 Our Lady of Fatima Special School

Roll No.	19266T
Principal Teacher	Glenda McKeown
Policy	Behaviour Management Policy
Date created	28th May 2025
Date reviewed	
Date reviewed	
Approved by	*Richard Gleeson*
	Chairperson, Board of Management
Date for review	Annually

Aim and Rationale of the Policy

The aim of the Behaviour Management Policy at Our Lady of Fatima Special School is to create a positive, inclusive, and supportive learning environment. Our mission is to provide a happy and secure atmosphere where we value and develop the whole person, celebrating each student's uniqueness. Our ethos, grounded in Christian values—care, compassion, hospitality, trust, dignity, respect, and diversity—aligns with the NCSE Relate Framework which places regulation, connection, and inclusion at the centre of all behaviour supports.

NCSE Relate encourages us to reframe behaviour as a form of communication and dysregulation. This policy emphasises understanding and connection before compliance and prioritises removing barriers to engagement through Universal Design for Learning (UDL), co-regulation, and student voice.

Legislative and Policy Context

This policy is informed by national and international legislative frameworks:

- **Education Act 1998**
- **EPSEN Act 2004**
- **Children First Act 2015**
- **Equal Status Acts 2000–2018**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 2005**
- **UNCRC and UNCRPD**

It also complements the Department of Education's **Understanding Behaviours of Concern (2024)** and the NCSE's **An Inclusive Education for an Inclusive Society (2024)** policy advice.

Related School Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Staff Code of Conduct – DRAW Charter
- Bí Cineálta: Staff & Student Policy
- Parent-School Communication Policy

Key Shifts Based on NCSE Relate

We commit to the following paradigm shifts:

From	To
Managing behaviour	Understanding communication and meeting needs
Hypothesising function	Recognising stressors and environment impact
Changing behaviour	Changing environment to increase wellbeing
Rewards and compliance	Connection, regulation, and intrinsic motivation
Starting with individual interventions	Starting with universal, school-wide inclusive practices

Principles from NCSE Relate Embedded in Our Policy

- **Regulation First**: Prioritise co-regulation to help students return to a calm, engaged state
- **Student Voice**: Actively seek and respond to the perspectives of students
- **Unconditional Positive Regard**: Every student is worthy of dignity and respect
- **Neuroaffirmative Practice**: Celebrate neurodiversity; do not seek to 'fix' difference
- **Solution-Focused Thinking**: Focus on what is working and build from strengths
- **Universal Design for Learning**: Reduce barriers to participation proactively
- **Staff and Student Wellbeing**: Ensure both adult and student needs are addressed
- **Rights-Based**: Grounded in UNCRC and UNCRPD, honouring student rights

Our Approach

At Our Lady of Fatima Special School, we are committed to a relational, regulation-first approach as outlined in the NCSE Relate framework. We believe behaviour is communication, and that dysregulation—not defiance—is often at the root of behaviour that challenges. We view co-regulation as a shared responsibility, and prioritise proactive, compassionate, and inclusive responses.

Our approach includes:

- Embedding co-regulation in daily routines
- Recognising the impact of stressors (biological, cognitive, emotional, social, prosocial, and communication)
- Teaching and modelling emotional literacy
- Providing safe, calm environments to support regulation
- Developing individualised support plans in collaboration with families and professionals

Behaviours of Concern

Behaviours of concern are classified into three broad levels based on intensity and impact:

Level 1 – Low-Level Challenges:

- Examples: Refusal to follow directions, minor disruptions
- Response: Positive reinforcement, consistent routines, clear visual supports

Level 2 – Moderate Challenges:

- Examples: Repeated disruption, emotional outbursts, persistent avoidance
- Response: Co-regulation, limit setting, visual and verbal de-escalation, sensory supports

Level 3 – Significant Challenges:

- Examples: Aggression, self-injury, destruction of property
- Response: Safety-first crisis management, individualised Behaviour Support Plans, post-incident restoration

In all cases, responses are student-centred, non-punitive, and focused on building understanding and capacity.

De-escalation and Crisis Management

Staff use a combination of verbal, non-verbal, and environmental strategies to de-escalate behaviours of concern:

Verbal Strategies:

- Calm, neutral tone of voice
- Minimal verbal prompts or directions
- Offering clear, structured choices
- Acknowledging emotions and affirming student safety

Non-Verbal Strategies:

- Open body language and supportive stance
- Use of visuals, proximity control, and sensory tools
- Creating calming spaces and reducing sensory input

Crisis Response Includes:

- Activating the "one voice" policy
- Removing the audience or creating a safe space
- Refraining from confrontation or negotiation
- Following the "Regulate–Relate–Reason" model by Dr. Bruce Perry

Once the crisis has passed, staff work with the student to reflect on what happened and identify ways to reduce triggers in the future. These moments are viewed as learning opportunities and are handled with empathy and care.

Whole-School Approach

Behaviour support is the responsibility of the entire school community. This includes:

- Ongoing staff professional development in regulation-first approaches
- Collaborative student support teams using a shared language
- Co-creation of support plans with families and clinicians
- Data-informed decision-making using functional assessment tools
- Reflection and review as a team practice

The Relate-Informed Structure of Behaviour Support

Our framework follows the Relate phases of support:

Preventative

- Consistent routines and predictable environments
- Visual schedules, sensory tools, and calming spaces
- Daily wellbeing check-ins and relationship-building practices
- Anticipatory supports (e.g., preparing for change or transitions)

Supportive

- Co-regulation through proximity, calm presence, and reduced language
- Use of "one voice" in crisis situations
- Immediate support through sensory strategies and time-in (not time-out)

Restorative

- Use of restorative conversations and reflection sheets
- Social stories or comic strip conversations
- Collaborative planning for future success

Implementation Strategies

- Behaviour Support Plans and Student Support Files
- Functional Behaviour Analysis and the use of Boxall Profiles
- Understanding behaviour as communication (escape, attention, tangible, sensory)
- Use of positive reinforcement and self-regulation teaching strategies
- Zones of Regulation, choice boards, and calming spaces

Crisis Management

- Verbal and non-verbal de-escalation strategies
- Proximity control, visual supports, low-arousal tone
- Environment control (e.g., remove audience, calm space)
- One-voice policy
- Post-incident recovery and reflection support

Physical Restraint

- Used only in crisis where there is imminent risk of harm
- Only by trained staff using CPI-approved techniques
- Documented, time-limited, and used with utmost care
- Reviewed after each incident with appropriate reflection and parent consultation

Seclusion

- Not permitted under any circumstances
- Recognised as punitive and counter to school values and legal expectations

Partnership with Families

- Engage families as co-creators of support plans
- Provide regular updates and opportunities for reflection
- Ensure that strategies used at school and home align where possible
- Share learning tools, visuals, and strategies for home use

Understanding Behaviour Through Behavioural Support Plans

We use Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) and functional assessments to identify the root causes of behaviour. These plans:

- Analyse behaviours using ABC (Antecedent–Behaviour–Consequence) records

- Identify stressors and triggers across domains (biological, emotional, cognitive, social, prosocial, and communication)
- Include clear, proactive strategies and co-regulation techniques
- Are developed collaboratively with parents, teachers, SNAs, and support staff

The Boxall Profile is used where appropriate to further understand students' developmental needs and inform our planning.

Teaching Appropriate Communication

Teaching communication is a key behaviour support strategy. We use:

- Visual supports (PECS, timetables, choice boards)
- Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) systems
- Social stories and comic strip conversations
- Explicit teaching of language for emotions and conflict resolution
- Teaching students how to request help, a break, or communicate discomfort safely

Creating a Supportive Environment

A supportive classroom environment is created through:

- Clear visual routines and rules displayed in classrooms
- Flexible seating, sensory tools, and calm spaces
- Predictable schedules with transition cues
- A playful pedagogy that includes movement, curiosity, and enjoyment
- Student-centred approaches, offering real choices and voice in learning

Role of Parents

Parents are vital partners in supporting behaviour:

- Share insights into student needs and strengths
- Co-develop BSPs and strategies
- Reinforce regulation and communication strategies at home
- Celebrate progress collaboratively with staff

National Legislative Requirements

- **Education Act 1998**: Obliges schools to provide for students' moral, emotional, and intellectual development
- **EPSEN Act 2004**: Supports inclusive education and provision of Individual Education Plans (IEPs)
- **Children First Act 2015**: Ensures the safeguarding of children and reporting of welfare concerns
- **Equal Status Acts 2000–2018**: Prohibits discrimination in education
- **Disability Act 2005**: Mandates reasonable accommodations
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 2005**: Provides for physical and psychological safety in schools

International Legislative Requirements

- **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**: Emphasises every child's right to education, protection, and participation
- **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)**: Affirms inclusive education as a human right

Duty of Care

Staff operate in loco parentis and have a duty to:

- Maintain a safe physical and emotional environment
- Supervise effectively, especially during times of dysregulation
- Act in the best interests of the child, balancing safety and dignity

Governance Responsibilities

- **Board of Management**: Ensures implementation and legal compliance
- **Policy Review**: Ensures this policy is updated annually and reflects current best practice
- **Training Oversight**: Ensures staff are trained in CPI, trauma-informed care, and co-regulation
- **Documentation and Incident Reporting**: Maintains records for transparency and review

Embedding in Policy

Embedding these legislative and relational approaches ensures that our policy is rights-based, neuroaffirmative, and inclusive. Staff act consistently across settings, modelling respectful and supportive behaviour for all students.

Monitoring and Review

- Track incidents and progress using reflection tools and behaviour logs
- SSE process used to assess impact of supports
- Policy reviewed annually in consultation with the school community and NCSE Advisors

Appendices to Support Practice

The following tools from the NCSE Relate framework will support implementation:

Appendix 1: Phases of Support Template – Planning support across preventative, supportive and restorative phases

Appendix 2: Stressor Recognition and Reduction Tool – Identify and minimise daily stressors

Appendix 3: Getting to Know Me Profile – Amplify student voice and build understanding

Appendix 4: Solution-Focused Goal Setting Tool – Collaboratively create positive, actionable goals

Appendix 5: Reflective Practice Questions – Promoting team learning and professional growth

Appendix 6: Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) Template – Comprehensive, holistic planning tool

This Policy embeds the principles, structures and resources of the NCSE Relate Framework, ensuring that our approach to behaviour is modern, inclusive, and sustainable.

Appendix 1: Phases of Support Template

Phases of Support Template

What the student may be experiencing:		
☂ Preventing	Supporting	Restoring

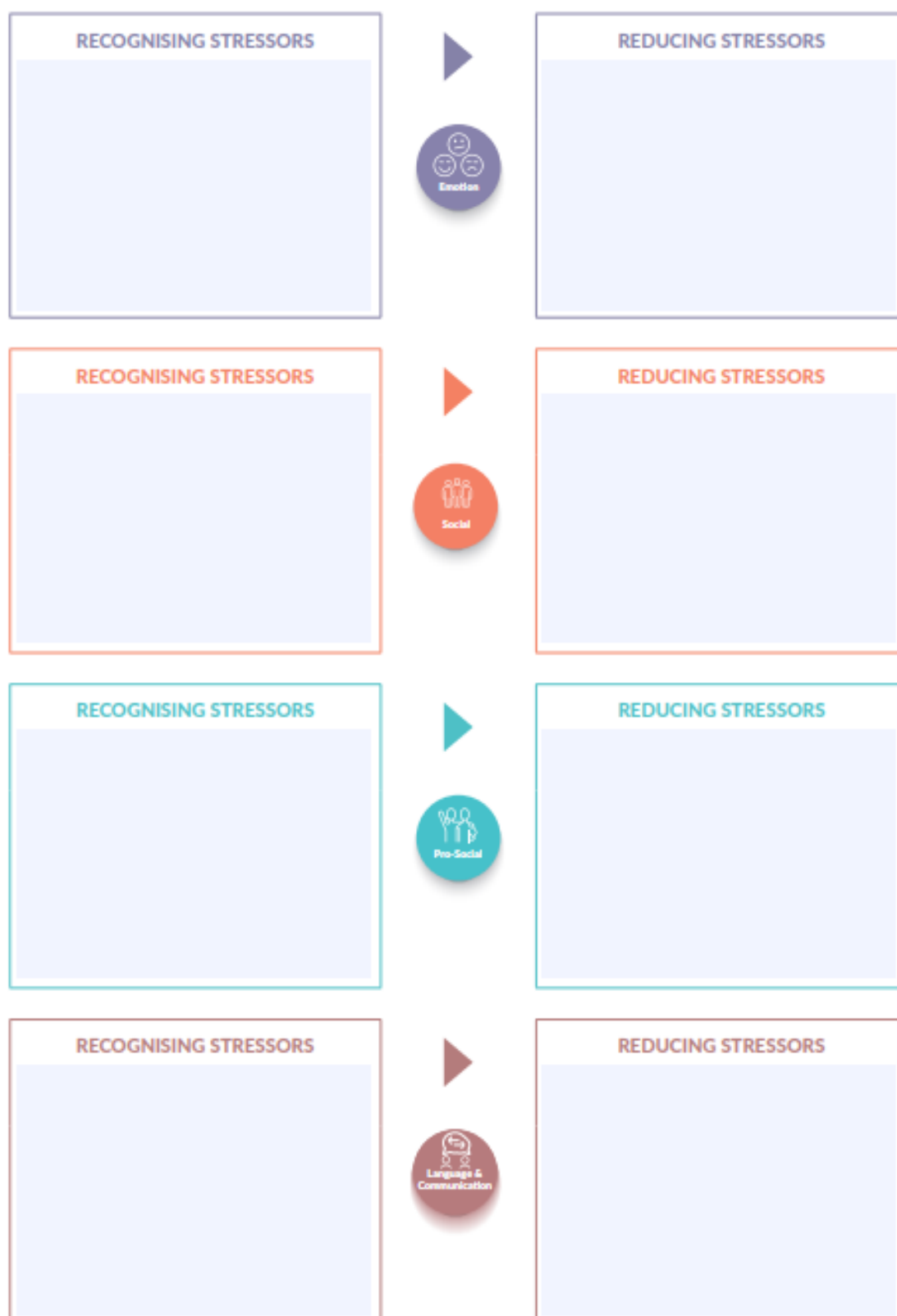| What the adult is doing:		
☂ Preventing	Supporting	Restoring

Appendix 2: Stressor Recognition and Reduction Tool

STRESSOR TOOL

Recognising and reducing stressors is an important part of reframing behaviour. Start with the student's strengths and interests. Then fill out the potential stressors that you recognise through your own observations or what you have learned from the student, their parent/caregiver or other supporting adults. When you have recognised the stressors, consider how you might reduce some of them with consideration to the student's strengths and interests. Some will be outside of your control.

Student Name:	Student's Strengths and Interests	Date:

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Biological

REDUCING STRESSORS

RECOGNISING STRESSORS

Cognitive

REDUCING STRESSORS

RECOGNISING STRESSORS		REDUCING STRESSORS
	▶ Emotion	

RECOGNISING STRESSORS		REDUCING STRESSORS
	▶ Social	

RECOGNISING STRESSORS		REDUCING STRESSORS
	▶ Pro-Social	

RECOGNISING STRESSORS		REDUCING STRESSORS
	▶ Language & Communication	

Appendix 3: Getting To Know Me Profile

Getting to Know Me

Information from me

Information about my teacher

Information from my parent/ caregiver

Information from adults working with me

Getting To Know Me

What do I really love?

What do I like about school?

What activities do I enjoy at school?

What do I like about break time?

What activities do I enjoy at home?

What do I like about yard?

What makes learning easier for me?

Something you should know about me...

I like to show what I have learned by...

Appendix 3 (continued)

Getting To Know Me
Questions for Parents/Caregivers

What are your child's interests and hobbies?

Is your child worried about anything or scared of something that we should know about?

How can we support your child in school?

Is there any other information you would like us to know?

Have they had any life experiences or changes that you would like to share with us?

Appendix 3 (continued)

Getting To Know Me
Questions for Adults working with: _____

What does the student enjoy currently?

How can the student's strengths and interests be used to support their learning?

What's working well?

Are there any approaches or strategies that were previously implemented or are ready to be implemented?

What helped the student in their previous class or setting?

Getting To Know My Teacher

My teacher's name is:

What did you like about school?

My teacher's favourites:

Colour: _____

Animal: _____

Food: _____

What's the most fun thing you like to do on the weekend?

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Do you have any pets?

Do you like to play any games or sports?

Do you like TV or movies?

What's the coolest place you've ever been to?

What is an interesting fact about you?

Getting To Know My Teacher
Dice Game

FAVOURITE
COLOUR

FAVOURITE
MOVIE

DO YOU
HAVE
HOBBIES?

DO YOU
HAVE PETS?

FAVOURITE
FOOD

INTERESTING
THING ABOUT
YOU
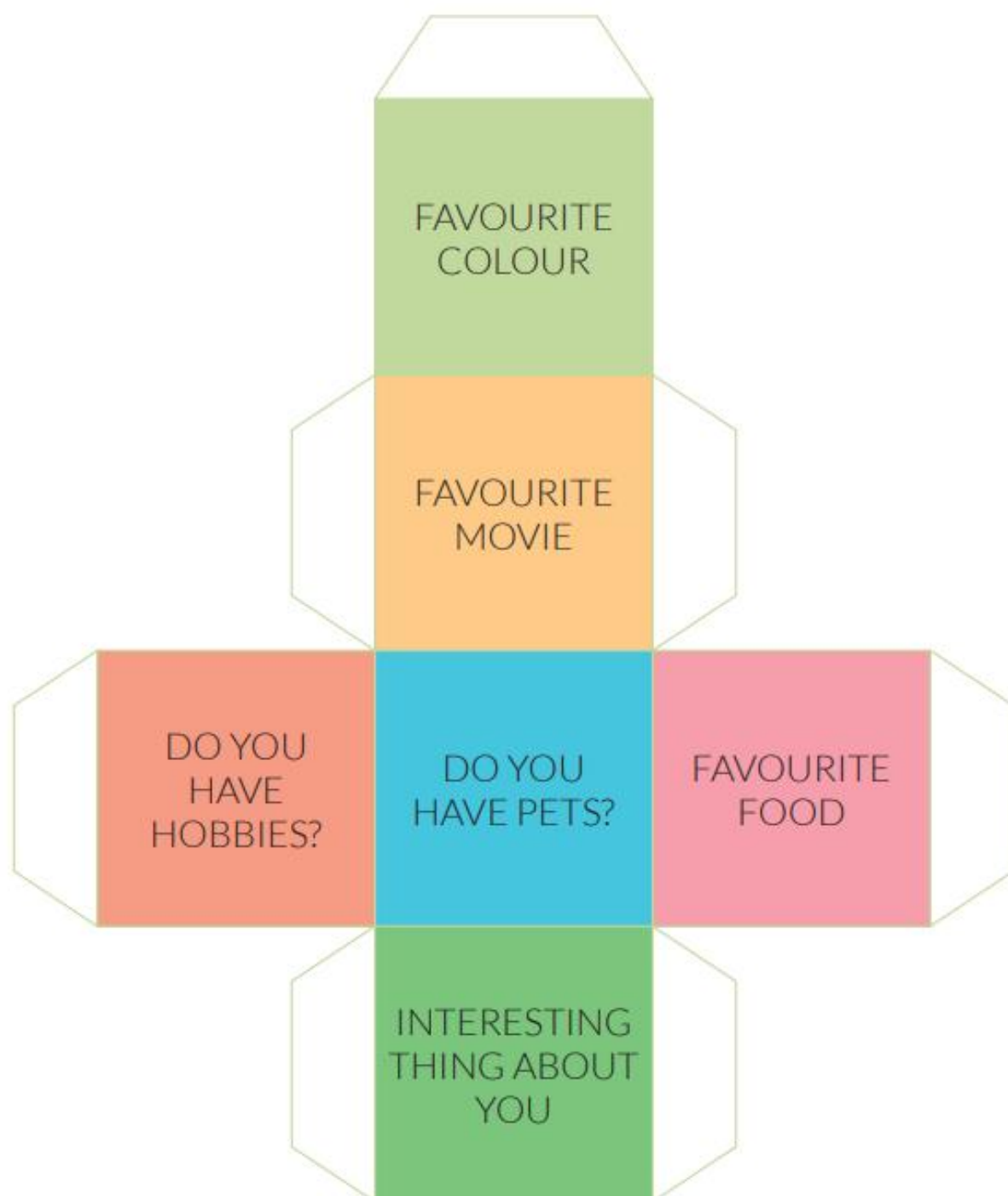
Appendix 4: Solution-Focused Goal Setting Tool

Solution-Focused Goal Setting

What are your best hopes for the student(s)?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What difference might that make?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What are your best hopes for yourself?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What difference might that make?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Preferred future

Suppose those best hopes are realised, how would you know? What would you notice that would tell you these changes have happened?

- What might the student be doing differently, in a way that would be good for them?
- What might you be doing differently?

_____

Appendix 4 (continued)

Exploring existing strengths and solutions

On the scale, where, at 10, the best hopes are achieved, and 0 is the opposite of that, where are you now? Mark a number on the scale below.

0 ——————————————————————————— 10
(best hopes)

How come you are already there and not lower? List 5 things.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Mark where might be the 'good enough' point on that scale?

Small signs of change

Moving up half a point on that scale from where you are now, what will be the next small signs of change that show things are moving in a helpful direction? What will you start looking out for?

Reflective practice

Continuous reviewing and reflecting on what is going well is encouraged. Start looking out for small signs of change, and what you are pleased to notice.

Appendix 5: Reflective Practice Questions

Solution-Focused Review and Reflection

What have you been pleased to notice?

What difference has that made?

What else has been better?

What difference has that made?

Who else has noticed these changes?

What difference has this made?

What might the next signs of change be?

Appendix 6: Behavioural Support Plan Template

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Student name:

Date:

Pertinent background information (if relevant):

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Behaviours in need of support

a. Target behaviours (rank in priority)

No. 1

No. 2

No. 3

No. 4

No.5

b. Known warning signs of impending behaviour

No.1

No. 2

No. 3

No. 4

No.5

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Behaviours in need of support

c. Known triggers of impending behaviour

No. 1

No. 2

No. 3

No. 4

No.5

d. Preventative strategies and techniques (to implement in response to or in anticipation of known triggers)

No.1

No. 2
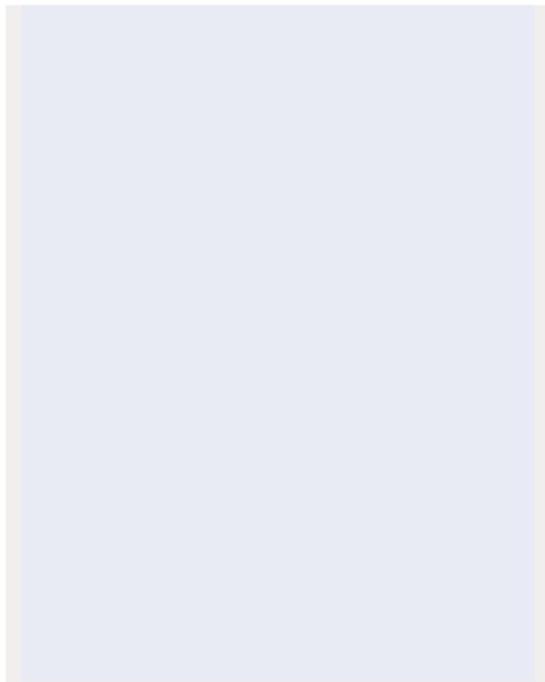
No. 3

No. 4

No.5

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Proactive strategies and techniques

In the classroom (e.g. a particular class)

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date
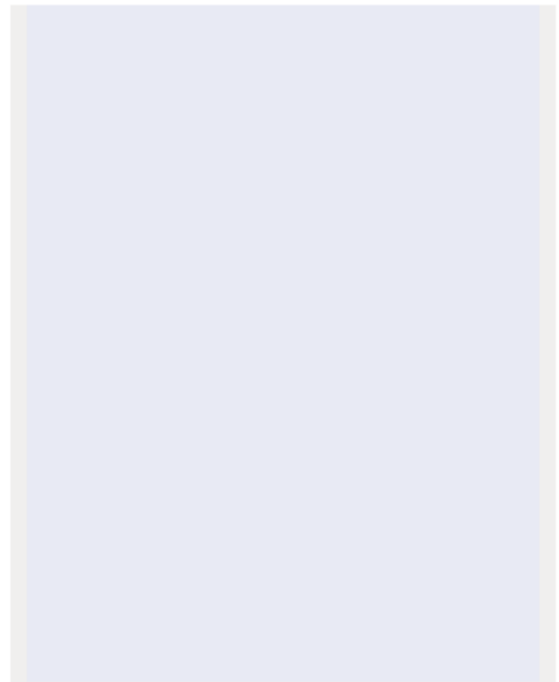
d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Before school

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Proactive strategies and techniques

At assemblies

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

In corridors and shared areas

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

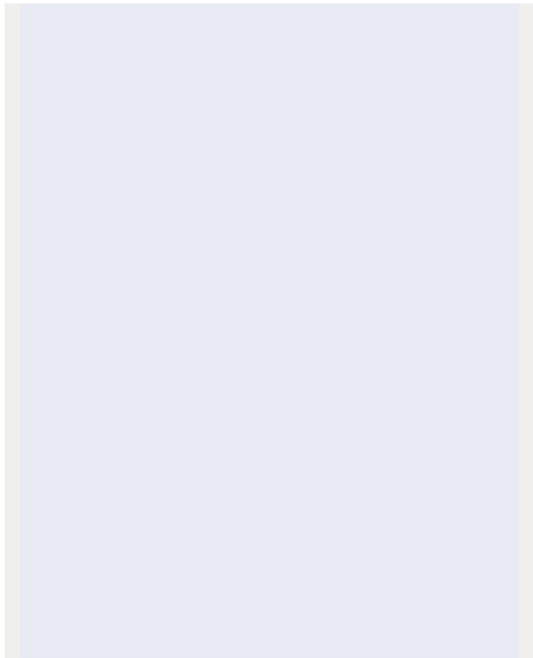d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Proactive strategies and techniques

Recess and lunch

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

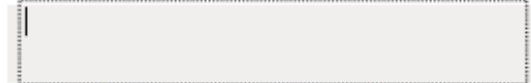c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?
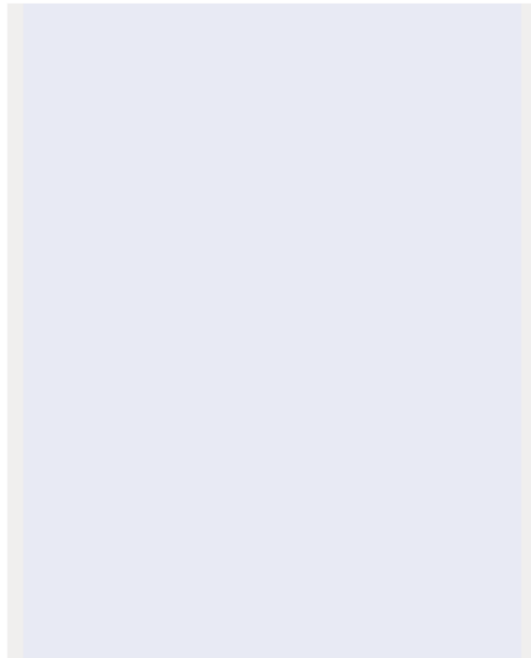
After school

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Proactive strategies and techniques

Camps/excursions/incursions

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

At home

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Proactive strategies and techniques

At second home (if applicable)

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Online, social media, gaming and films

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date   Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Proactive strategies and techniques

Other

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date

Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Other

a. Target behaviours

b. Strategies

c. Beginning date

Concluding date

d. Who is responsible for implementation?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Good behaviour recognition

a. What works to promote good behaviour for this student?

b. How will we know if the recognition is successful?

c. Who is responsible for providing good behaviour recognition?

d. When and how often is behaviour recorded?

Consequences

a. List consequences

b. Who is responsible for giving consequences?

c. When and how often are statements or approaches recorded?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Student's preferred contact people at the school

Person 1 - name and position

Person 3 - name and position

Person 2 - name and position

Person 4 - name and position

Review

a. Review date

c. How is it monitored?

b. Who is involved?

Behaviour Support Plan Template

Sign-off on the BSP

Principal name	Principal signature	Date:

Parent/guardian name	Parent/guardian signature	Date:

Student name	Student signature	Date: