Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction 3
SEBD Snapshot 6
Definitions 8

Chapter 2: Understanding SEBD 11
SEBD: The Challenge 13
Understanding Problem Behaviour 14
Bio-Psycho-Social Interactions [What Makes Us Do What We Do] 14
Needs and Environment 16
Profiles of Learners with SEBD 19

Chapter 3: Whole-School Strategies 27
Introduction 29
Whole-School Identification Processes 29
Identification Methods 32
School Leadership Responsibilities 35
The SEN Register 37
Continued Professional Development (CPD) of Staff 38

Chapter 4: Classroom Responsibilities 39
Identification Systems 41
Level 1: Base Population 43
Level 2: Children with Additional Needs 43
Level 3: Children in Need 43
Level 4: Children with Complex and/or Acute Needs 44
Classroom Organisation and Management 50
Summary 52

Chapter 5: Gender and SEBD 53
Why Gender Needs to be Considered When Planning for Learners with SEBD 55
Gender All Around Us: Stereotypical Traits Associated with Males and Females 55
Myths 57
Implications for Gender and SEBD 58
How Gender Influences our Ways of Behaving and Coping 59
Why Some of Us Act in Ways that are ‘Expected’ and Some Don’t 60
Gender in the Classroom 62
Summary 64
Chapter 6: SEBD Issues for Learners

Hidden Harm
Domestic Violence
Technology Issues
Mismatch between Expectations at Home and School
Peer Pressure
Dealing with Change and Greater Responsibilities
Worries at Home
Academic Issues
Building Resilience
Crises and How to Manage Them

References and Bibliography

Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample School Register
Appendix 2: Exemplar Policy for Identifying Learners with SEBD
Appendix 3: Risk and Protective Factors

Acknowledgements

Writers
Martin Breen
Kathryn Edgar
Treasa Farrell
Hazel Kealey
Clare McFadden

Focus Group
Joe Duffy
Imelda Jordan
Walter Lambe
Dermot McCartan
Brenda Montgomery

With Special Thanks To
Ed Sipler

Page 6 and 7 (Positive/Negative symbols): © iStock/thinkstockphotos.com
Page 9: Billy Connolly, Linda Hamilton, Oprah Winfrey, Orville and Wilbur Wright, Jamie Oliver, Michael Phelps and Abraham Lincoln © Getty Images/thinkstockphotos.com
Page 9: Liz Murray © BALLESTEROS/epa/Corbis
Page 16 (Pyramid Illustration): © iStock/thinkstockphotos.com
Page 56 (Female Face Illustration): © iStock/thinkstockphotos.com
Page 56 (Male Face Illustration): © iStock/thinkstockphotos.com
Page 68 (Speech Bubbles Illustration): © iStock/thinkstockphotos.com
Chapter 1: Introduction
The main purpose of schools and educators is to provide children and young people with an education that will equip them for a happy, productive and successful adult life. Part of that education involves the less measurable, ‘soft’ skills. ‘Successful young adults are satisfied with the path their lives are on (or they are able to do something about changing or improving that path). They are essentially happy people who accept themselves and have adequate levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy’ (Benson et al., 2004). In addition society functions better when it is composed of adults who are socially competent and emotionally secure. Civic engagement is a final suggested dimension of success in adulthood to improve the social, political, or physical welfare of society. Helping others and contributing to society does not only add to the common civic good, it also increases the wellbeing and positive functioning of the helper (Uggen and Janikula, 1999; Thoits and Hewitt, 2001; Piliavin and Siegl, 2007).

Therefore, as educators, we should support young people in their developing into an adult who:

• is able to understand and talk about their feelings;
• controls their behaviour so that it is constructive and not destructive;
• understands the perspectives of other people, and realises that their own feelings may be different from the feelings of others;
• is able to establish relationships with others and maintains an ongoing friendship with at least one other person;
• is able to understand that their actions have an impact on others;
• is able to deal with social situations such as meeting new people or behaving appropriately in formal interviews or meetings;
• is able to engage in and stay with an activity for a reasonable amount of time;
• is able to deal with mistakes and failure in a constructive way;
• is able to carry out life’s responsibilities effectively, such as keeping a home, paying bills, or caring for dependents;
• copes effectively with crises and their aftermath;
• knows how and when to seek help for problems;
• understands that when another person’s issues impact on them that it is not due to their own defect, but due to the other’s problem; and
• can feel compassion and empathy for others.
With the target of this ‘ideal adult’ in mind, this guidance has:

- **the aim of:**
  - assisting teachers, school leaders and school governors in developing a culture of support and empathy in their schools which will lead to a reduction of risk of social, emotional and behavioural difficulties (SEBD); and the early identification of and intervention for learners with SEBD using a multiagency approach; and

- **the objectives to:**
  - provide an overview of SEBD and the range of causes;
  - develop an understanding of the social, emotional and behavioural issues faced by learners, in order to promote empathy for learners and the development of good relationships within the school;
  - provide strategies for teachers in promoting and developing resilience in both staff and learners;
  - provide information about roles and responsibilities of teachers, school leaders and school governors regarding learners with SEBD;
  - provide a range of methods to identify learners who may have or be at risk of SEBD;
  - suggest whole-school structures for systems of identification and early intervention;
  - signpost a range of resources that are available for the education and support of these learners; and
  - signpost strategies and guidance for teachers and schools on how to manage times of crisis for learners with SEBD.

### SEBD Snapshot

**Figure 1: Overview**

**Positive**

... many schools across NI ... have adopted wellbeing initiatives.

(NIAMH, 2009)

The Bamford review has ‘planted seeds of change’ and has begun to make a positive difference for people with mental health problems, evidenced for example by the introduction of paid peer advocates and carers in some areas of Northern Ireland.

(Patient and Client Council, 2011)

Schools and other places of education are key settings for the development of emotional resilience in children and young people – a key protective factor against suicide... The Revised NI Curriculum, which incorporates a personal development strand, has been in place in all schools from the 2009/10 school year.

(Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, 2012)

**Negative**

Inspection findings relating to pastoral care and child protection indicate that schools are dealing with increasing numbers of children and young people who present with complex emotional and mental health related needs.

(ETI, 2007)

9.6% or nearly 850,000 children and young people aged between 5–16 years have a mental disorder.

(Young Minds, 2004)

In Northern Ireland: The mortality rate from homicide/assault was 225% higher in the lowest occupational class than in the highest.

(Public Health Alliance, 2007)

Women in the lowest social group in NI are 60% more likely to experience some form of neurotic disorder than those in the highest.

(Public Health Alliance, 2007)
## Positive

Patients and staff advised the review team that CAMHS [Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services] across Northern Ireland are held in high regard. This was supported by the large number of parents and young people in the VOYPIC consultation. All of the young people surveyed in three trusts and 75 per cent in the other trust said that they had benefited from receiving CAMHS.

(The Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, 2011)

The conditions and characteristics that put people on a positive trajectory early in life can help them negotiate later transitions...

(Benson et al., 2004)

Key thriving dimensions include pro-social behaviour, educational engagement, civic engagement, and a sense of purpose.

(Benson et al., 2004)

To educate and develop the young people of Northern Ireland to the highest possible standards, providing equality of access for all.


There is compelling evidence indicating that adequate prevention and treatment of depression and alcohol and substance abuse can reduce suicide rates, as well as follow-up contact with those who have attempted suicide.

(World Health Organisation, 2012)

[The Prison! Me! No Way! scheme] aims to educate young people about the realities of life in prison, different types of crime and prevent them from getting involved in offending behaviour ... [Criminal Justice] Inspectors were impressed by the commitment and enthusiasm shown for the scheme by those involved.

(Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, July 2012)

## Negative

100,000 young people hospitalised due to self-harm by 2020. Amongst females under 25 there has been a 77% increase in the last ten years in inpatient admissions due to self-harm.

(Young Minds, 2011)

In 2005 United States Department of Education research indicated that there is an ongoing concern regarding the over-identification of students with EBD from diverse backgrounds, particularly African American students.

(Chakraborti-Ghosh et al., 2010)

Although traditionally suicide rates have been highest among the male elderly, rates among young people have been increasing to such an extent that they are now the group at highest risk in a third of countries, in both developed and developing countries.

(World Health Organisation, 2012)

49.6% of the [Looked After (LAC)] young people [in Northern Ireland] scored within the abnormal range of the [Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire] Total Difficulties score and social worker reported prevalence of suicidal behaviour (10.3%) and self-harm (12.7%) was high.

(Cousins, McGowan and Milner , 2008)

A snapshot study on the backgrounds of young people detained in the Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre in November 2011 shows over a third were ‘looked-after’ or voluntary accommodated children within the care system; 82% were identified as coming from a single parent family and 34% had experienced domestic violence in the home environment. In relation to educational attainment, 38% of the sample had a statement of learning needs whilst 14% had a recognised learning disability; 80% of the sample had issues relating to school exclusion or absconding from school. The vast majority of young people (92%) had misused drugs or alcohol, while 32% had self-harmed.

(Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland, July 2012)
Definitions

Current definitions within Northern Ireland which describe learners with SEBD come from two documents produced by the Department of Education (DE) Northern Ireland. Any references to learners with SEBD within this document are based on these.


“Pupils with SEBD … may fail to meet expectations in school and in some, but by no means all, cases may disrupt the education of others. Such difficulties may result, for example, from abuse or neglect; physical or mental illness; sensory or physical impairment; a specific learning difficulty; or psychological trauma. In some cases, they may arise from, or be exacerbated by, circumstances within the school environment. They may become apparent in a wide variety of forms, sometimes depending on the age of the child – including withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes; obsessional preoccupation with eating habits; school phobia; substance misuse; disruptive, antisocial and unco-operative behaviour; and frustration, anger and threat of or actual violence.”


“According to Elton (1989) the majority of inappropriate behaviours within schools were “high frequency and low intensity”, such as “talking out of turn”, “calculated idleness”, and “work avoidance” … Behaviour, however, is on a continuum and pupils with SEBD can present with high frequency, low intensity behaviours or a range of more inappropriate and antisocial behaviours. These make up a significant proportion of the 25% of pupils who have been identified by DE (2010) as having “barriers to learning” … According to Fogell and Long … the continuum includes “acting out” behaviours such as aggressive and attention seeking behaviours or “acting in” behaviours such as anxiety and withdrawal.”
Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Chapter 1: Introduction

Billy Connolly
- Successful Scottish comedian, musician, presenter and actor.
- Abandoned by his mother when he was four.
- Suffered physical and sexual abuse from his father between the ages of 10 and 15.
- Has been addicted to alcohol and drugs.
- Suffered from depression.

Oprah Winfrey
- Has her own TV show, channel and magazine.
- Mother at 14.

Jamie Oliver
- Successful TV chef.
- Has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Liz Murray
- Graduated high school in two years.
- Attended Harvard University.
- Is an inspirational speaker.
- Born to HIV infected, drug addicted, poor parents.
- Left alone at age 16 when her mother died and her father abandoned her.
- Attended high school while sleeping in subways, on park benches or at friends’ homes.

Linda Hamilton
- Successful actor, most noted for her role as Sarah Connor in the Terminator movies.
- Was a compulsive eater as a child.
- Had depression.
- Diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

Orville and Wilbur Wright
- Created a plane that could fly!
- DEAL with mother’s illness and early death.

Michael Phelps
- Brilliant swimmer.
- Most successful Olympian of all time.
- Has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

Abraham Lincoln
- 16th President of the USA.
- Ended slavery.
- Mother died when he was 10.

Figure 2: Success Stories
Chapter 2: Understanding SEBD
SEBD: The Challenge

Learners with SEBD display ‘problem behaviour’. They are either ‘disruptive or threatening, or ... they are emotionally vulnerable or socially inept’ (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011).

One of the most contentious issues in identifying learners at risk of SEBD is their background and living circumstances. The problem may not lie with the learner but with their circumstances, which may need to be dealt with, perhaps urgently:

‘behaving in problematic ways is sometimes a legitimate response to intolerable circumstances.’ (Cooper et al., 1994)

Cooper adds that:

‘It is particularly important to understand that what might at first be construed as a problem emanating from an individual, may turn out to be the symptom of a problem in the individual’s environment.’ (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011)

A supportive school environment is one of the major protective factors against developing delinquency for vulnerable young people:

‘Numerous studies have shown that the positive effects of school experience seem most evident among pupils who are vulnerable and have few other support systems.’ (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011)

It promotes resilience and gives young people a sense of hope and aspirations for the future.

‘Students who have a strong attachment to school believe that success in school will lead to significant rewards later in life.’ (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011)

Conversely, it may be that certain groups, families or individuals do not fit the norm where they live, work, attend school and socialise. In these cases, behaviour which in other circumstances would not be an issue may be seen as difficult or problematic. It may also be that problem behaviour is ‘expected’ by some schools and teachers because the learner belongs to a particular group or family. ‘SEBD may also be socially constructed, which means that societies, families and school systems and individual staff may be “deviance provocative” and create circumstances in which deviant identities are first predicted and then confirmed through [stereotyping]. SEBD are always context specific, though in sometimes complicated ways’ (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011). Teaching staff must ensure that they provide all their learners with the protective factor of the supportive school environment.

They must be very careful not to give some learners the impression that they have low expectations of them, in case this becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy for the learner.

It’s also important to recognise that many learners may use different methods for dealing with their emotions at different times. Any system of identification that the teacher uses should recognise that the ‘symptoms’ can vary. ‘Approximately 12% to 20% of children are affected by [both] emotional [internalising] and behavioural [externalising] problems’ (Costello, Egger and Angold, 2005; Roberts, Attkisson and Rosenblatt, 1998). Schools should be aware of these pitfalls when constructing a system of identification.
Understanding Problem Behaviour

Behaviour usually has meaning. It is not random. It serves a purpose and has goals, though these goals may not be easy to recognise.

Relationships and behaviour are inextricably linked. Problem behaviour may be externalised or internalised. Simply put, externalised behaviour is acted out towards others and internalised behaviour is acted inwards towards oneself. Both are equally damaging, but internalised behaviour is more difficult to spot and not always given as much significance as externalised behaviour.

‘Teachers’ degree of concern was significantly less for the vignette of the child presented with clinical symptoms of an emotional disorder as compared to the vignette of the child presented with clinical symptoms of a behavioural disorder … help-seeking by teachers tends to be higher for children with behavioural disorders as compared to emotional disorders.’ (Meltzer et al., 2003)

With this research in mind, teachers need to be aware of the possibility of overlooking or underestimating emotional difficulties in learners.

Behaviour can be learned. This means it can change. Behaviour takes place within a particular context and in relation to other people. Understanding the context is central to understanding the behaviour.

‘A teacher must understand that if a child resists learning or misbehaves, the problem is not so much based in the child’s personal maladjustment as it is that of a cultural predicament.’ (Dreikurs, Cassel and Dreikurs-Ferguson, 2004)

The way in which teachers, other adults and other learners respond to a learner’s behaviour is critical in influencing how learners decide to behave. The quality of relationships affects behaviour.

Bio-Psycho-Social Interactions (What Makes Us Do What We Do)

Behaviour, emotional wellbeing, and our progress through life are the result of both:

- our natural abilities and physical make-up; and
- the life environment that happens to us.

There is a constant, fluid, dynamic interaction between these factors, for example poor nutrition will impact on the development of the biological systems. This diagram illustrates the mix which impacts on learners’ behaviour, attitudes and life outcomes.
Figure 3: Behaviour, Environment and Biology

Environment
- Family
- Education
- Socio-economic status
- Motivation
- Culture
- Peer group
- Opportunities

Biology/Genes
- Social and academic characteristics
- Neurology
- Cognitive differences

Behaviours
- Personal
- Social
- Academic

Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

Chapter 2: Understanding SEBD
Needs and Environment

It is not possible to change a person’s biological make-up, but to some extent their environment can be altered. Unmet needs can cause people to behave in a way that is detrimental to their happiness or wellbeing. The reasons why these needs are unmet can be many and varied, from difficult home circumstances through to a gifted and talented learner remaining unchallenged. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943) clearly spells out what a person needs in order to be a contented and productive member of society. The lower four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called ‘deficiency needs’: esteem; friendship and love; safety; and physical needs. With the exception of the most fundamental (physiological) needs, if these ‘deficiency needs’ are unmet, the body gives no physical indication, but the individual feels anxious and tense. Maslow’s pyramid is a good starting point for professionals considering learners at risk of SEBD. Each level of need should be considered in turn.

![Figure 4: Maslow’s Pyramid](image-url)
Is the learner hungry, thirsty or tired?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the need is not met the learner:</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is constantly aware of their hunger, thirst or tiredness – learning is unimportant to them at this time.</td>
<td><strong>The Physiological Needs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Food, water, air, sleep</td>
<td>Is able to think of ‘higher’ needs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the learner afraid at home or in school? Fears may be based on physical risks or emotional ones.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the need is not met:</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner is afraid and full of anxiety and dread.</td>
<td><strong>The Safety Needs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Freedom from pain&lt;br&gt;Security and stability</td>
<td>Is secure and comfortable. Is able to focus on ‘higher’ needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner will go into ‘fight or flight’ mode. (This may be a fear of what may happen during school time or after school.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When the safety needs are persistently unmet the learner may become hostile or withdrawn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does the learner feel ‘part of the group’ at home and in school? Does the learner feel wanted and loved?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the need is not met:</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The learner feels lonely, rejected and has no sense of belonging.</td>
<td><strong>The Belongingness and Love Needs</strong>&lt;br&gt;Giving and receiving affection and love&lt;br&gt;Friendship&lt;br&gt;Belonging – having roots/being part of the community</td>
<td>Feels good about themselves and is able to develop loving relationships with others. Can trust friends. Can allow friends freedom to mix with others or undertake separate activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner rigidly follows the ‘norms’ of the group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The learner may display dislike or hostility towards minority groups/others who do not ‘fit’ well with the group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If these needs are persistently unmet then the learner will:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop hostility to all others;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• develop chronic attention-seeking behaviours; and/or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• become withdrawn.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Has the learner had a focus on their achievements (or on their failures) in the past? Does the learner feel valued for who they are?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is afraid of criticism and feeling inferior, fragile and powerless.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Esteem Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is afraid of failure and of risks.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-esteem – desire for achievement, awareness of own worth and confidence in own abilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is fearful, frustrated or angry towards those who don’t show respect.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adequacy – to be able to cope by oneself</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has envy and bitterness.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect by and for others – desire for reputation, prestige, status and dignity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feels good about themselves and is able to develop loving relationships with others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can trust friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can allow friends freedom to mix with others or undertake separate activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is able to focus on ’higher’ needs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Has the learner had the opportunity to develop their skills to the fullest? Has the learner had the opportunity to ask questions and give opinions on topics important to them?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>If the need is met the learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feels restless, bored and apathetic.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The Self-Actualisation Needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finds life meaningless, boring and purposeless.</td>
<td></td>
<td>To realise their potential in many areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a tendency to avoid growth and development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>To grow and develop by following one’s own passions and interests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is listless.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-expression, creative need to search for identity and meaning in life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Acceptance of life</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Feels a desire to grow and develop in the direction of their higher values.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is creative, positive and energetic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has an unselfish desire to make a useful contribution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Is curious and open to experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has a desire to think for themselves.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Has a growing sense of identity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profiles of Learners with SEBD

People are individuals, so there will always be variety in their presentation, needs, difficulties, and the solutions that might work best for them. However, it is useful to sketch a general picture of some of the more common profiles of learners with SEBD. These profiles are intended to give teachers and other professionals a starting point when setting up their support plans. These should be used in the context of a whole-school approach.

Profile A: The Confronter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings and Attitudes</th>
<th>Likely Behaviours</th>
<th>Cognition (Thoughts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Anger</td>
<td>• Is noisy</td>
<td>• ‘That teacher is always picking on me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frustration</td>
<td>• Acts aggressively and/or threateningly</td>
<td>• ‘I’m not liked.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shows impatience</td>
<td>• ‘I don’t want them to know I can’t do this.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is violent</td>
<td>• ‘If the other learners can see that I have weaknesses then they’ll pick on me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Name-calls/insults peers and teachers</td>
<td>• ‘My family told me to stand up for myself and not be a loser.’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Needs**

- To be connected with others
- To be supported on managing emotions
- To learn self-acceptance
- Short-term, realistic goals to promote success and engagement

**Adults’ and Peers’ Perceptions**

- Troublesome
- Disruptive
- Aggressive
- Frightening

**Possible Issues**

- Relationships with peers
- Popularity (or lack of)
- Parental divorce/break-up
- Being in care
- Drug/Alcohol use or addiction
- Mismatch between social environment at home and school
- Isolation
- Financial worries
- Gangs or criminal activity

**Home Support**

- Acceptance and understanding
- Understanding of school requirements
- Modelling appropriate behaviour
- Family activities

**School Support**

- Tolerance
- Appropriate placement within school
- Access to counsellor and anger management classes
- Mentor
- Academic support
- Clear expectations for each class and break period
- Contract that spells out what learner, school and home will do
- Home-school liaison
### Profile B: The Uncertain

#### Feelings and Attitudes
- Low self-esteem
- Unsure of academic strengths and weaknesses
- Feels under pressure to achieve an unknown standard
- Sensitive to criticism
- Feels unpopular and on the ‘edge’ of the group

#### Likely Behaviours
- Continuously asks for guidance from teacher and peers
- Checks peers’ work for standards (may change correct answers to match a peer’s incorrect ones)
- Becomes upset and worried when errors are mentioned
- Avoids situations where there is a possibility of rejection by peers
- May self-harm
- Partakes in risky behaviour to be accepted by peers

#### Cognition (Thoughts)
- [When praised] ‘She’s only saying that because she has to as she is my teacher/mother/friend.’
- ‘I’ve probably got that answer wrong.’
- ‘He’s bound to know more than me. He is always so confident.’
- ‘My family aren’t as good as theirs ... we just can’t afford those things.’
- ‘I know that I can’t do that. My P1 teacher told me that I need to practise a lot.’
- ‘I need to work much harder but there is just no time and I’m so tired.’

#### Possible Needs
- Clear written instructions that can be referred to during activities
- Meaningful and constructive praise for achievements
- Clear, short-term academic expectations
- Friendships with supportive peers
- Buddy support
- Mentor

#### Adults’ and Peers’ Perceptions
- Clingy
- Attention-seeking
- Irritating
- Seen by peers as a ‘victim’

#### Possible Issues
- Relationships with peers
- Puberty/Sexuality/Sexual activity and associated issues
- Adapting to greater responsibilities at school, for example moving between key stages or from primary to post-primary sector
- Financial issues making it difficult to fit in with peers
- Changing schools at a non-standard time
- Home pressure to succeed
- Tiredness, due to a packed schedule and not enough rest and sleep
- Family problems
- Young carer
- Stricter home standards than peers
- Newcomer
- Health issues
- Learner being bullied
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Support</th>
<th>School Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Model assertive behaviour</td>
<td>• Recognise achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have regular family meetings to involve children in major and minor life plans</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities to take responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Praise achievements</td>
<td>• Provide same-sex role models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be available to hear worries</td>
<td>• Review workload – ensure that there is time for personal interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for risk-taking without major consequences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group activities that give opportunities to develop friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of standards expected ([WILF: What I am Looking For])</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Profile C: The Absentee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings and Attitudes</th>
<th>Likely Behaviours</th>
<th>Cognition (Thoughts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sees education as unimportant</td>
<td>• Has poor attendance and punctuality (possibly with regular pattern, for example late because of bringing younger siblings to school)</td>
<td>• [When at school] ‘They need me at home. There is no one else to look after them.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong sense of responsibility to family</td>
<td>• Doesn’t engage with schoolwork (academic achievements below ability)</td>
<td>• [When at school] ‘I know my family aren’t as good as other people but I don’t want other people to criticise them. I love them!’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Preoccupied by what might be happening at home when in school</td>
<td>• Rarely completes homework</td>
<td>• [When at school] ‘I am part of my family. When you criticise my family then you are criticising me too.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defensive of criticism of home life</td>
<td>• Distracted in class</td>
<td>• [When at school] ‘You have an easy life. You have no idea what it is like to be me.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Isolated</td>
<td>• May self-harm</td>
<td>• [When at home] ‘I’m so tired of being in charge but if I don’t do it then no one else will.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses anger or humour to deflect from issues</td>
<td>• [When at home] ‘This is something that I’m good at. I’m needed and wanted here.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has occasional ‘explosions’ to release tension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Doesn’t engage with peers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Possible Needs**

- Emotional support
- Practical support for home responsibilities
- Creative approach to access to education
- To be given opportunities to relax away from home responsibilities
- Support for completing homework during school day

**Adults’ and Peers’ Perceptions**

- Lazy and lacking effort
- Untidy
- Aggressive
- Irritating
- Class clown

**Possible Issues**

- Young carer
- Looked after child with younger siblings also in care
- Parents/Carers without necessary skills or with problems which prevent them from parenting effectively
- Serious illness at home
- Parents in process of divorcing
### Chapter 2: Understanding SEBD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Support</th>
<th>School Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Seek counselling and support for the family</td>
<td>• Diagnostic testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involvement of social services where appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teacher mentor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creative approach to making lessons accessible at home, for example use of Virtual Learning Environments and loan of equipment to access these at home or a blended approach of home tuition and school attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Flexible approach to school arrival times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involvement of alternative education programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Alternative opportunities to complete homework, for example lunch club (after school simply won’t work in this situation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to attend ‘fun’ events at school, for example reward trips or sports days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Group activities to consolidate friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supported opportunities to attend after-school clubs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile D: The Unchallenged

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings and Attitudes</th>
<th>Likely Behaviours</th>
<th>Cognition (Thoughts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Boredom</td>
<td>• Corrects teacher</td>
<td>• 'This work is too easy. I can pass the test without even trying.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Frustration</td>
<td>• Questions rules, policies and decisions</td>
<td>• 'I get simple things wrong but I love a difficult problem to work on. Am I stupid or clever?'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low self-esteem</td>
<td>• Is honest and direct</td>
<td>• 'No-one ever seems to understand my jokes/comments.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Impatient</td>
<td>• Is volatile (mood swings)</td>
<td>• 'My friends look at me in a funny way when I try to explain my ideas about inventions/politics/the world in general.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defensive</td>
<td>• Has inconsistent work habits</td>
<td>• 'I prefer to discuss big issues with adults but they aren’t interested in hearing my thoughts.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Heightened sensitivity</td>
<td>• Is creative</td>
<td>• 'My teacher/parent/minister gets irritated when I point out their mistakes in logic. I was just trying to help set them right.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uncertain about social roles</td>
<td>• Stands up for convictions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Prefers highly active, engaging,</td>
<td>• Is competitive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>questioning approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Needs</th>
<th>Adults’ and Peers’ Perceptions</th>
<th>Possible Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• To be connected with others</td>
<td>• Irritating</td>
<td>• Exceptional ability/Finds school work undemanding/Not stretched to their fullest ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To learn tact, flexibility, self-</td>
<td>• Rebellious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>awareness, self-control and self-</td>
<td>• Engaged in power struggles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acceptance</td>
<td>• Creative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support for creativity</td>
<td>• Discipline problem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contractual systems</td>
<td>• Peers see them as entertaining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Adults want to change them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Support</th>
<th>School Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Acceptance and understanding</td>
<td>• Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allow them to pursue interests</td>
<td>• Placement with appropriate teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Advocate for them at school</td>
<td>• Cognitive and social skill development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Modelling appropriate behaviour</td>
<td>• Direct and clear communication with learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family projects</td>
<td>• Give permission for feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mentorships to build self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Behavioural contracting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion of standards expected, for example behaviour contracts, WILF, TIB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Profile E: The Avoider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feelings and Attitudes</th>
<th>Likely Behaviours</th>
<th>Cognition (Thoughts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Insecure about academic ability</td>
<td>• Explosive when in a situation beyond their abilities</td>
<td>• 'They will all laugh at me if they know I can’t do this.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low self-esteem</td>
<td>• Distracts by using humour or violence</td>
<td>• 'My little cousin does these sums.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Defensive</td>
<td>• Attracts positive attention from peers by challenging teacher or by making jokes</td>
<td>• 'I’m too stupid to learn. Even little children can read better than I can.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fear of weaknesses being exposed</td>
<td>• Disrupts learning activities</td>
<td>• 'There’s no point in me trying. I’m never going to be able to do this.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Angry</td>
<td>• Often leaves work unfinished</td>
<td>• 'She’s going to ask me the question next and I don’t understand this. I need to find a way to stop her.'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worried</td>
<td>• Homework often not completed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Destructive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Possible Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of academic achievement due to absenteeism or undiagnosed difficulty, for example hearing loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of support at crucial academic moments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learner being bullied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adults’ and Peers’ Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion of support options with learner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discreet support that focuses on learner’s emotional and academic needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Carefully scaffolded learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SMART academic goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunities to succeed given regularly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Home Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Diagnostic testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Review of teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support plan with short-term academic targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Careful choice of support programme in order to encourage growth in self-esteem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Behaviour targets</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3:
Whole-School Strategies
Introduction

“It is important to start a search for effective interventions from a position that recognizes the validity of a “bio-psycho-social” perspective ... whereby nature (genetic inheritance) and nurture (environmental influences) are seen as being in constant fluid and dynamic interaction.” (Cooper and Jacobs, 2011)

This chapter is designed to support schools at both management and classroom level to develop and implement:

- whole-school policies; and
- an ethos whereby learners within the SEBD category of special educational needs (SEN) can be supported and given the opportunity to achieve their potential.

It aims to enable staff in schools to create an environment which allows for:

- the early identification of learners with SEBD;
- the promotion of protective factors to improve resilience;
- the breaking down of any barriers to emotional health and wellbeing that the learner(s) may be experiencing; and
- the promotion of a positive learning environment.

These practices will help implement inclusive education.

Learners with SEBD signal their distress through their behaviour. Fogell and Long (1997, page 7) state that the continuum includes ‘acting out’ (externalising) behaviours or ‘acting in’ (internalising) behaviours. This chapter also considers how teachers and schools should deal with a learner’s inappropriate behaviour and those occasions when teachers should consider if this behaviour demonstrates that the learner needs additional support.

Whole-School Identification Processes

Why early identification?

If a learner is showing signs of distress within their emotional health and wellbeing, it is imperative to recognise and monitor the behaviour. This enables assessment to take place and ensures that an appropriate remediation programme can be implemented at the earliest stage possible. The earlier the situation is addressed, the more likely it is that:

- the learner’s wellbeing will be restored;
- any barriers to learning will be broken down; and
- the learner will regain the opportunity to reach their full potential.

This will in turn lead to the avoidance of deeper problems. It will have a positive impact, not only on the learner’s future life but also within the school environment and society by avoiding potential problems.
Early identification should be an ongoing process. It should be used to inform the planning of provision for the learner. Reference will also need to be made to early identification when evaluating the policy and practice being implemented in the school. It is important that it directly feeds into the whole-school development plan. Schools may wish to consider the set of principles which underpin their system of identification.

One possible set of principles for identifying learners with or at risk of SEBD includes:

- Advocacy: Is this in the best interests of the learner?
- Defensibility: Is this based on best research and recommendations?
- Equity: Are all at-risk learners evaluated, regardless of gender, age and so on?
- Comprehensiveness: Are all aspects of SEBD considered? Does the system focus equally on externalising and internalising behaviours?
- Pragmatism: Does it allow for modification and use of accessible resources?
Figure 5: Sample School Identification Process

* In this diagram staff should be taken to mean the entire school staff and not just those directly involved in classroom work.

You can download and print a larger version of this diagram from www.nicurriculum.org.uk
Identification Methods

Key people in identification include:

- Learners (about themselves)
- Learners (about peers)
- Mothers, fathers, carers and extended family
- Other staff in schools
- Previous schools
- Other adults in the community, for example social workers, religious leaders or youth workers
- Other professionals, for example speech and language therapists, occupational therapists
- Psychologists
- Teachers

Learners (about themselves)

Any disclosure or help-seeking should be taken seriously. Relying on information from parents only ‘could conceal important emotional problems of the child’ (Michels et al., 2012). Details of any initial discussion should be carefully kept. Teachers should be aware they should consider information given in non-verbal forms, for example written responses or role-play responses to school work. Questionnaires designed to seek out protective and risk factors may also be used as a follow-up to the initial discussion. Possible choices are the ‘Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire’ and the ‘Child Behaviour Checklist’. Schools are already well advised on setting up opportunities for learners to disclose. They should continue to provide time for these important relationships to continue, for example peer mentors, teacher mentors, buddies, form teachers, and teachers responsible for pastoral care.

Learners (about peers)

Other learners may report issues with their peers in a number of ways:

- complaints about behaviour that has impacted on them or other peers – for example ‘He hit me’;
- concern for a friend, classmate or teammate – for example ‘She’s been upset on the bus every day this week’;
- gossip about incidents or current issues for their peers;
- discussion during circle time; and
- response to issues raised in Personal Development (PD/PDMU) class – for example querying accuracy of teacher information about standards of care because of a peer’s home life – the teacher says ‘Everyone in our country has a bed to sleep in’, and a learner points out that someone in class does not have a bed. (These discussions may happen in other subject lessons but are perhaps more likely in PD/PDMU classes.)

Teachers or other adults should clarify which parts are fact and which are opinions. Opinions can also be warning signs, so any confirmed details and reasons for the opinions should be ascertained. This information should be passed on to the appropriate person in accordance with school policies.
Mothers, fathers, carers and extended family

Parents/Carers know their children, so any concerns they have should be taken seriously. It may be that there is just a ‘feeling’ that something is wrong. Instincts are often correct and should be followed up. Whilst information from parents and carers is invaluable, it should be remembered that research has shown parents to underestimate the emotional distress their child may have. When comparing parental and child reports of difficulties it was found that ‘sadness had the lowest parent-child agreement’ (Michels et al., 2012).

It may be helpful to use questionnaires designed to look for protective and risk factors to pinpoint the areas of concern such as CBCL: Child Behaviour Checklist at [http://knowledgex.camh.net](http://knowledgex.camh.net) and SDQ: Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire at [www.sdqinfo.com](http://www.sdqinfo.com)

This may give ‘language’ to go with the instinctive feeling that there is a problem. Research has shown ‘there is a benefit to using the CBCL and the SDQ to help screen for psychiatric disorders in youth in both clinic and community-based populations’ (Warnick, Bracken and Kasl, 2008).

Schools should be aware of those learners who may have limited or no support from home, for example looked after children.

Other staff in schools

It is important to include all staff in the identification process. Some problems may be spotted more easily by non-teaching staff, such as a school office worker that may become aware of a young person who regularly needs to borrow the bus fare home and who is unduly anxious over the consequences, or a supervisory assistant that a child seeks out at break or lunch.

Other adults in the community

Any adult who comes into regular contact with young people may have important information about their wellbeing. It is important to include as many people as possible in the identification process. It may be useful to make contact through meetings and/or letters. All information collated should be recorded in the learner’s file, for example SIMS.

The following contacts may all be able to provide valuable insights:

- Social workers
- Youth workers
- Religious leaders
- After-school club staff
- Childminders/After-school care staff
- Voluntary youth group leaders
- Sporting groups coaches
- Drama or music group leaders
- School transport workers, for example taxi drivers, bus drivers or bus escorts
- Staff from previous schools
- Others*

* Others may be members of the community who come into regular contact with the young person, for example a local shopkeeper or neighbour, who may occasionally contact the school to volunteer information regarding the young person.
Whilst most of the information will be sourced from approaching people who have contact with the young people through the school or youth organisations listed above, information can occasionally be volunteered from other members of the community.

In this situation it is essential:

- to confirm that the information is valid and from a reliable source before acting on it; and
- to remember that all information included in a learner’s file is subject to the Data Protection Act.

Offering clear and simple ways for these people to share information with schools may add to a fuller picture.

Psychologists

Learners with or at risk of SEBD may be identified by the educational psychology service. At this stage schools and psychology services should work in partnership to provide the learner with a package of support.

Teachers

“Teachers are professionals who are involved with children on a daily basis, but who do not have specialist training in mental health. As such, teachers have a role in terms of problem recognition and early intervention.”

(Loades and Mastroyannopoulou, 2010)

Initial identification methods available to teachers are:

- observation in class, playground, lunch rooms, bus or other transport, school trips or extra-curricular activities;
- conversations with learners;
- awareness of responses or reactions to topics in Personal Development and Mutual Understanding/Personal Development (PDMU/PD) classes, subject classes, registration or assemblies;
- review of classwork or homework, in post-primary schools, particularly by those teachers with pastoral responsibility for a group;
- noting of particular behaviours over a period of time (general behaviour which is related to an activity or time of day or week, such as a reluctance to remove heavy clothing in front of others or lateness to school on a particular day each week);
- noting changes in behaviour or appearance; and/or noting any signs of distress or unusual reactions or behaviour.

Essentially, teachers need to show an awareness of changes from ‘normal’ for their learners or any behaviour, reaction or response that seems concerning.

**NB: It is essential that teachers are aware of the importance of their role in the process of identification. In many cases teachers will be the only source of initial identification.**

They must be made aware of the crucial impact that this early identification can have on:

- the learner’s emotional health and wellbeing;
- their future; and
- their place in society.
After this initial identification, teachers should refer the child or young person for further assessment by the educational psychology service. However, support should be provided from the earliest possible stage, without waiting for a formal diagnosis.

**School Leadership Responsibilities**

Research by Elton, 1989; Harris, 2000; Logan and Rickinson, 2005; and Steer, 2009 has highlighted the following characteristics for effective management and policy implementation within a school. These need to be considered when developing a policy for early identification of learners with SEBD.

- Good leadership
- Whole-school policies
- Positive relationships
- Set procedure for identifying learners with SEBD
- Welcoming and pleasant working environment
- Effective classroom management strategies which focus on the positive
- Effective whole-school systems which give flexible support to all members of the school community and systems for monitoring all of the above.

The principal and the senior management team (SMT) have a key role in highlighting the profile of learners with SEBD. The identification and needs of learners with SEBD should be an integral part of the school’s policies and development plans, ensuring that the ethos of inclusion is addressed effectively.

The co-ordination of practice for identification and appropriate action could be strengthened by having a nominated member of staff; in most schools this is likely to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SenCo) or person responsible for pastoral care. The person appointed should have the full support of the principal and senior managers to ensure that they can carry out the role effectively.

The responsibilities of the role may include:

- leading the implementation of whole-school policy;
- liaising with colleagues to raise awareness of needs of learners with SEBD;
- highlighting the importance of early identification and keeping a record of exhibited behaviours;
- updating a register of those learners who have been identified as either having SEBD or at risk of SEBD with all staff;
- developing their own expertise through recent research and CPD courses and leading or arranging professional development of the other staff;
- liaising with other relevant outside agencies;
- liaising with mothers, fathers, carers and extended family; and
- overseeing resources and monitoring and reporting regularly to the principal and governors.

The effectiveness of the school’s policy and practices for identification of learners with SEBD needs to be regularly evaluated by the principal, the governing body, and the senior managers. This should include areas such as staff development and liaison with both outside agencies and parents/carers.
Auditing current practice

A school audit is the first step in examining the current methods used in identifying learners with SEBD. An example audit form for school management is outlined below.

Figure 6: Exemplar SEBD Audit Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audit</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The school has identified a clear structure of responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff and governors take responsibility of the policy.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff, including classroom assistants and auxiliary staff, are aware of the school policy and practice for learners with SEBD.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All relevant policies or handbooks include guidance for identifying learners with SEBD.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The policy for early identification of SEBD is regularly monitored, evaluated and amended if required.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an equal emphasis on ‘internalised’ and ‘externalised’ behaviours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The SEN register of learners with SEBD is put in place and is kept updated, for example using SIMS.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are aware of any learners with SEBD on the SEN register.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are aware of how to record incidents of behaviours to ensure consistency.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are aware of strategies to use within the classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All staff monitor and record SEBD learners’ progress using a set proforma.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD includes a focus on the needs of SEBD learners.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a close link with all relevant outside agencies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school liaises with mothers, fathers, carers and all those with parental responsibility.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School policies place an emphasis on developing protective factors to improve resilience among staff and learners.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policies

It is desirable to have a whole-school policy for the early identification of learners with SEBD. This ensures a consistency of approach which is essential and is underpinned by core values. It will also ensure that parents/carers, allied professionals and new and temporary staff have knowledge of the practices implemented within the school.

Policy, ethos and practice

The core values listed underneath should be the basis of and be included in all ethos, policy and practice:

- Respect;
- Safety;
- Fairness;
- Dignity;
- Understanding others;
- Humanity; and
- Honesty.

It is also necessary to take cognisance of values outlined in the six outcomes framework in *The Ten Year Strategy for Children and Young People in Northern Ireland (2006)*:

'We will know that we have achieved our vision for our children and young people if, after ten years, we can report progress and evidence exists, which indicates that our children and young people are:

- Healthy;
- Enjoying, learning and achieving;
- Living in safety and with stability;
- Experiencing economic and environmental wellbeing;
- Contributing positively to community and society; and
- Living in a society which respects their rights.'

A sample policy is included in Appendix 2.

The SEN Register

Once learners have been identified as having SEBD, it is important that all relevant information is recorded. The register could be exclusively for learners with SEBD or the information could be included as part of the school’s SEN register. The register should be a source of information for other staff, outside agencies and parents/carers. Any individual information can be transferred to the learner’s individual class record. It is important that the register is kept centrally so that it can be accessed easily by all staff. One suggested method is to store it electronically so that data is readily available. The more the register is used and the more this is reported back to staff, the more accurate and comprehensive it becomes. Reporting back also helps staff to plan and implement appropriate interventions.
The register should include the following information:

- the name of the learner;
- their identified problem behaviours;*
- the action the school is taking; and
- how progress is being reviewed.

* Schools should take care to ensure that all problem behaviours are recorded and not just those which are disruptive to a class, for example displays of anxiety, worry or fear should all be included. The register will be a working document – new learners with SEBD will be added as they are identified and others may be removed if their needs change. A sample register is included in Appendix 1. This can be adapted to suit the needs of individual schools.

Continued Professional Development (CPD) of Staff

Teachers need to provide quality learning and teaching. Regular reference should be made to ‘Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties’ (SEBD) in A Resource File for Schools to Support Children with Special Educational Needs (DE, 2011), and Good Practice Guidelines for Schools to Meet the Special Educational Needs of Pupils at the School-Based Stages of the Code of Practice (Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards, 2009).

Schools should also provide regular opportunities for all staff to develop:

- a general understanding of SEBD;
- an awareness of behaviours which signal negative emotions (both internalised and externalised);
- a knowledge of protective factors and how to enhance these;
- a knowledge of barriers to resilience and how to reduce the impact of these; and
- a clear awareness of when to raise concerns with the person responsible for learners with SEBD.

Some suggested contacts for appropriate courses:

- Barnardos [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)
- Childline NI [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- NSPCC [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- CRUSE [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)
Chapter 4:
Classroom Responsibilities
Identification Systems

Classroom teachers’ essential role is to educate learners. As stated in *The Teacher Education Partnership Handbook* (DE, August 2010 edition):

‘Teachers will:

• maintain professional relationships with those pupils/learners entrusted to their care which respect the pupil/learner as a person and encourage growth and development;
• acknowledge and respect the uniqueness, individuality and specific needs of each pupil and thus provide appropriate learning experiences; and
• aim to motivate and inspire pupils with a view to helping each realise their potential.’

As part of this essential role, teachers need to identify barriers to learning and take steps to identify and secure help required both in and out of the classroom.

When a learner’s behaviour is showing signs of distress, teachers should initially examine the ‘in-school factors’ outlined in the table below to eliminate any of these which may be contributing to the distress and so to an inappropriate behaviour being exhibited. This table is based on information laid out in the Department of Education’s ‘Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD)’ in *A Resource File for Schools to Support Children with Special Educational Needs* (DE, 2011).
Figure 7: In-School Factors Which will Influence Learner Behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-School Factors</th>
<th>The Environment</th>
<th>The Child</th>
<th>The Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper ventilation</td>
<td>Tired due to lack of proper rest</td>
<td>Offering poorly differentiated curriculum leading to either frustration or boredom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor heating and lighting</td>
<td>Hungry due to insufficient or inappropriate food</td>
<td>Lack of knowledge of learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical problems of limited space</td>
<td>Poor or inappropriate social skills</td>
<td>Poor management skills such as inconsistency, over-reliance on domination, lack of reinforcement of appropriate behaviour or inconsistent approach between learners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to drinking water</td>
<td>Need for attention from teacher or parent</td>
<td>Poor diction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special occasions which cause excitement, for example Christmas, a windy day, or fire drills</td>
<td>Concern and worry over home responsibilities, for example a young carer worrying about how the parent will manage alone during the day</td>
<td>Lack of clarity or consistency in expectations for behaviour or subject</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference to issues/family situations which cause pain or embarrassment, for example requirement for trip permission note which will cause learner great difficulty to obtain</td>
<td>Stress over relationships with peers</td>
<td>Lack of or confusing instruction in subject matter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in teacher from the norm, for example sub teacher or cover teacher</td>
<td>Embarrassment over peers’ perception of their ability level</td>
<td>Meeting the expectations of exam results/league tables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable seating or placement in the classroom or changes to this</td>
<td>Feelings of inadequacy over ability to organise to the level required in post-primary school, particularly in early Year 8</td>
<td>Lack of professional development on SEBD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of stimulation in the classroom, for example access to ICT, no classroom displays and so on</td>
<td>Embarrassment over physical appearance such as acne, eczema, psoriasis, unclean clothes, incorrect uniform and so on</td>
<td>Teacher stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom displays which consistently exclude certain learners’ work</td>
<td>Worrying about money</td>
<td>Too many instructions given at once</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebration of Mother’s Day/Father’s Day when the parent is not part of the child’s life</td>
<td>Unable to accept help from teacher/adult</td>
<td>Lack of consistency between lessons, for example very challenging in one lesson but unengaged in another</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in classroom such as being moved to the science room for an English lesson or class being ‘split’ over a few other classes due to teacher absence</td>
<td>Early signs of mental illness</td>
<td>Changes the routine of the class without preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in planned timetable such as PE being cancelled due to the hall being used for another activity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Changes in goals previously agreed with learners without consultation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor break/lunch on consecutive days due to poor weather conditions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the ‘in-school’ causes have been eliminated the teacher then needs to progress to the next stage of identification.

Initially a basic record of the concerning behaviour(s) may be compiled. This may be in the form of a simple observation tick sheet, which will outline if any specific behaviour is dominant and will ascertain if they are ‘acting in’ or ‘acting out’ in nature. The record will also provide a quick and visual reference point for the teacher. However, it is imperative that the teacher is aware of states such as anxiety and depression as these may often be overlooked. These may be demonstrated by ‘quieter’ behaviours such as non-compliance and being withdrawn.

If it is felt there is justification to continue with the identification process for SEBD, more detailed checks should also be completed, such as using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire with teachers, learners and parents which can be found on www.sdqinfo.org. As part of the identification process for SEBD, a more detailed checklist must also be completed. Understanding the Needs of Children in Northern Ireland [UNOCINI] outlines the ‘Thresholds of Intervention’ in their booklet ‘Family and Child Care’.

This ‘threshold model’ was developed to:

- improve the quality of assessment within stakeholder agencies;
- assist in communicating the needs of children across agencies; and
- avoid the escalation of children’s needs through early identification of need and effective intervention.

The thresholds are divided into four levels. At classroom level, during the identification process for SEBD, teachers’ main focus will generally be making reference to the Education and Learning section at Levels 1 and 2. However, extending their reference to the Identity, Self-Esteem and Self-Care section may also be informative.

NB: Learners who meet the criteria for Levels 3 and 4 should already have had their needs identified and appropriate programmes put in place.

**Level 1: Base Population**

- This is the majority of children and families in Northern Ireland whose needs are being met. They utilise universal services and community resources as required.

**Level 2: Children with Additional Needs**

- These are vulnerable children and their families, who require additional support to promote social inclusion, to reduce levels of vulnerability within the family, and/or minimise risk-taking.

**Level 3: Children in Need**

- These are children with complex needs that may be chronic and enduring and whose health (physical and emotional) and development may be significantly impaired without the provision of specialised services such as health, social services, CAMHS, education or the PSNI.
- This may include some children who are in need of safeguarding. Children with a disability are also children in need.
Level 4: Children with Complex and/or Acute Needs

- These are children who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm without the provision of services. This includes children who are looked after and those who are in need of rehabilitation from a care or custodial setting; children with critical and/or high-risk needs; children in need of safeguarding; and children with complex and enduring needs.

Each level is divided into four subheadings:
- health and development;
- education and learning;
- identity, self-esteem and self-care; and
- family and social relationships.
Each level is outlined in the tables below.

**Figure 8: Levels 1, 2 and 3 – Education and Learning Needs**

Level 3 is included for reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquired a range of skills/interests</td>
<td></td>
<td>No interest/skills displayed (including sports, hobbies and so on)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing success/achievement (including sports, hobbies and so on)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Not achieving key stage benchmarks/identified learning needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to books/toys, play</td>
<td>Reduced access to toys/books</td>
<td>Toys and books absent from environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends school/group regularly and any absences are explained</td>
<td>Occasional unexplained absences from school or other group</td>
<td>Poor school attendance (less than 80%) including child refusing to attend school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truants with peers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually punctual or lateness acknowledged and explained</td>
<td>Poor punctuality</td>
<td>Regularly late 2–3 times per week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaves well in classroom or other learning situation</td>
<td>Poor behaviour in classroom/other learning environment</td>
<td>Serious behaviour problems in classroom, leading to suspension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is actively engaged in learning</td>
<td>Sudden or sustained drop in preparedness to learn and engage, for example no kit or homework and not participating in sport and hobbies</td>
<td>Disaffected from learning and other school activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning is on track, appropriate to age and ability</td>
<td>Not realising educational potential and/or reaching level appropriate to age and ability</td>
<td>Failing to reach potential in exams, test appropriate for age and ability and/or has no record of achievement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has good access to enhanced opportunities to learn in home, school and community</td>
<td>Unable to access or participate in enhanced learning opportunities, for example groups or trips</td>
<td>Not engaged in enhanced learning opportunities such as trips and other groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The remaining levels are also included for reference.

**Figure 9: Levels 3 and 4 – Education and Learning Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor school attendance (less than 80%) including child refusing to attend school</td>
<td>Does not attend school on a regular basis (prosecution likely or in process)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly late 2–3 times per week</td>
<td>Is usually late when attending</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious behaviour problems in classroom, leading to suspension</td>
<td>Behaviour is unmanageable and likely to be expelled or has been expelled</td>
<td>Children may be in alternative provision and school placement has broken down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disaffected from learning and other school activities</td>
<td>Not engaged in education, training or employment appropriate to age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing to reach potential in exams, test appropriate for age and ability and/or has no record of achievement</td>
<td>Not learning in classroom or other situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not engaged in enhanced learning opportunities, for example trips and other groups</td>
<td>Not engaged in extra-curricular development activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of special needs requested or in progress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not achieving key stage benchmarks/identified learning needs</td>
<td>No pattern to learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No interest/skills displayed (including sports, hobbies) and so on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys and books absent from environment</td>
<td>Pre-school child who is unable to engage or participate in play activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10: Levels 1, 2 and 3 – Identity, Self-Esteem and Self-Care Needs
Level 3 is included for reference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive sense of self and abilities</td>
<td>Some insecurities around identity expressed, for example low self-esteem</td>
<td>Demonstrates significantly low self-esteem in a range of situations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates feelings of belonging and acceptance</td>
<td>May experience bullying, discrimination or harassment due to ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability or religion</td>
<td>Subject to discrimination, for example racial or sexual, or due to disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A sense of self and an ability to express needs</td>
<td>Previously happy child becomes sad, withdrawn, quiet, argumentative, aggressive</td>
<td>Child has few (if any) positive relationships and can be hostile to others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate dress for different settings</td>
<td>Can be provocative in appearance and behaviour</td>
<td>Is provocative in behaviour/appearance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good level of personal hygiene</td>
<td>Not always adequate self-care, for example poor hygiene</td>
<td>Hygiene problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing level of competencies in practical and emotional skills, such as feeding, dressing and independent living skills</td>
<td>Some delay in developing age appropriate self-care skills</td>
<td>Child previously able to care for self, regresses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Poor self-care for age including hygiene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The remaining levels are also included for reference.

**Figure 11: Levels 3 and 4 – Identity, Self-Esteem and Self-Care Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates significantly low self-esteem in a range of situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject to discrimination, for example racial or sexual, or due to disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has few (if any) positive relationships and can be hostile to others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is provocative in behaviour/appearance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene problems</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child previously able to care for self, regresses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor self-care for age including hygiene</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates significantly low self-esteem in a range of situations</td>
<td>Experiences persistent discrimination, placing the child at risk or adversely affecting the child’s health and development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject to discrimination, for example racial or sexual, or due to disabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child has few (if any) positive relationships and can be hostile to others</td>
<td>Is socially isolated and lacks appropriate role models, placing the child at risk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is provocative in behaviour/appearance</td>
<td>Regularly seen in inappropriate/inadequate clothing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygiene problems</td>
<td>Hygiene problems causing isolation affecting the child’s self-esteem and development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child previously able to care for self, regresses</td>
<td>Neglects to use self-care skills due to alternative priorities, for example substance abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor self-care for age including hygiene</td>
<td>Child repeatedly presenting as being hungry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is also necessary to keep more detailed records as part of the identification of SEBD. This needs to record:

- the types of behaviour(s) exhibited;
- frequency;
- action taken; and
- the trigger point.

This can be done on a simple proforma such as an ABC record sheet illustrated below. This record should indicate if there is any specific trigger point and will show how the learner responds.

NB: Remember to include internalised behaviours, for example withdrawing or silence.

Figure 12: ABC Record Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antecedent (Trigger)</th>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>Consequences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>External</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asked to complete a task</td>
<td></td>
<td>Verbal aggression: shouting out/bad language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Learner reminded of behaviour rules and the sanctions for breaking these - these should be whole-school rules and sanctions, known to all, clearly displayed throughout the school, and consistently applied. Sanction applied at appropriate level. There should be a clear hierarchy of sanctions for behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave up easily and did not have the confidence to complete a new activity</td>
<td>Became withdrawn and would not communicate</td>
<td>Worked with learner on a one-to-one basis. Activity broken into smaller components. Verbal reassurance given for each step.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Consequences column indicates what action was taken and this should ensure consistency of approach. It will also indicate if the approach is successful in stopping the behaviour, or if an alternative approach needs to be taken.

Other areas must also be referred to in conjunction with these checklists, such as:
- attendance record;
- curriculum strengths and weaknesses;
- learner records from any previous year group or school;
- discussion with the learner regarding personal perception of difficulties, to further understand issues and how they might be best addressed;
- discussion with reference to records from other outside agencies involved, for example social services, CAMHS, educational psychologists;
- discussion with parents/carers;
- discussion with other relevant adults outside the school environment, for example youth club leaders;
- discussion with school transport workers; and
- achievement or non-achievement of targets set within the context of the whole-school day.

Classroom Organisation and Management
McNamara (1999) identified contributory factors which can impact on learners’ emotional wellbeing. Some of the factors identified were teacher/classroom related.

A Resource File for Schools to Support Children with Special Educational Needs (available at www.deni.gov.uk) ‘Understanding and Managing Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties’ outlines four areas of which teachers need to be aware.

- The reflective practitioner: The reflective practitioner should continually reflect on and examine their own behaviour and be aware of the consequences of proactive and reactive responses when managing learners with SEBD.
- The assertive practitioner: The assertive practitioner should be aware that communication styles are important and should be used accordingly to achieve the appropriate outcome. A strong positive communication style is most effective.
- Effective planning and classroom management: When managing learners with SEBD, it is essential to establish an organised, orderly classroom and to have clear plans as to how appropriate and inappropriate behaviour will be managed in a positive way.
- Positive behaviour management: The aim of positive behaviour management is to promote and sustain good behaviour through a continual focus on the positive.

The impact of teachers on learners is highlighted by Ed Sipler (2006) in The Power of Teachers in a Young Person’s World. It outlines the following risk and protective processes which can have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of young people:
- life skills;
- connections; and
- resilience.
Life skills

Sipler states in *The Power of Teachers in A Young Person’s World* (CCEA, 2006):

‘Life skills are one of the protective factors. Teaching life skills in the classroom has been shown to substantially reduce tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use. Life skills work is recommended for all pupils. When aimed at the whole-school population, universal programmes will also engage pupils with identified risks. Teaching personal development in the revised curriculum accomplishes this. Caution is made, however, to the limitation of a skills focus in isolation. Competence in life skills alone may not be enough. Skills can go unused or be used in an antisocial way if not anchored by connections.’ (Pittman, 1999)

Connections

The Add Health project, a longitudinal study on adolescent health and development, found that young people who feel connected to school have better mental health and are less likely to engage in risky behaviours including the use of alcohol and illegal drugs, early sexual activity and violence (Blum and Rinehart, 1997). Other researchers have found that learners respond to efforts to improve academic performance when they feel connected to school.

Resiliency

The risk and resiliency literature emphasises that schools are critical environments for young people to develop strengths and the capacity to adjust to pressure, bounce back from adversity and develop the social, academic and vocational competencies necessary to do well in life. Researchers have found that resilience is an attribute that can be developed and fostered (Benard, 1991). Milstein and Henry (2000) specified the following protective factors that build resilience and that can be developed within the school setting:

- positive bonding;
- clear and consistent boundaries;
- life skills;
- caring and support;
- high expectations; and
- meaningful participation.

Sipler has shown in these statements that learners lacking in these skills and protective factors are more likely to have behaviour problems, so it is imperative that schools find ways to support the development of the protective factors and incorporate the teaching of the coping skills into the curriculum.

The ethos of the school should reflect the above criteria. School should provide a positive experience for each learner where they can fulfil their potential. Such a school will provide an environment where each learner feels valued and all staff are sensitive to each learner’s social and emotional needs. The classroom environment will be stimulating and the work of every learner will be displayed (over the year each learner’s work should have equal ‘display time’) and success celebrated. Teachers will have the knowledge to respond to any distress exhibited by the learners. Lessons should be stimulating and differentiated to meet individual needs. Individual learning styles will be taken into account.
Teachers can refer to research as a reference point to the skills which must be developed to help both the learner and the teacher deal with the problems of everyday life. Research by Hawkins, Catalano and Miller (1992) has resulted in a comprehensive list of risk factors. The risk factors chart is included in Appendix 3. Sue Howard and Bruce Johnson’s list of protective factors is included in their paper *Young Adolescents Displaying Resilient and Non-Resilient Behaviour: Insights from a Qualitative Study: Can Schools Make a Difference?* (2000).

**Summary**

Early identification is a crucial part of breaking down the barriers to learning that learners with SEBD may encounter. During the identification process all evidence must be examined and a holistic view of the learner must be considered before a decision is reached. Exemplar formats have been included for ease of administration.

The roles of both senior management and classroom teachers have been outlined and suggested procedures have been put forward.

The policies and ethos of the school must have an inclusive approach to learners with SEBD and ensure that they are a valued group within the school population. It is essential that any structures, policies and so on are flexible and regularly monitored and evaluated.
Chapter 5: Gender and SEBD
Why Gender Needs to be Considered When Planning for Learners with SEBD

Society has differing behavioural expectations for boys and girls. Common language describes an active girl as a ‘tomboy’ or a quiet boy as a ‘geek’ or ‘Mummy’s boy’. From their earliest days, children are told that girls are made of ‘sugar and spice’, whereas boys are made of ‘frogs and snails’. We are presented with the image of ‘good girls’ and ‘bad boys’. There is an implication that educational achievement, friendship and ‘good’ behaviour comes naturally to girls and that boys are more likely to be independent, poor communicators, and have difficulties working quietly. This simplistic view masks other issues and causes difficulties and stress for those girls and boys who do not neatly fit the stereotype.

Gender All Around Us: Stereotypical Traits Associated with Males and Females

In Figures 13 and 14 we can see society’s stereotypes for male and female personalities and behaviour.

Figure 13: Stereotypical Traits Associated with Being Female

- more interested in people and the community
- creative
- nurturing
- inferior to men
- expresses emotions
- interdependent, part of a group
- passive
- physically weak
- compassionate
In reality, an individual consists of a much more complicated diverse mix of ‘male’ and ‘female’ personality traits, behaviours and attitudes.

‘Educational concerns are currently highly gendered’ (Lloyd, 2005). Previous debate in western educational circles on the underachievement of boys is now being re-examined, with the result that flaws within this debate are being detected.

“So, does the focus on boys’ underachievement matter? In short it does because the boy’s underachievement debate controls how we understand gender and education. It makes us pay more attention to some things and forget about other things. It ignores other differences between young people, particularly of ethnicity and class, which actually have a far greater [effect] on results.” (Mendick, 2013)
Myths

Research has led to reviewing of some current educational myths. ‘Gender and Education – Mythbusters’ produced by the Department for Education (DfE) for children, families and schools (2009) can be found at http://core.kmi.open.ac.uk

This gives a range of starting points for discussion in schools on some of the myths surrounding gender and education. It allows schools the opportunity to see more clearly the issues on which they should be focusing.

Having read this section, here are some questions to reflect upon:

1. What might it be like for a girl who:
   - had not been praised for her looks;
   - preferred to focus on qualities other than her appearance;
   - had not been allowed to talk about how she felt; or
   - only ever got attention by being aggressive and confrontational?

2. What might it be like for a boy who had:
   - been encouraged to think that typical male traits are ‘bad’;
   - a quiet demeanour and wasn’t very funny; or
   - not been allowed to show any aggression?
Implications for Gender and SEBD

Once we get past these myths, we can look at some of the real issues for pupils and teachers in supporting and educating learners with SEBD.

The version of masculinity most admired within our society centres around these stereotypes. There is an enormous pressure on young males to appear ‘male enough’ as other males will look for a victim to subordinate in order to assert their manliness. Displaying more typically ‘feminine’ traits, such as compassion and creativity, is often looked down upon. Young men who do not fit in with the hyper-heterosexual practices ascribed to as being typically masculine are often ridiculed using humour.

Men’s sense of who they are is often based on disassociating from others, and they tend to stress gender differences, whereas women are often less concerned with highlighting their gender differences to men, and feel more naturally linked to others and relationships. Hence men may be more effective in independent, self-driven situations, whereas women thrive more in interpersonal relatedness.

Women tend to be more reliant on relationships, which can have good and bad consequences. For example, due to the fact that a core sense of their identity is a sense of connection with others, psychological crises can arise quite quickly for a female who feels a sense of disconnection from others. The ultimate weapon against a girl’s sense of worth is to be excluded or left out. Girls sometimes form groups for a victim to be excluded from, especially in primary school. The group can claim that the excluded person has certain negative characteristics to make themselves feel superior.

Having read this section, here are some questions to reflect on:

- How much do you agree or disagree with the personality traits and behaviours associated with male or female?
- How do you view men who are physically weak or not sporty?
- How do you feel about women who are competitive?
- Look at the list associated with your own gender. How do you compare to these gender stereotypes? Can you see a mixture of both feminine and masculine stereotypical traits in yourself? How do you feel about your conclusion?
How Gender Influences our Ways of Behaving and Coping

The following table shows how gender can often influence how men and women react to things:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When we...</th>
<th>Men tend to...</th>
<th>Women tend to...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Show aggression</td>
<td>Feel they are exerting control; reclaim a sense of power and self-esteem.</td>
<td>Feel they 'lost' control, and so feel guilty and 'bad'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are intimate</td>
<td>Feel vulnerable as it arouses a sense of interdependency, which is considered 'weak'.</td>
<td>Be natural, positive, feel they will get something good from this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to get our needs met</td>
<td>Be less able to collaborate and make compromises.</td>
<td>Be better at using non-assertive, co-operative methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect with others</td>
<td>Be less concerned with feedback from others; this is not so important.</td>
<td>Be anxious; be more influenced by others’ opinions and have a wish to be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain self-esteem</td>
<td>Have self-worth based on performance and actions they make.</td>
<td>Have self-worth based more on body image and social connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>Be aggressive; explore ideas around morality.</td>
<td>Be more collaborative; avoid conflict in play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show humour</td>
<td>Use humour constantly, especially with young men in schools as a baseline around which to organise their interactions (humour can be seen as a strong, admired part of masculine identity).</td>
<td>See humour as not so important as a measure of self-worth or value.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consider suicide</td>
<td>Make fewer attempts, but are more likely to succeed; using more absolute methods such as guns or hanging.</td>
<td>Be more likely to attempt, but not succeed; using less aggressive methods such as poisons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-harm</td>
<td>Be less likely to use this as a method of controlling feelings.</td>
<td>Be more likely to use this as a method of controlling feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have difficult feelings</td>
<td>Act out.</td>
<td>Internalise (for example, eating disorders are more likely).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Generalised Gender Responses
Why Some of Us Act in Ways that are ‘Expected’ and Some Don’t

Our self-esteem is a value we place on our personal identity. It isn’t a fixed entity and can change depending on who we are with and the situation we are in. Our ability to be aware of our own feelings and tune into those of others is partly influenced by the way we were nurtured when we were a small child. We are all different and will all have certain tendencies due to our genetic background. However, how these manifest in our behaviour is strongly influenced by the environment in which we are reared and live out our lives.

Parents impose their attitudes, presumptions and wishes related to gender onto their children from pregnancy onwards, with children having a self-perception related to their gender by three or four years old. Research has shown that antisocial adult males often come from homes where care was unpredictable and discipline inconsistent. This can be seen in school where a child who has not been taught social ways of communicating feelings resorts to tantrums, yelling, lashing out and crying. The behaviour is not appreciated at school by either teachers or peers, and so the child seeks out similarly marginalised learners to form a deviant subculture, where antisocial behaviour is often approved of.

The following table (Figure 16) shows some examples of parents’ contrasting approaches to their children related to gender:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Boys</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls are praised for being useful, and this is assumed to be an important characteristic for girls to have.</td>
<td>Boys are encouraged to be more physically active than girls, and it is assumed that this should be something they enjoy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of 18–24 month old girls talk about, and show, a wide range of emotions when playing and communicating with their daughter.</td>
<td>Parents of 18–24 month old boys show, and talk less about, emotions when playing and communicating with their son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls are encouraged to talk about their feelings, so develop skills to do this.</td>
<td>Boys are not encouraged to talk about their feelings, resulting in more confrontational behaviour to verbalise their feelings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When daughters behave badly, mothers are less tolerant and more likely to be angry.</td>
<td>When sons behave badly, mothers are more likely to show worry and concern and try to find ways to help them feel better or distract them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An absent father may remove the opportunity for girls to see a respectful relationship between a man and a woman.</td>
<td>If the mother has an unconscious hostility towards men, her son may develop more feminine traits to appease her.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An angry, aggressive father may teach a girl to defer to men.</td>
<td>An angry, aggressive father may teach a boy inappropriate ways to be ‘a man’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents with good self-esteem and respect for one another will model healthy ways to be an adult of either gender and also how to manage a healthy, respectful relationship.

Figure 16: Parental impact on behaviour and attitudes

60
Guidance on Identifying and Supporting Learners with Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties
Difficult relationships with the mother during the early years of a person’s life can have an impact on attitudes towards women generally. Men may develop misogynist feelings, and women may unconsciously feel that they have internalised some of the aspects of their mother that they found difficult, affecting their self-confidence. When any person is feeling under threat or insecure, healthy personality traits can be exaggerated into unhealthy traits, as displayed in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Trait</th>
<th>Unhealthy Mutation of Trait</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Aggression/Passive aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical strength</td>
<td>Beating others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bravery</td>
<td>Bravado and cruelty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurousness</td>
<td>Extreme risk-taking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
<td>Disciplining others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td>Social isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to acknowledge and manage difficult emotions</td>
<td>Denying and repressing difficult emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-control and regulation</td>
<td>Extreme rage and shame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitiveness</td>
<td>Hostility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationality</td>
<td>Rationalisation of violence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual potency</td>
<td>Sexual control and/or contempt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17: Behaviours when under threat or feeling insecure

Having read this section, here are some questions to reflect on:

Consider each of the profiles of learners with SEBD from Chapter 2.

1. Which gender might you assume each to be, and why?
2. What could be the possible parenting situation that could have resulted in the individual adopting this profile?
3. Which unhealthy traits might they adopt, and why do you think this has happened?
Gender in the Classroom

Schools tend to prefer situations where people stay emotionally neutral and behave extremely rationally. This is understandable on one level in that a school has a complicated array of activities occurring throughout the day, and these need to flow as seamlessly as possible. However, this preference can also lead to intolerance of the difference and diversity of individuals, and their particular needs.

Social interaction studies have shown that boys are systematically socialised to dominate women, and that changing this power balance requires work with boys as well as girls. There is a need for a more gender-balanced approach to SEBD learners, especially towards girls as their more passive SEBD traits, such as disconnectedness, may go unnoticed because they are not disrupting the classroom: ‘A key challenge in terms of prevention and early intervention, in understanding that a girl or young adolescent woman may be in need of help, is that many of their difficulties may be hidden and as a result, overlooked by the more overt and challenging problems shown by their male peers’ (Street, 2005).

There is much evidence that ‘typical’ masculinity is entrenched in classrooms, as well as the outside world. In the classroom, social representations of gender are constantly projected onto boys and girls by each other, and by the teacher. There are unspoken assumptions and constraints, especially from teachers, about what learners can say, do, write and how they can behave as a boy or as a girl.

Teachers appear to have different assumptions of high- and low-achieving boys. Teachers, of either gender, often appear to collude with the social assumption that high-achieving boys are rational and intellectual, whereas low-achieving boys are assumed to represent another type of masculinity, of being more aggressive.

Teachers also tend to tolerate verbal abuse and acting out more from boys than girls. They reprimand girls more severely for the same behaviours as boys. However, they are less sympathetic when a boy cries than they would be to a girl who did the same. In the same way, they have less tolerance for girls who engage in physical fighting.

Some girls challenge the assumed superiority of males by trying to be more dominant, aggressive or sexual. However, these behaviours are actually more typically masculine, which in a way highlights the fact that these girls may believe that they must behave in a more masculine way to be superior, or to be taken more seriously. If girls choose to embrace society’s stereotype of masculinity in this way, it means that they are simultaneously rejecting society’s female stereotype. Ultimately this behaviour fails to challenge either stereotype. This ‘dominant form’ of femininity still denigrates typical female behaviour and so doesn’t actually challenge society’s assumptions that masculinity is the better mode of presentation as a human being.

Other girls will be ‘helpful’ and give up their power to more demanding boys, allowing the boys to dominate and so ensure that they are not excluded. It has been found that in some primary schools, the helpful girl is less highly-regarded by a teacher than a demanding, creative boy. The former is often considered too conformist, whereas the male child is fulfilling the stereotypical assumptions that the teacher may have.
Girls will more often appear depressed and socially withdrawn, because it is not societally acceptable to show their anger and frustration. They often disengage in less confrontational ways, such as chatting, reading non-curriculum materials, doing their hair or simply truanting. It is also assumed that girls are more comfortable with asking for help when they need it, and that they will avail of their social support systems more readily. These issues can result in girls often being overlooked when identification of learners with SEBD is taking place.

Changes in modern society have meant a change in roles for each gender, often making it harder for young males to find their sense of place and identity. Schools could assist young men with this transitional stage of values and help shape roles within society for each gender.

Girls’ sense of belonging is a strong influence on their self-worth. Girls from low-income families often cannot be involved in social activities involving entrance fees or sharing lifts or sleepovers, especially in rural areas. This can lead to social isolation and impact on self-esteem. The strain on parents can also have a knock-on effect on children. So for these girls, punishments such as breaktime detentions have a much stronger impact. It may be depriving them of their only opportunity for socialising.

Having read this section, here are some questions to reflect on:

1. Do ‘typical’ males dominate the interactions in your classroom?
2. Do you think boys are ‘better’ than girls in some way?
3. What are your typical expectations of girls? How much is this influenced by their ability?
4. What are your typical expectations of boys? How much is this influenced by their ability?
5. Do you find that you tolerate more verbal ‘acting out’ by boys than girls?
6. Do you make a point of ensuring that girls take as many ‘active’ roles in class as the boys?
7. Do the more vocal assertive girls adopt ‘male’ ways of behaving?
8. How do you encourage the quiet girls to take part in class?
9. How do you provide a space for the ‘typical’ male to ask for help without losing his status/image?
10. What systems are in place to support girls who are being socially excluded or simply cannot socialise due to financial and geographical issues?
Summary
This discussion raises some important issues about how gender influences our perceptions of people:
• Do we gender stereotype without realising that we are doing it?
• How do you, as a teacher, manage your own assumptions?
• How do society’s assumptions about gender behaviour add to the distress some young people have?
• How can we aim to treat males and females as equal, while incorporating the fact that they are not the same and typically respond to different approaches?
• How does gender impact on how people present their distress?
• How can you ensure that the more passive, ‘unseen’ distressed learners are noticed?
Chapter 6:
SEBD Issues for Learners
Society has always given young people challenges. Contemporary society in Northern Ireland has challenges that those born before 1980 will struggle to understand. It also has the challenges that have existed for thousands of years and will no doubt continue to do so. This chapter outlines some of the issues and their potential impact on young people. It gives links to sources of further information. It is important to remember that an accumulation of lesser issues can be as damaging as one major issue. Schools and teachers should consider what steps they can take to reduce the likelihood of these issues arising and to reduce the impact of those that do.

Hidden Harm

‘Hidden Harm’ is defined as when a parent, parents, or other carer’s alcohol and drug use (including over-the-counter and prescribed medication) has a serious negative consequence for children and young people and those around them.

The Hidden Harm Action Plan: Responding to the needs of children born to and living with parental alcohol and drug misuse in Northern Ireland, the Government’s report into the needs of children living with problematic alcohol and drug misuse states that:

“Many families with extreme burdens associated with problematic substance misuse and addiction go unnoticed.”

Chronic stress, unpredictability, and sometimes, violence can become the norm.

Family members develop survival skills that can have a lasting impact. It can have a devastating impact on all the family but can be particularly damaging to the most vulnerable: children and young people.

Scale of the problem

Because it is hidden, the exact number of people affected by hidden harm is not currently known. The above report estimates that 40,000 children and young people in Northern Ireland are living with parents who misuse substances. This represents one in 11 of our children and young people. Given the scale of the problem, it can be assumed that in the average classroom, at least two young people are going home to a household where parental substance misuse is an issue.
Messages family members need to hear

Although there are stresses and strains for many across the country, there is also hope. These are messages that will help family members and particularly children and young people, who need to hear them.

When young adults who had grown up in a family where one or both of their parents had a drinking problem were interviewed, several protective facts that had proved significantly positive for them were identified (Orford and Velleman, 1999). Teachers were identified as a powerful source of support.

Help and Information

_Taking the Lid Off_, a self-help booklet for family members and _Taking the Lid Off for Young People_ are available at [www.ascert.biz](http://www.ascert.biz).

ASCERT’s website: Taking the Lid Off, a self-help booklet for family members – [www.ascert.biz](http://www.ascert.biz)

NACOA provides support for anyone affected by their parents’ drinking – [www.NACOA.org.uk](http://www.NACOA.org.uk)

Childline provides a range of support for young people – [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Al-Anon supports family members affected by someone’s drinking – [www.al-anonuk.org.uk](http://www.al-anonuk.org.uk)

Nar-Anon supports family members affected by someone’s drug use – [www.nar-anon.org](http://www.nar-anon.org)

A resource for young people living with parental substance misuse – [www.coap.org.uk](http://www.coap.org.uk)

A website run by DIVERT – [www.hiddenharm-divert.com](http://www.hiddenharm-divert.com)

Public Health Agency – [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)
Domestic Violence

The Hideout helps young people faced with domestic violence – www.thehideout.org.uk

Technology Issues

Experts often discuss how those born after 1980 are ‘digital natives’ (Prensky, 2001). Digital natives are people who have grown up immersed in technology and who are as comfortable with it as older generations are with pen and paper. While this has allowed for amazing growth in the use of technology, it has also led to problems. Some of the issues related to technology that young people face are:

- posting too much information about themselves online, which can:
  - leave them open to ridicule, bullying or grooming
  - cause issues with universities and employers later in life, as it is becoming more common for checks of social networking to be made as part of the recruitment process
- posting online or sending inappropriate/intimate photos and videos via text
- the prevalence of mobile phones:
  - pay as you go phones don’t keep an independent record of calls and the log on the phone can be altered and deleted, making it difficult for parents to monitor
  - most phones have cameras, meaning that a picture can be taken, altered and shared within minutes, giving no ‘thinking time’ for young people to consider their actions
  - children and teenagers have constant access to calls, texts, images and the internet, all without supervision
- access to age-inappropriate materials
- the risk of cyberstalking
- being ‘tagged’ by others in unflattering images
- lack of understanding about privacy settings and/or software changes that impacts on previous settings
- Bluetooth and other technology that allows unwanted access by others
- pressure to have the ‘right’ number of friends on social networking sites
- apps and software that encourage adding strangers as ‘friends’
- pressure to own the ‘right’ digital equipment or technology
- personal pages such as Facebook or Instagram being hacked and altered
- the permanence of mistakes – any mistakes that previous generations might have made were not photographed and uploaded to the internet – but this generation’s mistakes could be available online for their entire lives
- feelings of inadequacy that young people might suffer, due to expectations from media, peers and adults, if they do not excel at technology
- GPS tracking apps – some social networking applications allow you to see the exact location of your contacts (and any other user of the same app). This means that other users of the same app including strangers can also see where you are, which could be potentially dangerous. This relates back to the point about being encouraged to add strangers or ‘friends of friends’ as contacts.
Visit the following websites for help and information:
• Department of Education (search for Child Protection): www.deni.gov.uk
• Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre: www.ceop.police.uk
  - Further information is available from CEOP: www.thinkuknow.co.uk
• NI Direct Government Services (search for cyberbullying): www.nidirect.gov.uk
• NI Anti-Bullying Forum: www.niabf.org.uk
• Get Safe Online (click on social networking): www.getsafeonline.org
• PSNI: www.urzone.com

Mismatch between Expectations at Home and School

Learners may experience different expectations in their home or community and in school. Our young people come from a variety of cultures and family situations. This can lead to confusion for the learner when trying to conform to the different expectations of home and school. Some of the reasons for this may be:

Being a newcomer to Northern Ireland:
• Different cultural expectations, for example an expectation of more or less formal behaviour; different types of humour
• Misunderstandings when English is not the learner’s and/or the parent’s first language.

Help and Information for being a newcomer:
• Search for ‘newcomers’ at www.deni.gov.uk
• Search for ‘Diversity and Inclusion in Catholic Maintained Schools’ at www.onlineccms.com
• Search for ‘newcomer children’ at www.niccy.org

Inappropriate role models in the community where the learner lives, for example learners living in areas with a high level of crime or street violence, may see violent responses to confrontation used regularly. This can lead to a distorted idea of the most appropriate approach to a variety of situations.

Help and Information for inappropriate role models:
• Search for ‘Our Children and Young People – Our Pledge’ at www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk (particularly pages 15 and 16)
• Search for A Thematic Review of Literature on the Relationship Between Neighbourhoods, Housing and Crime at www.scotland.gov.uk (particularly sections 3.24–3.27)
• Search online for ‘Does Growing Up in a High Crime Neighbourhood Affect Youth Criminal Behaviour?’
• Search online for ‘Teenagers at Risk: The Safeguarding needs of Young People in Gangs and Violent Peer Groups’

Some useful strategies to help learners cope with differing expectations are:
• Role models:
  - speakers can be invited to the school for question and answer sessions
  - videos, podcasts or short written stories may be distributed to learners for personal learning or as stimulus materials for whole-class discussions (both live or online)
  - posters with information may be displayed at key points in the school
Role models can include local achievers, celebrities who lead an ethical lifestyle, or people who have turned their lives around after a difficult period.

- **Mentoring**: Learners may need a mentor for a short period or over several years. The mentor should be someone who can provide consistent, non-judgemental advice and who is willing to listen when needed.

  **NB**: Child protection should be a first priority and any person who is in the role of mentor should have the appropriate police checks.

Mentors may be:
- older learners;
- teachers;
- auxiliary staff;
- community workers;
- local business people;
- foster parents; or
- other suitable adults.

- **Modelling appropriate behaviour in different situations**:
  - role-playing scenarios where different types of behaviour are required, for example Granny might not expect a teenager to wash the dishes after dinner but Mum might;
  - teenagers using different language when at a party with their friends to the language they use when explaining symptoms of an illness at a doctor’s appointment;
  - watching extracts of soap operas and discussing behaviour in differing situations; considering possible strategies to cope with difficult situations.

**Peer Pressure**

Growing from childhood to adulthood is a time of transition and can be difficult. As children mature, increasingly, expectations from peers take greater priority over the expectations from adult society. This can manifest itself in a variety of ways.

- **Relationships with peers**
  - click on ‘Resources for Teachers’ at [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

- **Puberty/Sexuality/Sexual activity and associated issues**
  - search for Insync and for ‘Knowing and Growing’ at [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)
  - search for ‘How to Cope with your Sexual Identity’ at [www.teenissues.co.uk](http://www.teenissues.co.uk)
  - [www.diversityrolemodels.org](http://www.diversityrolemodels.org)

- **Popularity**: both the pressure of ‘staying at the top’ or feeling a social outcast
  - search for ‘Insync’ at [www.nicurriculum.org.uk](http://www.nicurriculum.org.uk)

- **Loneliness**
  - search for ‘The Lonely Society’ at [www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) especially chapter 4
• Peer pressure to conform
  - search for an article called ‘Defeating Peer Pressure’ at www.teenissues.co.uk
• Non-standard appearance/Physical self-image
  - search for ‘body image and self-esteem’ at www.kidshealth.org/teen
  - search for ‘Dove Evolution in Campaign for Real Beauty’ at www.theinspirationroom.com
  - search for articles called ‘Dental Braces’, ‘Stuttering’ and ‘Cultivating a Realistic Body Image’ at www.teenissues.co.uk
• Discrimination
  - www.right-to-education.org
  - www.equalityni.org
  - search for SENDO and pages for young people at www.equalityni.org
  - search for inclusion and diversity service at www.education-support.org.uk
• Drug/Alcohol use/Addictions
  - search for addiction at www.nhs.uk and at www.addictionni.com
  - search for computer addiction symptoms at www.video-game-addiction.org

Dealing with Change and Greater Responsibilities
The move from primary to post-primary or from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 can be difficult for many learners. The greater expectation of maturity and organisation is one that can take time to adjust to. This period of adjustment is often very stressful. Teachers, schools and families can ease this path by providing information and opportunities for learners to practise skills before they need to perform them alone. Schools often provide information to families or as part of their induction programme. Some of the information in this section may also be useful.

Changing schools and adapting to the greater responsibility for their own day-to-day living:
• travel arrangements
  - search www.translink.co.uk for a Belfast bus map which is updated yearly
• healthy lifestyle
  - search ‘For Children and Young People’ at www.youngminds.org.uk for advice on diet, exercise and other lifestyle choices for good mental health
• workload
  - search for ‘life balance’ at www.pamf.org/teen
  - search online for programmes in school to teach study skills; time management; and stress management
• meeting deadlines
  - search for ‘Plan a Homework Schedule’ at www.wikihow.com
• meeting and balancing the expectations of a widening circle of adults and peers
  - search for ‘Supporting Your Child at Secondary School’ at www.bbc.co.uk/schools/
  - search for ‘Starting High School’ at www.cyh.com
  - go to www.teenissues.co.uk and search for ‘Moving from Primary School to Secondary School’
• tiredness, due to a packed schedule and not enough rest and sleep
  - Search for ‘Sleep Tips for Teenagers’ at www.nhs.uk
Worries at Home

Many young people have fears and concerns for those they love and how they might cope with difficult situations. They may also be fearful for their own position and security when they are dealing with major life changes. The issues that may arise are varied. Below are links to information and sources of help for some of the more common issues.

- **Gain of new family member through birth, adoption or parent’s remarriage**
  - search for ‘stepfamily’ at [www.careforthefamily.org.uk](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk)
  - go to [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org) and click on ‘Adoption and Sibling Relationships’ in the link for ‘Adoptalk Articles’
  - go to [www.adoptivefamilies.com](http://www.adoptivefamilies.com) and click on the ’Siblings and Adoption’ link

- **Financial issues**
  - search for ‘family money troubles’ at [http://kidshealth.org/teen](http://kidshealth.org/teen)

- **Family ill health**
  - search for ‘dealing with someone you love being ill’ at [www.teenissues.co.uk](http://www.teenissues.co.uk)

- **Parental divorce**
  - go to [www.rcpsych.ac.uk](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk) and click on ‘Parents and Youth Info’

- **Being in care (Looked After Children)**
  - go to [www.education-support.org.uk](http://www.education-support.org.uk) and search for ‘education welfare service, looked after children’
  - go to [www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk) and search for ‘looked after children’
  - go to [www.familysupportni.gov.uk](http://www.familysupportni.gov.uk) and search the alphabetical menu for local services in ‘Looked After Children in Health Trusts’

- **Young carers**
  - [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)

- **Prisoners’ children**
  - go to [www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk) and search for ‘children of prisoners’
  - go to [www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk) and search for *Children of Prisoners: Maintaining Family Ties*
  - go to [www.eurochips.org](http://www.eurochips.org) and click on Children’s Special Needs in the Expert Corner link

- **School Age Mothers (SAM)**
  - go to [www.education-support.org.uk](http://www.education-support.org.uk) and search for ‘education welfare service, school aged mothers’

- **Obesity/Being underweight**
  - search for an article called ‘Cultivating a Realistic Body Image’ at [www.teenissues.co.uk](http://www.teenissues.co.uk)

- **Health issues/Disability/Life limited**
  - go to [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and search for living with diabetes
  - go to [www.cfvoice.com](http://www.cfvoice.com) and click on the 13–17 link
  - go to [www.pamf.org](http://www.pamf.org) and enter living with disabilities
Academic Issues

- Pressure to succeed academically/Failing academically/Being gifted and talented or having a learning difficulty
  - go to www.pamf.org and search for ‘academic pressure’
  - go to www.womenonthefence.com and search for ‘de-stress your teen’
  - go to www.nicurriculum.org.uk and search for ‘gifted and talented’
  - go to www.iggy.net
  - go to www.nclld.org and search for The Social and Emotional Side of Learning Disabilities
  - go to www.ldonline.org and search for Understanding Children’s Hearts and Minds

Building Resilience

All young people encounter some of these issues. Some face many of them and cope wonderfully. Others, confronting just one or two, struggle to meet the challenges. Problems arise when the coping resources are exceeded by the issues faced. Pressures that are too intense or last too long, or troubles that are shouldered alone, can cause people to feel stress overload. Some people have anxiety problems that can cause them to overreact to stress, making even small difficulties seem like crises. If a person frequently feels tense, upset, worried, or stressed, it may be a sign of anxiety.

If the methods provided for the greater school population are not sufficient for some learners, then further steps should be taken. Ed Sipler has created a wonderful resource for building resilience, which schools may use either in small groups or one to one situations. His Bouncing Back Workbook and Bend Don’t Break are available at www.nicurriculum.org.uk

Using these resources to build resilience

Bonnie Benard [2004] has identified three key resources that help young people manage stress points in their lives. These resources are:

- Having a caring and supportive relationship with at least one adult. Teachers are included in her list of sources of support.
- Hearing positive messages. ‘I know you can do it!’
- Having plenty of opportunities to shape, influence and control what is going on in their lives.

It is this last point that is at the heart of these resources.

While we can’t control what happens around us we can gain more control over our reactions. Based on low-intensity Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) the workbooks state most reactions (feelings, behaviour) are shaped by thinking. Gaining more control of thinking is part of building skills that support resilience. This material can support learning activities in Insync, the resource for exploring Personal Development issues in Years 8 and 10, specifically:

- Year 8: Feelings and Emotions Resource Sheets 5 and 6: Types of Unhelpful Thinking, Unhelpful thinking quiz; and
Crises and How to Manage Them

Sometimes schools and teachers have to manage a situation where a learner has reached crisis point. This section will give an overview of how to handle some situations that may arise.

Self-harm: When you become aware that a learner is self-harming

This is a child protection issue and you should follow the directions in your school policy. Listen to the learner without being critical. This can be very difficult if you’re upset or angry, but try to focus on the learner rather than your feelings. Remember that self-harm is a way of expressing very deep distress. If it feels too much for you, help the learner to find someone else to talk to. Self-harm takes many forms, including self-destructive behaviours, such as drug abuse and promiscuity. Be aware of this when listening to the learner.

Do not promise confidentiality. Reassure the learner that they have done the right thing in disclosing. Help the learner to think about their self-harm not as a shameful secret, but as a problem to be sorted out.

If the learner is comfortable with the idea then contact the teacher responsible for child protection in your school while you are still engaged with the learner. If it is not possible to do this at the time then you must inform the child protection officer as soon as possible afterwards. Remember not to “investigate” the situation. Do not ask leading questions. Your role is to:

- listen;
- reassure;
- record; and
- report.

If you feel the learner is at immediate risk from themselves or others then you must inform the school’s child protection officer before the learner leaves.

**NB: Self-harm is a method of coping with emotional pain. It is not a suicide attempt. However, people who self-harm are at greater risk of attempting suicide later.**

How to react to someone who is suicidal

You may find the approach suggested by the Samaritans a useful place to start: find it by searching for ‘Worried about Someone?’ at www.samaritans.org

David Conroy also has a possible set of steps outlined in ‘Handling a Call from a Suicidal Person’, which you can find at www.metanoia.org His website has a very sympathetic approach to those who are feeling suicidal and those who are supporting them.

The most important pain-coping resource is the help of a trained mental health professional. A person who feels suicidal should get help, and get it sooner rather than later.
Critical Incident Information from the Education and Library Boards

The Education and Library Boards (later the Education Authority) provide a range of contacts, support and guidance for schools on the management of critical incidents. You can search for this information in the sites below, or by contacting the Critical Incident Officer.

- Belfast Education and Library Board  
  www.belb.org.uk
- North Eastern Education and Library Board  
  www.neelb.org.uk
- South Eastern Education and Library Board  
  www.seelb.org.uk (go to Special Needs, then Education Psychology for a range of support information)
- Southern Education and Library Board  
  www.selb.org
- Western Education and Library Board  
  www.welbni.org
Reference and Bibliography


Benson et al., *Successful Young Adult Development*, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2004)


Cooper, P and Jacobs, B, *From Inclusion to Engagement*, Wiley-Blackwell (2011)


References and Bibliography


Office of First and Deputy First Ministers (OFMDFM), Six Outcomes for Children and Young People of Northern Ireland Strategy (2006)


Public Health Alliance, Health Inequalities on the Island of Ireland (2007)


Sipler, E, The Power of Teachers in a Young Person’s World, CCEA (2006)


West-Burnham, J, *New Leadership for New School*, a presentation at a joint Regional Training Unit/Queen’s University Belfast conference at Queen’s (2008)


*Please note that all web addresses are correct at time of publication.*
### Clarendon School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of learner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class/form:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person identifying concern:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date added to Register:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of concern:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Identified SEBD behaviour/s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal:</th>
<th>Verbal:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor self-image</td>
<td>Silent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in hygiene standards</td>
<td>Threatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Bad language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>Arguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>Constant interruptions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distant</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being vindictive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing defiance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-verbal:</th>
<th>Work skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>Inability to work without direct supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being disruptive</td>
<td>Inability to follow instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being destructive</td>
<td>Inability to concentrate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing violence/aggression</td>
<td>Inability to complete tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not compliant to rules</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix 1: Sample School Register

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results from Record Sheet:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results from Levels of Need checklist:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action taken:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monitoring arrangements:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional support:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outside agencies involved (if any):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Copy to:</th>
<th>Signed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class teacher:</td>
<td>Teacher:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-ordinator:</td>
<td>Parent/Carer:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Carer:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal:</td>
<td>Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rationale

Clarendon School is committed to providing equal access for all learners to a broad and balanced curriculum. As a school we recognise that some learners during their school career may have SEBD and we will endeavour to make every possible arrangement to provide for their individual needs.

Definition*

Learners with SEBD have learning difficulties as defined within the SEN Code of Practice. They may fail to meet expectations in school and in some, but by no means all, cases may disrupt the education of others. Such difficulties may result, for example from abuse or neglect, physical or mental illness, sensory or physical impairment, a specific learning difficulty or psychological trauma. In some cases they may arise from, or be exacerbated by, circumstances within the school environment. They may manifest themselves in a wide variety of forms, which sometimes depends on the age of the learner, including:

- withdrawn, depressive or suicidal attitudes;
- difficulty in communicating;
- obsessional preoccupation with eating habits;
- school phobia;
- substance misuse;
- disruptive, antisocial and unco-operative behaviour and frustration; and
- anger and threat of or actual violence that requires physical intervention.

SEBD may be associated with frustrations resulting from other learning difficulties. Learners with SEBD cover the full range of ability and continuum of severity. Their behaviours present a barrier to learning and persist despite the implementation of an effective school behaviour policy and personal/social curriculum.

At the milder end of the continuum, learners may have difficulties with social interaction and find it difficult to work within a group or cope in unstructured time. They may have poor concentration, temper outbursts and be verbally aggressive to peers and adults.

Other learners may display similar signs of low self-esteem, underachievement and inappropriate social interaction, but without outwardly challenging behavioural outbursts. They may be withdrawn, quiet and find it difficult to communicate.


Search for this at www.deni.gov.uk (2005)

The School Register

The SenCo/Nominated teacher is to maintain a register for learners with SEBD and to ensure that appropriate records are being kept. All learners who have been identified as having SEBD are entered into the School Register. For ease of access a copy of the register is made available to all staff in paper and electronic form. The teacher records the area of concern and all relevant details.
Appendix 2: Exemplar Policy for Identifying Learners with SEBD

The parent or carer is consulted before the learner’s name is put on the register. The register is reviewed each term at a meeting of the staff concerned. The progress of each learner towards their individual targets is also evaluated at this meeting. If a learner is not reaching their full potential or has achieved the set targets, new arrangements and where necessary new targets will be set.

 Provision for SEBD

- To identify learners with SEBD as early and thoroughly as possible through a variety of means and in consultation with the appropriate personnel.
- To ensure full entitlement and access for learners with SEBD to high quality education within a broad, balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum so that they can reach their full potential and enhance their self-esteem.
- To ensure that all learners will feel valued and have a positive self-image.
- To offer curricular, pastoral and extra-curricular experiences and opportunities that allow learners to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills ensuring progress, promoting success and self-confidence.
- To encourage parental and learner involvement in the identification, assessment and support of learners with SEBD, and strive for close co-operation between all agencies aiming for a multidisciplinary approach.
- To implement a policy of inclusion by educating learners with SEBD, wherever possible, alongside their peers.
- To develop a system for recording identification so that each learner’s performance can be monitored and reviewed appropriately.
- To stimulate and/or maintain learner interest and enjoyment in their own education.
- To encourage the use of a range of teaching strategies that incorporate different learning styles and ensure barriers to learning are overcome.
- To create a caring and supportive environment in which learners can contribute to the planned provision in relation to their individual needs.
- To provide a curriculum to promote intellectual, emotional, social and physical development in order that learners can develop as valuable members of society both now and in the future, for example learners should develop a range of desirable qualities such as:
  - safety awareness;
  - politeness;
  - resilience;
  - perseverance;
  - initiative; and
  - independence.
- To meet the needs of all learners with SEBD by offering continual and appropriate forms of educational provision by the most efficient use of all available resources.
- To promote collaboration and consistency among all staff in the implementation of whole-school policies to take account of the individual needs and requirements of learners, promoting a feeling of belonging and taking action to strengthen protective factors.
Roles and Responsibilities

A communication strategy should be implemented to ensure the successful dissemination of the roles and responsibilities within the school's policy for the early identification of learners with SEBD.

The strategy should ensure that all relevant information reaches all staff. The communication should be a two-way process, for example from the Principal and Senior Management Team (SMT) to all staff, and from all staff to the SMT and Principal.

The following questions may inform the process:
- Who needs to know?
- What information is required?
- How is it going to be communicated?
- When will it be communicated?
- What are the key messages to be communicated?

The Board of Governors should ensure that:
- the needs of all learners with SEBD are addressed;
- the policy for SEBD is kept under review; and
- appropriate funds and resources are delegated to SEBD.

The Principal should:
- keep the Board of Governors informed about SEBD issues;
- work in close partnership with the SenCo/Nominated teacher;
- liaise with parents and external agencies as required;
- ensure that the SMT are actively involved in the management of SEBD within the school;
- ensure that SMT members are consistent in practice and contribute to the realisation of the SDP; and
- provide a secure facility for the storage of the School SEN Register for SEBD.

The SenCo should:
- be responsible for the administration of the School SEN Register for SEBD;
- co-ordinate the day-to-day provision of the school’s SEBD Policy;
- co-ordinate provision for learners with SEBD, maintain the school’s SEBD register, and oversee the records of all learners;
- organise necessary reviews and referrals;
- liaise with parents/carers and external agencies;
- contribute to the in-service training of staff;
- use Classroom Assistant expertise in staff development; and
- be aware of current research.
Appendix 2: Exemplar Policy for Identifying Learners with SEBD

All staff should:

- liaise with and advise colleagues;
- promote lessons that are well prepared – challenging, engaging, motivating, progressive and accommodating the individual needs of learners;
- arrange timetables to best effect, aimed at minimising disruption;
- include opportunities to teach and model conflict management skills;
- provide opportunities for relationship and self-esteem building activities;
- have a balance and range of teaching strategies and activities, for example whole group, small group, pairs, individual or practical;
- ensure that learners have appropriate time to complete a task;
- use a balance of questioning techniques;
- use a range of teaching strategies and resources that promote different learning styles and multiple intelligences;
- employ self-monitoring and self-assessment techniques; and
- provide learners with positive and constructive feedback that promotes assessment for learning.

The class teacher should:

- keep up-to-date with information on the School SEBD Register;
- gather and record information through observation and assessment;
- develop an inclusive classroom;
- promote protective factors for resilience;
- work closely with other staff to plan for learning and teaching; and
- contribute to and manage learning plans in consultation with the SenCo/Nominated teacher.

Learning and Teaching

- All learners have the right to a broad and balanced curriculum. This involves all staff in using a range of teaching strategies and classroom management styles designed to take account of the differing abilities, interests and experiences of learners.
- In order to facilitate, this work should be stimulating. It should be differentiated so that learners can experience success, yet challenging enough to promote progression in learning.
- Work should allow learners to progress at their own rate, yet encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Staff should give positive feedback and the achievements of learners with SEBD should be celebrated.
- Staff should be sensitive to learners’ SEBD and how this impacts on communication. This needs to be taken into consideration when giving instructions.
- Lessons should be structured in a series of simple, clearly-defined steps.
- The classroom environment should be inclusive, simulating and attractive, featuring as much learner work as possible.
Continuing Professional Development

It is essential that all staff keep up-to-date with current developments in order to best provide for learners with SEBD.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

This policy will be reviewed in light of changes in legislation or practice following consultation with all staff members, parents and external agencies. Feedback will also be sought on an annual basis. The following table outlines areas that may support the review of the policy.

Three core elements are examined:
1. strong leadership;
2. a whole-school approach; and
3. a whole-person approach.
### Appendix 2: Exemplar Policy for Identifying Learners with SEBD

#### Policy Review:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. <strong>Strong leadership:</strong> Does the policy include...?</th>
<th>2. <strong>Whole-school approach:</strong> Does the policy include...?</th>
<th>3. <strong>A whole-person approach:</strong> Does the policy include...?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An inclusive approach to working with all members of the school community, including parents and learners</td>
<td>The incorporation of the learners’ emotional health and wellbeing in the School Development Plan (SDP)</td>
<td>The creation and development of a caring school ethos capable of fostering emotional health and wellbeing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working closely and routinely with other bodies and agencies concerned with the promotion of learners’ emotional health and wellbeing</td>
<td>The use of clearly-defined policies</td>
<td>Good-quality relationships based on good communication and caring, respect and consideration for others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A grounded and co-ordinated approach to the development of activities and programmes to promote learners’ emotional health and wellbeing that follow the ‘SAFE’ guidelines of being: carefully ‘sequenced’; involving ‘active’ learning; ‘focused’ on skills development among the whole-school community; and ‘explicit’ in terms of their goals</td>
<td>The selection of evidence-based programmes based on an explicit identification of the needs of learners within the school</td>
<td>Ethical principles and values, including the promotion of trust, integrity and equal opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate staff training and support</td>
<td>Recognition of the fact that the specific needs of learners will vary from school to school and thus there is a need for a degree of flexibility in the identification of priorities and the selection of particular programmes and activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The explicit monitoring and tracking of learners’ needs</td>
<td>Robust evidence-based evaluation of outcomes, services and programmes used, including ‘public value’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Possible Challenges in Carrying Out an Effective Policy Review

- lack of time available to the school
- lack of staff expertise and training
- lack of resources
- lack of clarity over what learners’ emotional health and wellbeing entails, and what schools should be doing to improve it
- lack of an appropriate and comprehensive audit tool to help schools in their own development and self-evaluation of practice
- lack of awareness of the range of external programmes and services that are currently available and how these might help schools address different aspects of their efforts to promote learners’ emotional health and wellbeing
- lack of appropriate tools that schools can use to measure and track the emotional health and wellbeing of their own learners
- the limited nature of the existing data regarding the effectiveness of current programmes available in Northern Ireland
- the difficulty in accessing any existing data outlining the effectiveness of current programmes that do exist.

Outcomes from the policy will be discussed and reviewed by the SMT. Any amendments considered necessary will be forwarded to the Board of Governors for approval.
Appendix 3
Risk and Protective Factors

(Adapted from The Power of Parents in a Child's World, which can be downloaded from www.edact.org, Hawkins, Catalano and Miller, (1992))

Risk Factors

Community
- Availability of alcohol and other drugs
- Community laws and norms that are favourable towards alcohol and other drug use
- Transitions and mobility – moving schools a lot, or undergoing a major lifestyle change such as divorce, relocation or death of a loved one
- Low community management of problems
- Poverty and deprivation in the community

School
- Early and persistent antisocial behaviour (particularly in boys)
- Academic failure, especially in late primary school
- Lack of commitment to school

Individual/Peer
- Young people feeling they do not belong
- Rebelliousness
- Low self-esteem or feeling unvalued
- Friends who drink or use drugs (in fact, this is the most reliable of the risk factors)
- Favourable attitudes to drink and drugs
- Early onset of drinking, drug use

Family
- A family history of addiction
- Family management of problems (including a lack of clear expectations and rules, supervision, knowing with whom and where they are, a lack of praise, inconsistent, excessive or harsh punishment)
- Family conflict
- Parental attitudes and involvement in alcohol, drug use and crime
- Broken family structure, for example loss of contact following separation
- Unclear rules about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs
- Low parental involvement in their children’s lives, including parent’s failure to notice children’s efforts, not getting their views regarding family decisions that affect them or the lack of doing enjoyable things with parents.
- Past problem behaviour with other brothers and sisters – including misuse of alcohol and other drugs
- Children who feel their parents don’t understand them
Appendix 3: Risk and Protective Factors

Protective Factors
(Adapted from Young Adolescents Displaying Resilient and Non-Resilient Behaviour: Insights from a Qualitative Study – Can Schools Make a Difference? Sue Howard and Bruce Johnson, [2000])

Search for this at http://trove.nla.gov.au

Life events
• Full-term birth
• Continued good health
• Opportunities at major life transitions
• Meeting significant people
• Moving into a supportive online community

Self
• Well-developed social competencies
• Interpersonal skills
• Well-developed problem-solving skills
• Autonomy
• A sense of purpose and future
• At least one coping mechanism or strategy
• A sense of self-esteem and personal responsibility
• Religious commitment
• Self-efficacy
• Positive attitude
• Optimism
• Sense of humour

Family
• Close bond/Attachment with at least one person
• Availability of support
• High warmth
• High, clear expectations
• Rootedness
• Opportunity to contribute in meaningful ways

Parenting
• Consistency
• Positive expectations
• Family personal/social network
• Good role models
Appendix 3: Risk and Protective Factors

School

- Positive links to school
- Good teaching
- Caring school climate
- Feeling safe
- Staff knowledgeable about the needs of adolescence
- At least one caring friend or peer
- Personal interest of school personnel
- Co-operative learning
- Positive role models
- Empathy
- ‘Catch’ them doing something positive and reward
- Continuity over time
- Expectations for success
- Range of options for participation