



De-Escalation & Positive Intervention

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	Date of Next Review by
Headteacher/SLT	Jan 2019
Approval	Safeguarding, Premises and Health & Safety

Training for teachers of learners with Severe Behavioural Difficulties, Profound and Complex Learning Difficulties

About the training:

The training covers the following areas:

- Severe learning difficulties (SLD)
- Duty of Care and Safety of Pupils
- De-escalation
- Team intervention
- Reasonable Force
- Guidance on the Use of Restrictive Physical Intervention for Pupils with Severe Behavioural Difficulties
- Post intervention

Meeting your needs:

- This training is relevant to a wide range of people:
- Teachers
- Teaching assistants
- Lunchtime Supervisors
- School leaders

The Training is based on recommendations made in:

- The Salt Review (2010)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools DFE-00058-2011
- Use of Reasonable Force DFE 2012
- Guidance for Restrictive Physical Intervention DoH 2002

The importance of relationships

- Developing and maintaining positive relationships is fundamental to the emotional well-being of children.
- Forming relationships is a core process in all children's development.
- The emotional bonds that infants develop with their parents and other key caregivers are essential for their future development.
- Feelings and emotions are the building blocks of the positive relationships through which we can support and improve the quality of life for children with severe, complex and profound needs.
- The development and maintenance of positive relationships is fundamental to the emotional well-being of children

Responsiveness and sensitivity

- A sensitive, responsive caregiver is one who sees the world from the child's point of view and seeks to meet the child's needs.
- Responsiveness and sensitivity are important in many different ways in the classroom. Not only must teachers and other carers be skilled at teaching, they also need a wide range of skills in relation to nurturing, settling and carrying out care and comfort routines.

Building a relationship of trust

Building a relationship of trust with the caregiver is a crucial process in the emotional development of the child. As trust grows, children begin to express their positive feelings in various ways. They take pleasure in interacting with their caregivers. This is seen through:

- Body language, facial expressions and vocalisations - laughing, smiling, chatting, etc.

- The children appearing relaxed and expressive and able to radiate openness, making themselves accessible to others.

The importance of strong relationships

- When children with complex needs are under stress the importance of strong relationships with particular adults becomes apparent.
- Strong positive relationships are built when teachers/caregivers are attentive, responsive, stimulating and affectionate.
- To promote healthy relationships, teachers/caregivers need to be sensitive and responsive to children

A sensitive and responsive teacher/caregiver is one who sees the world from the child's point of view and seeks to meet the child's needs.

Sensitive and responsive teaching/caregiving has four essential components:

- Awareness of a child's signals.
- An accurate interpretation of these signals.
- An appropriate response to the signals.
- A prompt response to the signals.

Barriers to establishing positive relationships

Adults and peers who do not know children with complex needs well may find it difficult to establish positive relationships with them. Because they can experience discomfort due to a child's:

- Lack of speech
- Poor control over their physical movements.
- Difficulties being in the company of others they do not know well.

Although it is important to recognise and acknowledge our own feelings of discomfort, or rejection and hurt, it is how we respond to these feelings that will determine our success in building positive relationships.

Managing your emotions and reactions

- When children have behavioural problems, some teachers/caregivers feel it is important not to show emotional reactions, whereas others will give vent to how they feel.
- However, either extreme reaction can create more stress in situations that are already stressful for both the teacher/caregiver and the child
- In order for a child to begin to trust, they need to experience teachers and caregivers responding to them consistently and with emotion. It is good for children to experience a range of reactions and emotions from their teachers and caregivers and it helps build the relationship.
- Reactions need to reflect feelings but actions need to be consistent and supportive so that strong professional relationships are established between children and their teachers and caregivers.

Think about your school and the children you work with:

- How do you build positive relationships with children?
- How do staff build positive relationships with pupils who are unable to express themselves verbally?
- Think of the caring, nurturing or comforting routines that you or other staff carry out.
- What opportunities are there to build trusting, positive relationships during such routines?
- How are children encouraged to participate as much as possible and have 'control' in such routines?

To build trust and good relationships:

- Talks to the children so that they are aware of what is being done
- Recognises when children are unhappy
- Know your children well and take account of their communication even though they may not communicate verbally.

Learning and development happen in context.

One of the simplest frameworks for understanding this context comes from behavioural psychology. This says that what children learn depends on the **consequences** of their behaviour:

- If a child receives a pleasant consequence after their behaviour they are likely to repeat the behaviour.
- If they receive an unpleasant consequence after their behaviour they are not likely to repeat it.
- The degree to which they perceive the consequence as pleasant or unpleasant will depend upon the strength of the relationship they have with the person concerned.
- Over time a child learns how to behave based on their past experiences.

Use of Rewards

- We often use rewards as a positive consequence and to encourage the behaviour we would like to see.

Changing the environment

- By changing the environment you can change the child's behaviour. In particular the focus should be on what triggers the behaviour.
- A good way of identifying triggers is to keep an ABC chart.

Identifying what triggers a child's behaviour

One of the simplest ways of noticing what contextual factors affect a child's behaviour is to keep an ABC chart. This is a record, over time, of the child's behaviour and the triggers and consequences of that behaviour.

Time/date	Antecedent (Trigger)	Behaviour	Consequences
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- The A (Antecedents) is the trigger - what happened before the behaviour?
- The B (Behaviour) is what the child does - their behaviour or actions.
- The C (Consequences) is the adult's reaction to the child's behaviour or actions.

By noticing what triggers a particular behaviour, children's behaviour can often be changed.

Don't forget, all behaviour occurs in context.

Before starting an ABC chart it is important to be really clear about what behaviour you want to capture on the chart.

After completing an ABC chart, a good question to ask is: If you wanted to start this behaviour, what would you do?

If you can answer this question you have probably identified the triggers for the behaviour.

Communication

Communication can take place using a variety of means and systems - all of which rely upon the quality of the interactions taking place.

Communication begins from the moment we start to interact with another person.

We must learn how to respond to the needs of the child to create a positive experience.

Any intervention should promote the child's autonomy and allow them to come to terms with their world, understand it and continue to learn from it throughout their lives.

Values that underpin interventions

When working with children with complex needs, it is important to be mindful of the rights and responsibilities of the children and your own rights and responsibilities as a member of staff.

Those in your care should be:

- Treated with respect, understanding and dignity through quality care delivered at an individual level
- Treated fairly, openly and honestly, kept safe by being informed and involved and provided with appropriate boundaries and limits, and
- Appreciated for their worth, recognising their humanity with empathy and compassion through high levels of support that offer fairness and firmness where necessary.

A Parent's view

Think of your own child or a child of a close friend or relative. What words or expressions best describe how you would like to see them treated by the staff in their school or early years setting?

The school staff view

Now think of yourself as a member of staff in a school or early years setting, what words or expressions would best describe what you consider to be your rights and responsibilities.

Similarities and differences

- Consider the differences and similarities between your two lists.
- There will be some differences but there are also likely to be some similarities.
- These similarities are often around the need for adults and children to feel safe and secure.

Creating boundaries and routines

As a caregiver you are a link that helps children make sense of their world by creating boundaries and routines.

There are different sorts of boundaries in all our worlds:

- Space boundaries within which we move.
- Time boundaries describing our routines and the order in which we do things.
- Interpersonal boundaries restricting how others interact with us

Creating continuity

As a caregiver you provide a medium of continuity between the past, the present and the future, helping the child to predict what is coming next.

It is through experience that a child can predict and make sense of their world and in order to do this they rely upon, as we all do, consistent patterns and routines.

We all have our routines that make us feel comfortable about our day, e.g. that first cup of tea or a walk with the dog in the evening.

Think about how you feel if something gets in the way of that routine

Security

In order to offer a sense of security, a child must know that there are limits to their world.

They might not like them and they may (literally) kick against them and test them all the time. The more insecure they feel the more they will kick. But, it is only by knowing that there are firm and consistent boundaries that they can make sense of what is happening around them.

They therefore rely upon the caregivers to provide this for them. This helps them to learn to predict their world and reduce levels of anxiety. The more they can feel relaxed about what is happening next the less they will feel the need to test the boundaries

Reducing levels of anxiety

- Work in pairs with one partner blindfolded (or at least with eyes shut).
- Hold your partner's hand and in silence lead them around an open space with your partner keeping their eyes closed for approximately 20-30 seconds. When you stop, ask your partner to open their eyes and reflect upon how it felt to be led around in this way.

- Repeat the task, with your partner walking with their eyes closed, but this time stand alongside your partner and cradle their arm.
- As they walk give a running commentary on exactly what you are doing and what you do next as you lead your partner around the space. After approx 20-30 seconds stop and once again ask your partner to reflect upon how it felt to be led in this way.
- Now imagine a child who is totally blind and has never left their home. They know everything there is to know about that house. What if one morning they wake up in the middle of a very large field? How would they feel? What would they understand? How would they make sense of where they are or what to do? How different is this experience from that of a child with complex needs starting school, or moving to a new classroom?

Dependence

At birth all children are highly dependent upon those who care for them.

As they grow up they become more and more independent. However, children achieve independence at different rates and some children will never achieve full independence.

Some children with complex needs will continue to rely on carers to help them:

- With basic daily living skills, eating, toileting etc., and/or
- Make sense of what to them is a scary and unpredictable world

The physical environment

An ordered and secure environment that offers consistency provides the opportunity for predictability and independence

Being able to predict and prepare for change is important to everyone. Without the opportunity to exert control and to predict what will happen

in an environment, we would all be living under continuous stress. We would constantly look for indicators and predictors of change, even if none existed

Repetitive behaviours

All behaviour has meaning and it is the way in which we attach meaning to it that will determine how effective we are in dealing with inappropriate behaviours.

For some children with challenging behaviour, repeated patterns become a form of comfort and stimulation, creating a situation for them in which they can predict what is going to happen next.

Repetitive behaviour can also be used as a way of shutting out the unpredictable world and substituting it with a predictable, manageable and comfortable one

Managing our feelings

Recognising our feelings

- As teachers and caregivers, it is important to recognise and acknowledge our own feelings when faced with challenging behaviour.
- It is how we act upon these feelings that will determine how successful we are in what we do.
- Some people feel it is important not to show emotional reactions, while others will show clearly how they feel. Either extreme can create more stress in situations that are already stressful.
- It is important to acknowledge to yourself how you feel. You have the right to feel angry, upset or hurt by what is said and done to you, but your actions in response to such feelings should be considered carefully.

Stay in Control

When you are upset and made to feel angry, you need to take a mental and physical step back before committing yourself to a considered response.

In any confrontational situation the first person who needs to calm down is the teacher/caregiver. To cope with a challenging situation you need to maintain both firmness and presence of mind.

In order to help others control their feelings and behaviour we must control our own

Remind yourself:

- "I am prepared, I can handle this"; "Seeking help is a sign of strength"; "I will not take this personally"
- I am prepared, I can handle this; Seeking help is a sign of strength; I will not take this personally
- There's no point in becoming angry - what does the behaviour mean?
- I'm the adult in charge; Reduce the anxiety; Find a way for you and the child to get out with dignity
- I will take it one step at a time; If I feel my heart pumping, I will slow down
- Start sentences with 'I' rather than 'you'
- Avoid judgmental remarks that imply blame
- Don't get drawn into the spiral of a power struggle.

Sending out emotional messages

- To manage a challenging situation, you need to communicate an 'emotional message'.
- This emotional message should signal safety and security.
- The communication can take many forms but should be at a level a child can access and understand

Acting as a reasonable parent

- The law imposes a legal duty on teachers and schools to take care of the safety and well-being of pupils in their care. This duty of care arises where a teacher-pupil relationship exists.
- Every teacher and school authority has a duty to take reasonable care to ensure that their acts or omissions do not cause reasonably foreseeable injury to their pupils.

In practice this means acting, as any reasonable parent would, in the best interests of the child to:

- Prevent injury to themselves or others, or serious damage to property, and
- Ensure that there is no significant disruption to good order and discipline

The duty of care applies to the individual

The duty of care is owed to every child, not just those whose behaviour might be viewed as 'ordinary' or 'reasonable'.

Teachers and caregivers working with children with complex needs have to recognise and respond to those needs. The duty of care means making sure that, when you act, you are not putting anyone at risk of harm.

The duty of care ARC

In order to plan to meet the duty of care, you should:

- **Assess** - identify risks and people likely to be affected.
- **Reduce** - levels of risk.
- **Communicate** these findings to others.

Doing nothing is not an option!

Five challenges

A helpful starting point in planning to meet your responsibilities under duty of care is to consider how you will keep pupils safe in following situations, which are a routine part of responding to children's needs but which some pupils may find challenging and which may, as we have seen, trigger unwanted or unacceptable behaviour:

- Imposing rules and insisting on conformity
- Having high expectations
- Ensuring adequate change and transition throughout the day
- Invading personal space, e.g. carrying out basic care routines, such as toileting, and
- Use physical intervention where necessary, e.g. touching, guiding and escorting.

The Concept of Containment

Containment is a very simple but powerful concept in child development, which gives rise to a way of offering practical support to children through an awareness of their emotional distress.

There are two basic elements:

- The 'container' - this is an adult - usually a key person in the child's life - who is able to acknowledge and accept a child's distress and makes experiences safe for them by offering a way, temporarily, to relieve the child of their anxieties, until they are able to understand and control them themselves.
- All the thoughts and feelings that give rise to fears and anxieties and which prevent a child from understanding and managing their own feelings are 'contained' by the adult.

Containment in practice

The following example may help you to understand the concept of containment better. Imagine yourself in a new job.

You're in a place you've never worked before, possibly never been in before, with people you've never met, doing a job you know something about but you're not quite clear what is expected of you.

You don't know what support you can expect from your colleagues, your line management or your employer.

and anxieties bubbling away inside as pressure begins to build to the point that initiates an uncontrollable reaction.

Write down the thoughts, feelings and anxieties you would experience either just before you started work or on your first day

Write down what you think would help to calm the fears and anxieties that you have identified.

The benefits of containment

Your answers may have included the importance of having a mentor or someone identified as a point of reference.

- As adults in the workplace, we all recognise the benefits of having a reassuring figure whose calm manner and presence helps to reduce our anxiety at times of stress or uncertainty. A good mentor can empathise and plan to provide support.
- Exactly the same can be said for children as they face new and unfamiliar experiences, whether they are children who are able to articulate their feelings and anxieties or children with very limited means of communication, who rely heavily upon their emotional interactions with others to feel safe and secure.
- Some children with complex needs, may experience uncertainty and anxiety on a weekly or daily basis.
- Some children may experience uncertainty and anxiety in relation to every change that takes place throughout the course of the day.

If we can recognise the anxiety caused by new and unfamiliar experiences within ourselves, as adults with all our emotional resources, we can begin to appreciate and understand the responses of children to uncertainty and change.

How parents become 'containers' for their children's anxieties

Parents become aware of their baby's distress and anxiety through behaviours which communicate the child's internal experiences, their fears and anxieties, e.g. through crying, not feeding, not sleeping, restlessness, etc.

Through the baby's behaviours, its feelings are described as being projected into the parent. In a sense the baby is saying, 'Help me. I can't understand what these thoughts and feelings mean but they scare me'.

In response, parents may then try to calm or 'contain' the baby, e.g. by picking the baby up, talking and making soothing noises, all the time being aware of what the baby responds to and repeating what is

successful as the baby calms. All this takes place within a non-verbal context where feelings are expressed physically.

Through such behaviour, parents become 'containers' for the child's anxieties.

Containing fears and anxieties

Adults working with children with complex needs need to learn how to respond to and 'contain' children's fears and anxieties so that something which is confusing and frightening to a child can be made more understandable and predictable for them.

Containment can turn experiences that children find frightening or which cause them anxiety, into nurturing experience that encourage growth and understanding.

Containment provides us with an initial framework for understanding and responding to children's behaviour. It also demonstrates the importance of the adult's capacity to contain not only their own fears and anxieties but also those of the children.

Containment and attachment theory

The ideas of containment are closely linked with those of attachment as they both rely upon an emotional connection between adults and children.

Children are not born with their attachment already formed. It emerges over time as they develop a trusting relationship with those adults who can make their world safe and secure by containing their anxieties.

What is attachment?

An attachment is an emotional bond between the child and the adult.

The psychologist John Bowlby was the first attachment theorist, describing attachment as a

'...lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.'
(Bowlby, 1969, p.154).

Bowlby believed that the earliest bonds formed by children with their parents/carers have a tremendous impact that continues throughout life.

Attachment and security

The central theme of attachment theory is that the main caregivers, who are available and responsive to their infant's needs, establish a sense of security for them.

The infant knows that the carer is dependable, and this creates a secure base for the child to explore the world.

The caregiver strengthens their attachment to the child in a number of different ways:

- Emotionally - 'My caregiver understands my feelings'.
- Cognitively/communicatively - 'My caregiver is aware of my needs'.
- Interactively - 'My caregiver is there for me'.
- Physically - 'My caregiver is nearby'

The role of attachment

Attachment relationships play a key role in the child's:

- Development
- Concept of self
- Life experiences
- Relationships with others

Attachment behaviour

Children's behaviour and its effects become regulated by a concern for maintaining a positive and loving relationship with their carers.

Bowlby referred to 'attachment behaviour' as any form of activity that results in a child accessing and/or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who the child believes is better able to cope with the world.

The knowledge that an attachment figure is accessible and responsive provides a strong and pervasive feeling of security, encouraging continuity of the relationship.

In all children behaviours that show a desire to maintain a relationship include

- Eye contact
- Reaching
- Smiling
- Signalling or calling
- Pouting
- Holding or clinging
- Protesting separation
- Seeking to be picked up
- Following

Attachment theory identifies two fundamental types of attachment:

- Secure attachment
- Insecure attachment

Insecure attachments have been further divided into three categories:

- Ambivalent
- Disorganised
- Avoidant

Characteristics of secure attachment

- Securely attached children exhibit minimal distress when separated from their parent or caregiver. These children feel secure and able to depend on their parent and caregivers.
- When the adult leaves, the child feels assured that the parent or caregiver will return. When frightened, securely attached children will seek comfort from their parent or caregiver.
- Securely attached children know these adults will provide comfort and reassurance, so they are comfortable seeking them out in times of need and will quickly settle once reassured

Characteristics of insecure attachment

- Ambivalent Attachment: Ambivalently attached children usually become very distressed when a parent or caregiver leaves the room. Ambivalent attachment is a result of children not being able to depend on their main carer to be there when the child is in need. This attachment type is relatively uncommon.

- **Disorganised Attachment:** Children with disorganised attachment do not behave consistently in response to reunions with their parents or caregivers. They may protest then freeze or want to be held and/or go limp, suggesting a lack of stability or uncertainty in their relationship with caregivers.
- **Avoidant Attachment:** Children with an avoidant attachment tend to avoid parents or caregivers. When offered a choice, these children will show no preference between a parent/caregiver and a complete stranger. This attachment type may be a result of neglectful carers. Children who are punished for relying on a carer will learn to avoid seeking help in the future.

Attachment and children with complex needs

Children with complex needs, especially those with physical difficulties, may not be able to respond to carers in the same way as children without disabilities. It is therefore important for carers and teachers working with children with complex needs to respond to the smallest gestures and communication from the child. Carers and teachers also need to communicate clearly when leaving and when returning to a child with complex needs as this will help establish a positive experience and reaffirm for the child the secure attachment within their relationship.

Early attachment is important because it enables children to develop a general mental model of whether adults can give them security and reassurance. Failure to form secure attachments early in life can have a negative impact on behaviour in later life. Children with secure early attachments tend to form strong relationships later in life.

Attachment theory is useful when thinking about the needs of children with complex needs however it is also important not to jump to conclusions about attachment style because a child with complex needs may find it difficult to respond in the same way as other children.

Communication

All children communicate in a number of ways:

- they communicate through their speech
- they use non-verbal communication, for example through their posture and facial expressions.
- Some of this may be intentional and some of it may be unintentional - especially if they are adolescents.
- If you look closely enough at any child with complex disabilities, you will understand they are also communicating. They may not be using speech, or at least not complex sentences, but they will be communicating non-verbally, both intentionally and unintentionally, how they are feeling and what they want

Developing communication

- The fundamental skills of communication are learnt from birth.
- These fundamental skills underpin the development of speech and language in the second and third years of a child's development.
- Speech development also occurs in many ways from the word 'go', but it is useful to think about the fundamentals of communication as underpinning this development

The fundamentals

Children learn to communicate.

The fundamental skills of early communication are to:

- Give brief attention to another person.
- Share attention with another person.
- Extend this attention and to concentrate on another person.
- Develop shared attention into 'activities'.
- Take turns in exchanges of behaviour.
- Have fun and play.
- Use and understand eye contact.
- Use and understand facial expressions.
- Use and understand non-verbal communication such as gesture and body language.
- Use and understand physical contact.
- Use and understand vocalisations, with the vocalisations used becoming more varied and extensive, then gradually becoming more precise and meaningful.

Communication and complex disability

Examples of communication:

As we have seen, children with complex disabilities may have very little speech and are likely to communicate through a range of other means, including:

- Vocalisation
- Head movements
- Facial expressions
- Tongue activity
- Eye contact, gaze or eye-pointing, and
- Hand and arm activity

It is often very difficult to interpret these signals. It is important, therefore, for adults who know the child well to work together to:

- Discuss meanings.
- To interpret meaning consistently.

Challenges when interpreting communication

It is sometimes difficult to interpret what a child with complex needs is trying to communicate, for the following reasons:

- The communication is very brief and is not noticed.
- The communication is not consistent.
- The communication means different things in different contexts.
- The communication means different things to different people.
- The child is expected to have an opinion, e.g. between a choice of activities, when they may not have one.
- Adults assume that they know what children like and don't like but the children changes their preferences over time.

The role of social interaction and child development

Language, attention and memory do not simply develop in the brain. They are acquired through interaction with others.

All learning takes place in a dynamic, social environment.

The learning between the adult and the child is two way - the child learns from the adult and the adult also learns from the child.

It used to be thought that the adult controlled this interactional process. We now know that, even with very young infants, that this is a much more two way process.

Infants are not passive in their interactions - they often initiate and maintain the interactive games that they have with adults. These games are characterised by mutual enjoyment.

For children with complex needs, there are a variety of reasons why such interactions may be different:

- There may be fewer initiating behaviours from the child.
- The adult may have difficulty reading the child's signals.
- The child's responses may be delayed or ambiguous.
- The child may not be enjoying the game enough to continue.

Challenges for children

What do we do that challenges children?

However well-meaning your actions are, it is likely that at your behaviour will sometimes challenge particular children. This is particularly the case when working with children with complex needs.

This may be because you:

- Impose rules and expect behavioural conformity
- Have high expectations for achievement
- Introduce changes and transitions during the day
- Invade personal space, e.g. by carrying out basic care routines, such as toileting, and
- Use physical intervention, e.g. touching, guiding and escorting.

All these elements form part of the daily routine for children with complex needs and are part of a positive response to their needs.

Your Role

What is your role?

It is important to create the environment you wish a child to experience - an environment which is safe, secure and predictable.

For children with complex needs, this is achieved by understanding and being understood by those caring for them.

Building a relationship

Think about:

At what level the child understands what you want from them, and
What they can expect from you.

Consider the most basic of responses from parents when faced with a very young baby.

Parents will try to establish an understanding with their child by doing something to elicit a positive response, e.g. a smile. By repeating such activities a connection is formed and shared behaviour becomes predictable and safe

Acting as a 'container'

When a young child becomes distressed, carers try to find ways to comfort them, to make them feel safe and secure, to show that the world is not scary and unpredictable.

We have already met the concept of 'containment', which is used to describe this very early important activity. This can be extended and applied to children of all ages.

As the word implies, containment is about the ability to contain feelings and anxieties, and to offer security and understanding in situations that children find frightening, unpredictable and confusing.

Sometimes children's anxiety and difficult behaviour is triggered by not knowing what the boundaries are and being unable to understand and predict what is happening, what is going to happen next and what the consequences of chosen behaviours will be.

Managing change

What does change mean to each child?

Most people find change difficult. Whether starting a new job, moving house or splitting from a long term partner, change is part and parcel of the cycle of life.

However, for some children with complex needs, especially those with autistic spectrum conditions, change can be overwhelming, causing them stress and anxiety.

Why is planning for change important?

In order to support the emotional well-being of pupils who find change difficult, it is important to establish a whole school system which enables them to move smoothly through the school day and maximises their ability to learn.

Why is planning for change important?

This should always begin by identifying key changes, particularly:

- Beginnings
- Endings, and
- Other transitions.

Key techniques to help children deal with change?

The school day should:

- be structured and predictable so that children feel safe, and
- consist of identifiable 'units' with a clearly defined beginning, an accessible activity and a distinct end that cues pupils into what is happening next.

All movement from 'unit' to 'unit' should be:

- communicated clearly through classroom and school routines, and
- cued by speech, gesture, objects of reference, visual timetables, symbols, sign, music, etc.
- Pupils should be prepared for unexpected changes to the 'unit' structure as soon as possible, using methods that are clear and meaningful to them, to reduce their stress levels.
- Staff teams should work together to ensure the smooth running of the classroom, offering a safe, secure and predictable environment that maximises access to learning.

Staff should:

- Offer physical and emotional support using single words or short phrases as 'cues' and 'anchors' to keep children focused
- Manage movement and transitions within, around and between spaces
- Use a calm voice with limited language that reassures rather than excites
- Offer a 'get out with dignity card' that does not undermine a pupil's sense of control in a challenging situation, e.g. by offering a choice of two options to complete the same activity
- Establish and maintain positive relationships in day-to-day interactions to build trust
- Be consistent to ensure that pupils' behaviour and emotional responses are nurtured, and
- Make pupils feel safe, secure and supported. This will enable pupils to learn to manage their own behaviour, make progress and embrace change.

Challenging behaviour

What do we mean by challenging behaviour?

Many behaviours 'challenge us' throughout our daily lives, so what do we mean when we say a child has "challenging behaviour"?

Identify the different sorts of behaviours that would challenge you

Responding to challenging behaviour

The term 'challenging behaviour' is a neutral description. It does not degrade the child.

No child should be judged by their behaviour, even though it may have very negative consequences.

Instead, there should be a 'no blame' response towards both adult and child. This approach:

- promotes examination of the purpose of the behaviour.
- draws attention to other factors that influence behaviour and can be changed, e.g. relationships, communication and interaction.

However, we have a duty of care to respond to challenging behaviour in order to protect children who display challenging behaviour and others around them.

Doing nothing is not an option!

Case Study – Michael

Read this case study of Michael, who has Cri Du Chat Syndrome (CDCS)

Michael has Cri Du Chat Syndrome (CDCS), one of the features of which is challenging behaviour, including hyperactivity and aggressive and oppositional behaviour. About 90% of CDCS children have problems with poor concentration, impulsiveness and overactivity.

The main areas of concern with Michael's behaviour are:

- Biting
- Head butting
- Throwing
- Climbing

Due to the incidents that have occurred, Michael has been the subject of much discussion throughout his school life. These discussions have involved the class staff, the school behaviour coordinator and the school educational psychologist.

Throughout his time in school there have been a number of behaviours that have been a cause for concern and have resulted in injuries to staff. In addition to those above, these have included:

- Head banging
- Dropping to the floor
- Making his body rigid and not moving
- Pinching
- Scratching
- Grabbing
- Hanging around necks of staff

Through the use of ABC charts, some of the triggers for these behaviours have been identified as:

- Seeking attention
- Determination to get something he wants – any toy or distraction in the room
- Overstimulation/overexcitement
- New people
- New situations
- Things happening out of routine
- Loud noises

Physically Michael is very strong and is very determined; when he sees something he wants he will persistently go for it, though he can be easily distracted.

Michael does not enjoy any form of physical intervention and can become very excited by this, using the full range of his behaviours to deal with any staff intrusion.

Michael has limited communication skills, using one word utterances and pictures and symbols, which are strongest in his areas of interest, e.g. words like 'ball', 'blue', 'bus', 'home', etc. He enjoys using his range of vocabulary with staff when prompted and can easily be distracted when his attention is directed early enough.

Over time, the class staff team have developed effective strategies for managing his behaviour, built around his interests and the ways in which he likes to engage with staff.

Through working as a **team**, staff have identified situations that trigger Michael's challenging behaviours and have worked together to pre-empt behaviours when triggers were imminent.

- For example, newspapers, leaflets, books etc., which he loved tearing up, are generally kept out of sight. Where this cannot be avoided – in the entrance foyer of the school, for example – staff would use distraction techniques, occupying Michael with something equally interesting when passing these areas, e.g. pointing out colours in the environment in the opposite direction and saying the colour together.
- At transition times, which was another trigger for Michael, there would always be a member of staff available to keep him engaged and focused on moving on to the next activity, using symbols and saying the words the symbols represented, e.g. 'Art', 'Cooking' – Michael enjoyed repeating words.
- In the mornings, getting off the bus and walking to class were usually very challenging as Michael could be distracted along the way by the pamphlets in the entrance hall, by people and objects he passed along the way and, when he got to the classroom, by the many interesting things in the classroom. This was managed by creating a motivating activity for Michael to do immediately on arrival each morning – a colour matching exercise. A member of staff would collect him from the bus with a symbol for the activity so he would be motivated to get to class and get on with it. Staff in the school were asked not to engage in conversation with Michael at transition times.

Activities using symbols and words were written into his targets, teaching him to use an adaptation of PECs to request things rather than grabbing.

Time-out was also used. This was used as a consequence of becoming too disruptive after a warning coupled with attempts by staff to motivate him to reengage in a session. Michael could go to a designated area but nowhere else if he chose not to engage in sessions. This was very effective as inevitably he preferred being with the group rather than a bare time-out space.

Team work was very important in managing Michael's behaviour and staff worked out which members of staff would deal with Michael in particular contexts. They also agreed when to intervene if a member of staff was not getting anywhere with Michael – especially if he was beginning to get aggressive.

Michael's parents were invited to use similar strategies at home. Staff worked with parents and the nurse to understand how his regular constipation affected his mood, adjusting their expectations of him at times when notified by his mother in his home school book about his current bowel situation.

Summary

Staff were able to identify key times at which behaviours would occur and develop a planned response that all staff then used to establish clear boundaries and consequences for unacceptable behaviour. At the same time they built positive relationships with Michael.

Staff used a range of methods to plan how best to support Michael, through an *Individual Access Plan* and a *Positive Handling Plan*.

Individual Access Plans are usually devised when reasonable adjustment strategies within a class don't seem to be working and some form of reorganisation becomes necessary. It involves discussion and planning for positive behaviour and should involve parents.

A Positive Handling Plan becomes important where physical intervention is considered as part of an intervention plan – it sets out clear strategies that are to be used before reaching the point of physical intervention.

Michael has shown tremendous improvement. He can still become over-excited, but responds well to cues, reminders and distraction as a means of calming his behaviour.

The responses focused very clearly on his individual needs and how best to support him within a complex classroom environment. The staff team met regularly, supported by the behaviour coordinator, to achieve an individualised approach that involved a range of supporting professionals.

Physical intervention

Why is physical intervention necessary?

- As a general rule, nobody has the right to touch, move, hold or contain another person.
- However, school staff do have a legal power that allows them to use reasonable force which operates in exceptional circumstances where it is sometimes necessary to act outside the norm.
- Whenever they do use reasonable force, staff need to be clear about why it is necessary. The school's policies will describe the procedures that staff should follow so that if reasonable force is used then it is in the child's best interest and that it was reasonable and proportionate.

The use of physical intervention

There is a clear distinction between:

- Touching, guiding and escorting of children in the course of supporting their learning and development, and
- Responding to challenging behaviours that are a cause for concern because of a risk of harm they pose to the child, other children, adults or property.

Touching versus physical prompting

Choosing physical intervention

- Select a child in your class who does not exhibit challenging behaviour.
- Keep an ABC record of when you touch, guide or escort the child over the course of a day.
- Consider the extent of your physical interventions.
- Are they ever used to coerce the child?

When can reasonable force be used legally?

Reasonable force can be used to prevent pupils from hurting themselves or others, from damaging property, or from causing disorder. See the 2011 Department for Education guidance, *Use of Reasonable Force: Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies*.

The use of physical intervention should be viewed in terms of a continuum of support:

- Beginning with the gentle use of physical touch, e.g. contingent touch to guide, support or praise a child.
- Moving, if necessary, through to the use of physical touch/intervention to remind or reinforce boundaries and expectations.
- Finally and rarely, moving to the extreme of using restrictive physical intervention to completely control movement and mobility.

Your school will have a clear policy and guidance about the use of physical intervention or reasonable force.

The term 'reasonable force' covers the broad range of actions used by most teachers at some point in their career that involve a degree of physical contact with pupils.

Force is usually used either to control or restrain. Reasonable in the circumstances' means using no more force than is needed.

School staff should always try to avoid acting in a way that might cause injury

Who can use Reasonable force?

All members of school staff have a legal power to use reasonable force (Section 93, Education and Inspectors Act 2006).

This power applies to any member of staff at the school. It can also apply to people whom the head teacher has temporarily put in charge of pupils.

Schools can use reasonable force to:

- Restrain a pupil at risk of harming themselves through physical outbursts.
- Prevent a pupil from attacking a member of staff or another pupil.
- Prevent a pupil leaving the classroom where allowing the pupil to leave would risk their safety.

Schools cannot:

- Use force as a punishment - it is always unlawful to use force as a punishment.
- Every school is required by law to have a behaviour policy and to make this policy known to staff, parents and pupils. There is no legal requirement to have a policy on the use of force but it is good practice to have one.

The policy should make clear that any force should be consistent with the circumstances and reasonable and proportionate. The policy should give examples of what constitutes reasonable force (e.g. holding, guiding, shepherding a young person away) and should give examples of what would constitute unreasonable force or restraint (e.g. tripping a young person).

The legal framework

In order to have good policy and practices in the use of positive behaviour management, it is important to understand the legal framework. In addition to the guidance and law on reasonable force school staff also need to:

- Act in accordance with the best interests of the child as established in the Children Act 1989 and the Human Rights Act 1998 and the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the child.
- Exercise a duty of care towards children in their care.
- Make reasonable adjustments for disabled children and children with Special Educational Needs.
- Comply with Health and Safety requirements set down by their employers.

Positive handling

The educational aim of positive handling is not one of punishment or control - it is to promote learning.

Within the context of the legal framework schools should have an open, clear and transparent system of positive handling.

The system needs to support all those involved - children, parents and staff.

There is a wide variety of situations in which reasonable force might be appropriate, or necessary, to control or restrain a child. These fall into three broad categories:

- Where action is necessary because there is an imminent risk of injury.
- Where there is a developing risk of injury, or significant damage to property.
- Where a pupil is behaving in a way that is compromising good order and discipline.

Using reasonable force

Reasonable force should be based on providing the maximum amount of care, control and therapeutic support, reflecting the message: "I care enough about you not to let you be out of control."

Planned responses and techniques should be written out and included in individual behaviour support and intervention plans or sometimes known as Personal Handling Plans.

Following a restraint there should be a supportive and reflective structure in place for both the staff and children involved.

All incidents using restraint are reported, recorded, monitored and evaluated.

The emphasis should be on caring, protecting and enhancing positive relationships