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Managing behaviour positively and reducing exclusion: A checklist of steps you can take

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Setting a positive model – at the door, smiling, enthusiastic about working with the children and about the content of the lesson, changing your focus to catching children doing the right thing, modeling the behaviour that you expect to see and making this model overt and easily read, discussing how successful learners deal with the frustrations of learning.

Maintaining an Assertive/Positive approach – removing the negatives from your verbal and physical language, being specific about the behaviour that you expect, providing clear choices structured around rewards and sanctions, resisting hostility or passivity, using an assertive performance when there is turbulence in your own emotional control.

Each day with a clean sheet – making sure that incidents have been dealt with from yesterday and making a conscious decision to refresh your expectations for the class and for individuals.

Collaborative agreements with other adults working in the classroom – having an agreement about how certain children are managed; who applies sanctions/rewards, what happens if an incident occurs; working towards a classroom where the two adults speak with certainty and with one voice.

Establishing explicit rituals and routines – verbal routines and rituals written on clear signs (language and image) and posted in two or three areas of the room.

Acknowledgement – saying thank you, acknowledging every child on a personal level and with an informal tone/register, making sure that even the quietest children are acknowledged for their efforts.

Positive reinforcement and encouragement – redirecting groups of students, catching students doing the right thing, building a positive atmosphere where children feel emotionally safe

Praise – personal, sincere, specific and age appropriate praise, eye contact, touch, building relationships and mutual trust

Reward – using positive contact with the home, class rewards negotiated with the children

Redirecting low level disruption– non verbal cues, movement and positioning around the room, proximity, use of verbal cues.

Providing clear choices and time to make a decision– ‘You can choose to join the rest of the children on the carpet or to sit next to me. Have a think about what you would like to do, I will come back and speak to you in a moment.’

Private verbal warning – eye contact, lower than eye level where possible, using a positive model of the child’s previous good behaviour to encourage them to make better choices, making sure that they understand they have been given a warning and what will happen if they ignore it – marking the moment.

Applying sanctions with care – showing empathy, patience, care, your disappointment, concern, attacking the behaviour not labeling the child,

Slowing the process of applying sanctions - giving the child time to make the right choices, finding opportunities to reinforce positive choices, catching them doing the right thing