



Package of support for schools when in crisis with a child



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Purpose of guide

This guide provides a steer to schools when they are in crisis with a child.

In essence, this guide exists to:

- Ensure that WPES effective practice is shared as widely as possible
- Provide clarity to schools on a pathway through a difficult period with a child



WPES approach

We have developed a relational model with respect to supporting our children through periods of emotional upheaval and challenging behaviour. We do not judge and we do not seek punishment or consequence for the sake of it. Everything we do has a supportive purpose with the aim of developing self-awareness, self-regulation and foresight.

If adults remain calm and consider their own personal conduct and behaviour carefully, being mindful of body language, tone of voice, facial expression and our choice of language, can go a long way to keeping a child calm. It will also support co-regulation.

Trauma-informed, attachment-aware approaches and strategies are appropriate for all children with respect to supporting and managing behaviour. Those children who are prone to eclectic, often irrational behaviours will certainly benefit. Cause and effect, black and white approaches will not serve to change the undesirable behaviours of the most vulnerable and disengaged learners.

The only real impactful way to gradually change behaviour is to start from a place of curiosity and non-judgment. Seeking to punish behaviours that are not within the control of a child is not going to work. Behaviour needs to be seen as communication.

It is our task to try to understand the meaning of the behaviour and more importantly, to see what lies beneath it. What is really going on?

- Is it the result of trauma?
- Is it a relational issue?
- Is it an unmet learning need?
- Is it a cry for help? - Is it a sensory issue?
- Is it poor teaching and classroom management?

Once there is a clearer understanding of the causes of the behaviour, professionals can create meaningful and impactful plans to remove the stimuli or triggers that can lead to the undesirable behaviour in the first place.

Included in this pack

- Pupil Development and Learning Passport

This is a holistic toolkit that leads staff to unpick the triggers for and causes of negative behaviours. It is also a systematic tracking tool against clear, SMART targets to support a child in developing more productive, positive, pro-learning behaviours.

- McSherry Scale

WPES uses this scale as part of the PDLP process. This scale enables school staff to drill down into the specific areas of behaviour which are of cause for concern. This builds up an evidence base as to whether a child is mainstream or classroom-ready and also enables staff to set realistic, precise, targeted SMART goals and objectives for the child to work towards.

- Back-on-Track Programme

This is one of WPES' internal support packages used with children who require a period of respite in another location following a period of concerning behaviours that need to be unpicked. The simple pupil work pack, staff guide and PowerPoint guide the child to think about the impact of behaviours on others and helps achieve a deeper understanding of how the human brain works in relation to behaviour.

- Models of staff debriefing following incidents of concern

These simple guide sheets support staff or small team reflection following a period of challenging behaviours or a one-off dramatic incident. They place the responsibility for change onto the professional and adults, drilling down into the whole picture of a situation as opposed to solely what a child did. WPES finds that this creates a culture of professional learning and supports minimising a re-occurrence of the same behaviours.

What we suggest to schools

We recommend that schools adopt (amending if schools wish) the Pupil Development and Learning Passport as the principal guide and support package to a child and their family:

- School staff complete the McSherry scale and populate relevant passport page with scores
- Safe staff member with good relationship with child spends some time with child to unpick triggers and stimuli that can spark behaviours
- RAG trigger sheet completed in draft to be shared at parent meeting
- Convene a parent / child meeting with any supporting agencies, a non-judgemental, supportive meeting that is positive in feel
- Parent states what they wish to change, child does, school does, agencies do
- Targets are set with a review planned at 1 week, 2 week, 3 week... intervals
- Information from the 1st section of passport is shared with all staff: triggers, stimuli, what to do, not to do.....
- Proceed with review process
- Redo McSherry Scale every month / 2 months to assess impact and progress

We recommend that the Back-on-Track Programme is used following a serious incident and that there are regular structured opportunities for a child to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others.

Pathways Family of Schools can request free advice and guidance from the Bridge. These schools can seek support with the case and ask that Bridge staff support (where capacity allows) with planning meetings and reviews of the case, to look at next steps.

We also recommend that schools use the staff debrief guide sheets and get into the habit of professionally reflecting and debriefing following a period of challenging behaviours or a one-off incident.



Engagement with Parents / Carers – Think Family!

Our mission is to make families, parents and carers feel welcome and safe across our service. We do not judge them, we do not overburden them. They are just as anxious and vulnerable in many cases as their child who will be attending with us.

Any parental meeting should be guided by the following:

- Parents / carers have a viewpoint and are listened to
- We accept parent's negative views of any predecessor school
- We listen to any anxieties and work within them
- We do not make parents / carers feel that they are to blame
- We build a solid trusting relationship founded on honesty, transparency and clarity
- We are able to signpost families for support and help if a need is identified.

“Strong families help build strong communities, so they are crucial for a successful society”

Think Family toolkit 2009

Families are the building blocks of our communities. As well as providing for the current generation, families bring up the children who will be the future of Hounslow.

In the majority of cases, families provide the positive nurturing, learning and care needed to enable children to lead healthy and happy lives. Good parenting leads to improved attainment, resilience, healthy lifestyles, confidence and feelings of self-worth. Through the provision of effective universal services in the community, such as GP and other community health services, good child care, nursery and school education, most families will flourish.

Some families however, need extra support. Too often cycles of intergenerational disadvantage can become established in families. Children and young people's problematic behaviour in school or the community has traditionally been treated as a child-specific issue, rather than one caused by unmet parental need such as mental health, substance misuse, domestic abuse

(hidden harm) or broader social circumstances such as housing and debt.

What is Think Family?

It is recognised that where families have multiple and complex needs, historically services have worked in isolation of each other. 'Thinking Family' means taking a broader view by ensuring that all members of the household and their wider community are able to get the support they need, at the right time, to enable them to achieve positive changes and improve their lives. It means making sure that families receive integrated, coordinated, multi-agency, solution focused support. By identifying problems early, all services can work closely together to help prevent a family's needs escalating and requiring more intensive, specialist intervention. This means breaking down multi-agency barriers, facilitating better communication between professionals and smoothing the journey for families with complex needs. By taking an integrated approach, we will meet needs in a more effective and efficient way. Practitioners who work in partnership with families are able to recognise their strengths and promote resilience to build their capabilities.



