Advice to Student Managers -Responding to Challenging Behaviour

When concerns arise about a student's behaviour, or when a student is displaying chronic patterns of challenging behaviour, a targeted response will be required which may include both support measures and disciplinary measures.

Successful interventions are underpinned by strong staff-student relationships, as they require an understanding of the underlying factors influencing behaviour and the immediate triggers for its occurrence. So, while issuing a detention might be an appropriate response to a student who is being highly disruptive in a class, the teacher or appropriate staff member should also seek to identify the reasons and triggers for that student's behaviour and address these where possible to reduce the likelihood of future problems.

The disciplinary measures that may be implemented for incidents of challenging behaviour will depend on the nature and severity of the incident. For more information on disciplinary measures including processes for suspension and expulsion see: Disciplinary Measures

Any decisions made in relation to addressing challenging behaviours should be clearly documented on XUNO and discussed with the student's parent or guardian.

A staged response

Where students repeatedly demonstrate challenging behaviour, schools should implement more structured intervention strategies as part of a staged response to address the behaviour. Intervention strategies that should be implemented include:

- **Assessing** the behaviour, focussing on its influences, triggers and function (ie what purpose it serves). This should involve observation and talking with the student, their family and relevant wellbeing professionals.
- **Developing a Behaviour Support Plan** and/or Individual Education Plan and documenting it on XUNO.
- **Considering** if any environmental changes need to be made, for example changing the classroom set up.
- **Explicit teaching** of replacement behaviours (recognise students will need time to practice these before they become habit).
- **Engaging appropriate support services**, such as Student Welfare Coordinator, Student Support Services or community agencies to undertake assessments and/or provide specialist support.
- **Establishing a student support group** to establish the student's needs and supports required.
- **Implementing** appropriate disciplinary measures that are proportionate to problem behaviours.
- **Considering** alternative learning or behaviour management options such as Student Development Centres or re-engagement programs.

For more information on these and other strategies and supports, including supports tailored for particular groups such as students with disabilities or in out-of-home care, see: Strategies and Supports Available to Schools

Schools should use the **Staged Response Checklist** as a guide to help them consider, implement and document their responses to incidents of challenging behaviour. For more information, see: Staged Response Checklist

In the event of serious behavioural issues that could lead to expulsion, principals need to enact and document evidence of a staged response to the behaviour before an expulsion can be considered. For more information, see: Expulsion

How to determine the appropriate response

In determining the most appropriate response to challenging behaviour, it helps to consider the following questions:

- how serious was the behaviour of the student?
- how frequently is this type of behaviour being exhibited?

- what are the educational needs of the student?
- does the student have a disability or additional learning need?
- what is the age and development stage of the student?
- what are the residential and social circumstances of the student?
- is the student from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse background?
- what is the student's learning style and how does this match with the teaching approaches used?
- will the proposed strategy produce the desired outcome for both the student and the school?

- ## Whose role is it to respond to challenging behaviour?

   Teachers are the school staff members who spend the most time with students, therefore responses (both support and discipline) should always involve the classroom teacher. Where there are ongoing behaviour issues, teachers should work with school leadership and/or school-based wellbeing staff to engage specialist support for the student. For serious behavioural issues wh ere suspension or expulsion is being considered, the principal must be directly involved in decision-making.

The Department offers a blended professional learning program on managing challenging behaviour that aims to enhance teachers' understanding of the factors influencing behaviour and their skills in promoting positive behaviour and responding to challenging behaviour. For more information on the program, see: Managing Challenging Behaviours

Record keeping - XUNO

Schools should keep detailed records of instances of challenging behavior and behaviour management reponses as reported by students, teachers, non-school based staff and the school community.
Records of behavioural incidents should focus on the facts of a situation and not include vague or unsubstantiated claims and NOT value judgements.
Good record keeping practice serves a number of purposes including:
- allowing staff to monitor the behaviour and wellbeing of individual students
- ensuring that student behavior is being responded to in a consistent and staged manner
- monitoring the effectiveness of strategies used
- supporting principals in their decision-making process concerning suspensions and expulsions.

Schools are required to record suspension and expulsion in CASES21.
In addition, the Student Online Case System (SOCS) is a referral and data system for schools to support the case management and service delivery for students referred to Student Support Services. The data provided via SOCS will facilitate more effective interventions and ensure accurate record keeping. For more information on Student Support Services and SOCS, see BoM or: Student Support Services.
More serious situations, involving violent or dangerous student behaviors, may constitute a critical incident, and need to be reported to the Security Services Unit (phone: 03 9589 6266). This will be done by the principal.

Managing extreme behaviours

The Department offers a professional learning program for school leadership teams, teachers and education support officers working with students displaying extreme and challenging behaviour associated with a disability.
For more information on this professional learning program, see:
- Preventing and responding to extreme behaviour (pdf - 296.71kb) Preventing and responding to extreme behaviour (docx - 388.62kb)
- Professional Learning Portal

- Calmer Classrooms

Emergencies and critical incidents

In the event of an incident threatening life or property, schools must contact emergency services by calling **000**.

Schools must also immediately report to Security Services Unit (phone: 03 9589 6266) any incident:

- posing a risk to the safety of a student, parent, visitor or staff member including:
- seri ous injury or death
- allegations of or actual physical or sexual assault
- constituting a threat to property or the environment; or
- involving physical restraint or isolation of a student

For more information on responding to and reporting emergencies and critical incidents, see: Emergencies and Critical Incidents

For specific information on responding to allegations of student sexual assault, see BoM and: Responding to Student Sexual Assault