

Special Educational Needs and Challenging Behaviour: A Post-Primary, Whole School Approach

Handout 5: Teacher Strategies Checklist

Strategies for **preventing** challenging behaviour in the classroom:

- Be organised and on time
- Try to have a positive/upbeat start to the lesson.
- Be aware of your tone of voice – calm and persuasive without arrogant or condescending.
- Use your initiative, tailoring your actions to individual situations.
- Use pupils names rather than referring to them in impersonal terms.
- Try to have a sense of humour, be relaxed.
- Give pupils a choice or a way out of situations.
- Deal with secondary issues at a later date. Loan a pen to those without, but follow this up, after the lesson or as a reminder before the next lesson.

Strategies for **diverting** challenging behaviour in the classroom:

- Give pupils responsibility.
- Change the subject/conversation if possible.
- Acknowledge the reason for the conflict but say you will help or sort it out later.
- If appropriate, accept some responsibility for the situation and offer a new start.
- Be aware of the needs of the individuals and where appropriate modify tasks or offer support.
- Bring humour to the situation!
- Talk about how they have successfully dealt with other similar situations

Strategies for **defusing** challenging behaviour in the classroom:

- Use a personal touch – pat on the back, use of name or reference to former achievements.
- Offer a dignified way out of conflict.
- Avoid personal comments.
- Remain calm.
- Praise previous good behaviour.



- Remove for a short period of time or offer time-out. Discuss the incident before re-admission.
- Smile.
- Divert by changing the topic of conflict.

Strategies for **managing** challenging behaviour in the classroom:

- Allow the pupil space – a way out, time-out etc.
- Keep conversation impersonal.
- Don't make impossible demands.
- Avoid making threats – state facts and make statements.
- Follow up what you say you will do.
- Avoid physical contact.
- Use the agreed system – Head of Department, rota for on-call, Head of Year
- Try to ensure the safety of others within the group.
- Be aware of individual education plan targets and the needs of individuals in the group.
- Avoid confining a pupil who is determined to leave – let him/her go and follow it up later.

