
- Clear expectations and instructions
- Jigsaw reward charts
- Use cue cards / visual prompts
- Be specific about behaviour being unacceptable – criticise the behaviour not the children e.g. “I don’t like the way you are speaking to people, I like it when you use kind words.”
- Partial agreement can help e.g. “I know you are pretending but....”
- Refer to home expectations when indicating inappropriate behaviour
- Action replay – when things go wrong give the child a chance to rewind the situation and replay in a different way, reinforcing good behaviour

Praising – praise/compliment a child to distract from the uncomfortable feelings he/she may be experiencing. This may involve you temporarily ignoring the inappropriate behaviour and discussing it later when the child is calm and at their best.

- Use of reward time for appropriate behaviours
- Appropriate praise – be concise what you are praising don’t just say well done. E.g. “I am pleased with the way you have quietly completed your homework.”
- Be sincere when using praise – children know when it is insincere!
- Encourage children regularly, briefly and, for some children, discreetly
- Try to be specific when using praise e.g. “Good, you started your work on your own there.”
- Avoid qualifying praise e.g. “.... but you could have done better if....” Or “See what you can do when you try!”
- Use points, stickers, certificates, awards, rewards etc

Listening – allow the child to express their concerns/anger in a one-to-one setting away from the audience or whatever triggered his/her anger. Listen in a non-judgemental way and acknowledge that the child is feeling upset.

- Time to talk
- Active listening to the child (show them the respect you want from them)
- Partial agreement – “I understand how you might feel that way.....”