

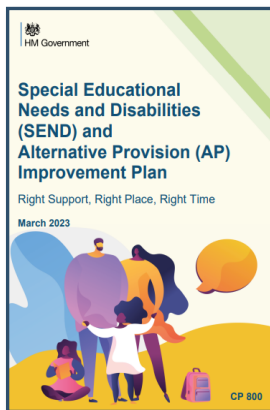
1 IN 10

SEMH NEWS

Issue 10 Spring 2023

Sebda

Promoting the social and emotional well being of children and young people



A summary of the key proposals

- * National SEND standards (not until 2025 at earliest)
- * Accountability to 'ensure expectations met'
- * EHCPs to go digital – but trialled first
- * Local Inclusion Plans (LIPs)
- * Mandatory mediation process
- * New NPQ for SENCOs (leadership level)
- * 33 new special schools
- * National SEND tariffs to come alongside standards, i.e. national system of funding bands and tariffs to ensure more "consistent" funding.
- * AP funding to be reviewed.
- * Inclusion dashboard
- * 'Adjusted' intervention in failing areas in line with the new Ofsted and Care Quality Commission area SEND inspection framework.
- * New AP performance framework - a "bespoke national alternative provision performance framework"
- * Fair access panels review to ensure "transparent and effective movement of pupils without EHCPs, such as those requiring alternative provision, to address behavioural needs"
- * 'Comparable' expectations for independent schools
- * More 'joined-up' work with NHS England
- * SEND and AP Implementation Board will drive reforms.

Thanks to SEBDA member Dr David Colley for this summary.

IN THIS ISSUE:

National Council member Steve Russell examines the move from a 'behaviour' to a 'relational' policy and we suggest some useful resources.



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Sebda

Promoting the social and emotional well being of children and young people

Global Solutions to Working with Vulnerable Children and Young People

An **international conference** to be held on **7th, 8th & 9th September 2023** at The Alan Walters Building The University of Birmingham, UK
sebda2023internationalconference.org

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Keynote speakers, researchers and practitioners will cover themes such as mental health, inclusion, displacement and the lived experience.

Keynote speakers will include:

- Professor Carmel Cefai, University of Malta
- Professor Harry Daniels and Ian Thompson, University of Oxford
- Professor Mina Fazel, University of Oxford
- Professor Karen Guldberg, University of Birmingham
- Dr Anne Southall, La Trobe University, Melbourne

For more information please visit www.sebda2023internationalconference.org

Call for Papers now live!

Behaviour or Relational Policy? – What’s in a name? by Steve Russell

Until recently, the vast majority of schools approached behaviour from very much a behaviourist perspective, building behaviour systems around rewards and sanctions which would encourage pupils to make ‘the right choices’. Do ‘the right thing’ and you can receive house points, golden time, stickers etc etc. Do ‘the wrong thing’ and you will experience consequences such as loss of playtime, a name on the board, detention etc etc.

Increasingly, schools and other education settings are exploring alternative approaches – ones which are far less reliant upon compliance and instead seek to foster co-operation based on high quality relationships. There are a number of factors behind this growing shift, including:

- The understandable frustrations amongst hard-pressed staff who are finding that, no matter what ‘tweaks’ or indeed large-scale changes are made to a school’s behaviour system, there is always a proportion of pupils for whom this still doesn’t bring about any change. Just check out your school’s behaviour data tracking and see how many of the same names keep re-appearing in the rewards and sanctions figures!
- Our understanding of the difference between compliance and co-operation. Pupils comply through anxiety or fear of not wanting to experience the negative consequences. And when the brain and body is in a state of fear or anxiety, this limits the capacity to engage fully in learning.
- The growing pressures upon staff to be supporting pupils with significant social, emotional and mental health needs. For this group of pupils, a behaviourist approach based upon rewards and sanctions will not only be limited but can have significant detrimental effects.
- Related to this latter point, insights from neuroscience which show that ‘behaviour’ needs to be understood within the context as to how effectively a youngster can regulate their emotions and therefore their behaviour.

These factors, and others, have led schools to shift their focus to one of looking at the significance of relationships when it comes to ‘behaviour’ – and hence considerations of replacing ‘behaviour policy’ with a ‘relational’, ‘attachment-aware’ or similar policy. Whatever name given to it, such a policy is based upon the following central premise:

Pro-social behaviour and learning – the two things that a classroom are essentially about – occur when pupils are in a sufficiently regulated state. A calm, regulated brain and body state means a pupil’s frontal cortex is “open for business” (Dr Bruce Perry). And we have a wealth of research that points to the central importance of relationships when it comes to supporting pupils to be in such a state. Well-attuned adults who are available, and who aren’t leaning heavily into consequences to ‘get pupils to behave’, will provide such safety – and therefore optimise learning and ‘behaviour’.



Behaviour or Relational Policy? – What’s in a name? Cont....

The shift from ‘behaviour policy’ to one that places relationships front and centre is a challenging one. It involves staff reflecting and discussing on a deep level the values and beliefs each brings to ‘behaviour’, their role as adults in a school, the purpose of schooling etc etc. It takes us from the black and white world of ‘pupils will behave as long as the systems are ‘good’ and there is consistency’, to enter into the grey areas that more accurately reflect the complexity of human behaviour. And for these very reasons, paradoxically, the shift from a ‘behaviour’ to ‘relational’ policy can be one of the most significant parts of a school’s developmental journey.

Some suggested resources:

Stress, Trauma, and the Brain: Insights for Educators--The Neurosequential Model by Dr Bruce Perry – an excellent series of short YouTube talks explaining how neuroscience can help educators : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3is_3XHKKs

Kohn, A. (2018) *Punished by rewards : the trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise, and other bribes*. Twenty-fifth anniversary edn. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Alfie Kohn turns what we assume to be the positive effects of rewards to motivate pupils on its head.

[Primary School Leaders](#) Facebook group. There are many schools that are at various stages on their ‘relational policy’ journeys. This group not infrequently discusses this issue and includes pointers to specific schools’ policies.

Transactional Analysis is a psychological school of thought heavily rooted in the relational. These two books apply TA ideas in very practical ways to the classroom:

Barrow, G., Bradshaw, E. and Newton, T. (2001) *Improving behaviour and raising self-esteem in the classroom : a practical guide to using transactional analysis*, London: David Fulton.

Barrow, G. (2006) *Walking the Talk: How Transactional Analysis is Improving Behaviour and Raising Self-Esteem*, London: David Fulton.

Suggested resources cont.

Finnis, M. (2021) *Independent Thinking on Restorative Practice: Building relationships, improving behaviour and creating stronger communities*, Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press.

Local Authority Guidance

Here are two examples of Local Authority approaches to relational policies:

[A Relationship Approach to Positive Behaviour and Anti-bullying.](#) by North Yorkshire County Council

NYCC has designed materials to support schools to establish an inclusive culture built on trusting relationships between pupils and staff.

The materials advise that many children and young people experiencing SEMH needs find it difficult to engage in a ‘reward and consequence’ behaviour system as it doesn’t offer them emotional support around how to express themselves in a more appropriate way; these are the pupils who find themselves in detention or excluded time and again, exacerbating their SEMH needs. For children and young people who have more developed SEMH needs (for example, those who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences) behaviourist approaches often serve to re-traumatise and do not teach how to express emotions in a more appropriate manner.

[Quick guide to developing relational practice and policy](#) by Devon County Council

The DCC guidance describes a relational approach to teaching and learning which influences whole school ethos and systems as well as everyday teaching practice and targeted support. It seeks to support schools to develop Relational Behaviour Policies where behaviour is seen as the communication of a need and which take into account current research and theory from the fields of attachment and trauma and on effective support for personal development.

Online Postgraduate Diploma—Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties

Develop your understanding and practical skills when working with children and young people with SEMH.

Oxford Brookes, working in partnership with SEBDA, offers a two year distance-learning **Postgraduate Diploma in SEMH Difficulties** (120 credits) for professionals working with children and young people who are experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Supported by an experienced team of tutors, you will critically explore key themes around mental health and drive your own professional practice forward. The 120 credits generated by the Diploma can then contribute towards an MA Education (SEND) with a specialism in SEMH. For more information please see [PGDip in Social, Emotional and Mental Health Difficulties at Oxford Brookes](#).
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Call to Action

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The Attachment Research Community

Virtual School Heads
Looking after learning

Call to Action

Attachment and Trauma Awareness -
teaching, learning and emotional wellbeing in schools

Building Connections & Improving Outcomes

SEBDA is a signatory to the ARC's (Attachment Research Community) campaign to raise awareness of Attachment and Trauma needs within schools across England.

The **Call To Action** is for a system wide redevelopment of policies and processes, academic support and training programmes, that will benefit our young people in both educational institutions and all social care environments; improving performance, mental health and wellbeing and to narrow attainment gaps.

To find out how you can support the Call to Action please visit <https://the-arc.org.uk/calltoaction>

Editor's Corner

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1 in 10 ?

Calling the Newsletter **1 in 10** was always going to have a questionable life span. Latest data from NHS Digital suggests the current rate of mental disorder in children aged 7 to 16 years is nearer **1 in 6** (16.7%), with no sign of it reducing.

