

Pastoral care ideas to support young people with SEMH

The following guidance has been collated through partnership working with schools across BANES and through the government's behaviour hubs. The guidance is not intended to be a tick list of support offered to a pupil but rather a menu that schools can choose from to meet the specific needs of the individual pupil. What might be appropriate in one setting for one pupil may be inappropriate for another pupil at a different establishment.

Pastoral care ideas

- It is important that pastoral leaders use this information in conjunction with the specific interventions highlighted in the SEND section of the behaviour tool kit.
- Consider behaviour through the lens of trauma, aces and SEND first. Organisations like Nurture UK offer excellent advice around the administration of trauma informed practice. Many schools in BANES report viewing "all behaviour as communication" and viewing poor behaviour as a teachable moment.
- Consider the need to referral to external agencies. Use the BANES alternative provision directory or referral directory for specialist agencies.
- Quality contextualised safeguarding and risk assessment procedures should be used and shared with key members of school staff. Many schools are choosing to use the "Signs of Safety" system for safeguarding alongside contextual risk assessment.
- NPQ LBC for pastoral leaders is a useful qualification to support school leaders working closely with pupils at risk of PEX.
- <https://educateagainsthate.com/resources/respectful-school-communities-self-review-signposting-tool-2/> Educate against hate provides a mass of resources to support positive behaviour in schools.
- Individualised approach to behaviour management. Use of a behaviour support plan that is shared widely with staff is key to implementation of the reasonable adjustments that pupils will need in class. Many schools use the template for Zones of Regulation as a strategy in behaviour support plans. This highlights key triggers, behaviours and emotions that pupils may feel in a variety of situations. It should also outline teacher behaviours and regulation strategies that can be used to support pupils.
- Consider tracking items like bullying/physical assaults/drug use etc and sanctions through measuring the rate per pupil. If encouraged across schools this will give schools a better idea of the prevalence of such issues and potentially highlight cultural/local traits or issues that need tackling.
- Staff will need to focus on a relational approach to behaviour management building secure attachments with pupils.
- Carefully designed opportunities for restorative conversations are vital in maintain positive relationships. Pupils may need these conversations at different times depending on how quickly they are able to regulate their emotions. Schools should

avoid using the phrasing “you chose to...”. Sometimes for pupils with SEND or trauma there is little cognitive choice in their behaviours.

- Planned and structured break time activities can help prevent unwanted behaviour occurring.
- Schools can deliver “courses” to pupils who have shown negative behaviours. These day/evening courses could focus on the negative behaviour they have exhibited e.g bullying or disruptive behaviour in the classroom etc. This builds on the idea that negative behaviours should be viewed as teachable moments and pupils should be offered a learning opportunity that prevents the unwanted behaviour occurring again in the future.
- Meet and greet at the start of the day. “Framing” opportunities at the end of the day to meet with staff to summarise the day. This can lead to pupils leaving school in a more positive frame of mind.
- 5:1 ratio of positive to negative comments. Some schools have found the same system works well with parents.
- Record all positive comments to pupil/home. Review these positive comments books when pupils are dysregulated.
- In year inductions to the behaviour system for pupils that have joined part way through the year.
- Some schools use a GL PASS assessment to indicate pupil's thoughts and feelings on education. This can provide a useful baseline with regards to a pupil's attitude to learning.
- School wide screeners for mental health such as the feelings and emotions questionnaire can give a good indication of pupil's mental health and highlight pupils where further investigation is needed. See mental health advice for further information and assessment ideas.
- Ensure basic needs are being met. Free fruit/snacks? Tea/hot chocolate/squash at breaks. Many alternative provision schools find that the sharing of food has a hugely positive effect on relationships. One of the most commonly mentioned ideas is staff taking something that a pupil has made. This helps the pupil build trusting relationships with staff.
- Establish, maintain, restore (EMR) method of relationship building. This system places heavy emphasis on staff playing the key role in building relationships as some pupils are unable to model relationship building behaviours. Often it takes two adults to model positive interactions to a pupil who struggles building relationships and understanding social norms.
- ABC – Deep dives into antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence diaries. Where, who, when, environment, peers, work, task. Aim to find trails in data to support pupils. Secondary school staff have reported that the ABC strategy and building consequence maps works equally as well as social stories. I would however recommend that with ASC learners visuals are still used to help guide them through the particular social interaction you are working on.

- Thorough review of incidents with pupil and a key worker who can guide pupils through the situation considering how other may have felt and why they may have acted the way they did. ELSA practitioners would be good for this. It is Important to get ahead of the game and teach pupils about situations that may arise in the future to ensure the process is proactive and not just restorative/reactive.
- Use of NHS provided mental health teaching materials. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/get-involved/learning/schools-resources/> . Many schools also use a variety of resources from the Anna Freud website which are very good to support mental health. See the mental health section of the behaviour tool kit for more information.
- Modelling of how to apologise. Pupils really benefit from seeing staff apologise. Either to each other or to a pupil. Pupils may struggle with apologising and shouldn't be forced into it. It is however a basic act of human compassion so is a important skill to learn. Pupils may be supported through the process by using a simple script for example. It is vital that the member of staff receiving the apology accepts and uses the situation as an opportunity to rebuild a relationship – recovering the situation at this point can be counterproductive for the pupil – choose to do this with caution.
- Review of Careers advice and guidance offer for pupils experiencing SEMH issues. Many schools report that focusing pupils with SEMH issues towards the world of work can help them see “the point” in school and what they are learning. Schools may consider using an extended careers curriculum for these pupils.
- Triangle of key adults. This is an idea that works well in many schools. Pupils are taught who their triangle of support it. This means that at any one point the pupil should feel confident having a trusted adult in school even if there are absences. This also means if one member of the triangle needs to sanction the pupil then the other members of the triangle can support to rebuild the relationship. This approach appears to reduce the reliance on one key person. It should be stated though that for pupils with extreme disorganised attachment, having one key adult may be the only way of forming trusting relationships with adults at first. A triangle of support in these situations may not be possible initially.
- Regular meetings with families – parental contracts. Some schools have reported effectiveness from the use of parental contracts. This entails behaviour protocols, attendance plans etc being agreed and documented with the entire family. School report that pupils being witness to this helps them understand that schools and parents are working together to support them.
- Parental drop-in sessions with pastoral leads. Good sharing of home information leads to a better picture of needs. Some schools arrange these in person, but many happen online – schools report this is a more time effective way of managing drop-in sessions.
- Involvement of pupil in making school rules. Work through the pupils own set of rules and guidance with them getting buy in. This can be very helpful to allow pupils with SEND to see the reasonable adjustments that are being made for them. Where this process is reviewed with the pupils regularly school report the greatest success. It is very important that schools share the information about reasonable adjustments in the school's behaviour policy with all staff and parents.

- Pupils voice on rewards process. Getting pupils ideas on what motivates them in school is key. Some schools report using vouchers for pupils with SEMH when they have achieved targets set out on reports.
- Training for pastoral leaders on counselling. Many school pastoral leaders reported concerns about their role straying into the realms of counselling. Anna Freud offers a series of training programs for school leaders to enable them to understand the process of simple counselling strategies. Schools should consider making referrals to specialist agencies quickly where it becomes apparent the scale of the counselling need is beyond what teaching staff could/should offer. The BANES mental health support team is often able to support schools quickly when referrals are made.
- Talk to pupils about key events in their lives – e.g. remember to ask them about their visit to their nan's at the weekend. Many schools keep records of family life and pupil's personal hobbies on pupil passports as they aid the relationship building process.
- Can pupils start their own extra-curricular clubs? Schools have reported that some pupils who struggle to show positive learning behaviours have benefited from being given responsibility to support the school in the running of extra-curricular clubs. This also gives staff the opportunity to work alongside pupils building relationships where the pupil is taking the lead and staff are in a supportive role.
- Safe space, safe place, safe person within schools. This works similarly to the triangle of support but goes further by offering an agreed safe space for the pupil. In some cases, schools have provided sensory type activities within the safe space to help with regulation. Where pupils have a "zones of regulation" profile or "5 point scale" protocol the resources for the regulation strategies are kept within the safe space so pupils can self-regulate.
- Some schools provide pupils with a small card with their regulation strategies on. Pupils are given training in how to use the strategies on the card when they are feeling dysregulated. Schools report that this initially is very difficult but in the long term produces very favourable results.
- Forest schools – outside learning. Many schools are using this kind of alternative provision as a social and physical skill development program.
- Monitor involvement at extra-curricular clubs and trips and visits. Ensure access to cultural capital. Reports from local serious violence steering groups and PCSO's suggest that the period directed after the end of the school is where much of the violence in the community happens with school aged young people. Anything schools can do to keep pupils during this time will be beneficial.
- A large proportion of schools have suggested sport as a key vehicle for improving pupils' behaviour. This could be due to expenditure of energy allowing greater focus or pupils developing a greater sense of belonging by being part of teams etc. Some schools have found that non-PE staff found running sports clubs particularly helpful in building relationships.
- Breakfast clubs – eating with staff at lunch. Schools report that this is a vital time for relationship building. This can happen in the school canteen, during lunchtime clubs or in specific nurture provisions within school.

- Pupil Leadership responsibility and opportunities. Some schools have encouraged pupils to take up student leadership positions, for example on the school council. Many pupils have engaged and feel that they are having their voice heard.
- Where pupils voice is taken into consideration and changes have been made, schools have often found it necessary to remind pupils that this is the case, and their voice has been heard. Some school leaders stated that without this, pupils forget very quickly that adaptations have happened as a result of their views. This could be done through school assemblies or individual student mentoring meetings.
- Part time timetables – potential work experience placements. Many schools use a bespoke package of support for pupils with severe SEMH issues. Schools should consider using the BANES Alternative Provision directory to source appropriate provision for pupils. Schools must ensure that they follow the government advice of creating “bespoke packages” for pupils or issuing “direction offsite”. Schools should also consider the relevant safeguarding and quality assurance checks that will need to be carried out with any provider. It is worth checking all provision and packages with the BANES education inclusion services and CMES prior to engaging with an offsite AP package.
- Many schools use internal alternative provision – See send strategies for a full breakdown on best practice. This strategy has been shown to reduce the need for exclusion hugely and is being used effectively in several schools across BANES.
- Early access college courses – This can be a good but expensive way of maintaining pupil engagement. Many of these courses can be found through Bristol college. The south Bristol skills academy is great source of information. Bath College does not offer early access college courses
- Access to short courses or AQA awards for quick wins. Some schools use a curriculum of AQA unit award, entry level qualification and functional skill qualifications to build learner confidence. This seems to be an appropriate and effective strategy at building learning engagement.
- Older pupils running break time clubs and activities. Some schools have used older role models from the student cohort to support younger pupils. This can be through mentoring – specific training should be given to student mentors and safeguarding procedures explained. It is more widely used through older pupils running clubs and activities. Some schools use 6th form pupils as additional teaching assistants. This appears to work well where it is done sparingly and carefully.
- Leadership schemes for older pupils volunteering in non-contact period to “train as a TA” acting as positive role models for younger pupils. In addition to the above some schools offer TA training courses for young people.
- Timetabled mentoring or coaching with young person. This has been highlighted as an effective but costly intervention by schools. Schools have stated this can be coordinated by tutors, pastoral support staff or teachers and leaders. It is time costly though and many schools outsource this provision to an external agency.
- The BANES Violence reduction Unit Education Inclusion Project can offer a 6-week intervention for pupils at risk of exclusion. Referrals should be made through the behaviour and attendance panels. Results of this intervention have been very positive. Schools are also able to refer to the VRU through the BANES VRU website

for pupils to be discussed at the Serious violence operational group meetings. Referral forms can be found online.

- Each school has a link PCSO and social care worker. These links in many schools across BANES are used extensively and are a great source of information but also intervention.
- Schools in BANES can complete an Adolescent Care Experienced information sharing referral for discussion at ACE panels. Many supporting agencies attend, and it is a good, efficient way of getting the appropriate support for young people. Many agencies included on the specialist referral directory attend this panel.
- Schools should consider “reporting a concern” through the BANES website where there are non-urgent safeguarding concerns about a pupil. Where there are urgent safeguarding concerns the police should be called.
- Appropriate school role model or mentor from similar background. Schools are aware of the disproportionate number of pupils from black ethnicities that are permanently excluded. Schools may wish to refer to the equalities section of the behaviour toolkit for ideas on improving “belonging” in schools.
- Appropriate role models from within and external to school. Many schools utilise either specialist agencies to provide mentoring or take steps to use member of the community as role models for pupils. Some schools have been able to use local trades people (appropriately DBS checked etc) as additional mentors for pupils with specific interests in building or carpentry for example.
- Pastoral leaders may wish to visit the specific section on the tool kit for transition ideas.
- Friendship/Equalities/EDI groups – schools report that pupils exhibiting negative learning behaviours have benefited from these types of social groups to aid belonging.
- Anti-bullying programs – schools may wish to refer to the specific list of bullying interventions in the SEND section of the behaviour tool kit.
- Pathways for pupils to disclose information about peers. Schools have stated that this is key to understanding the contextual risk that pupils may be facing. These pathways vary from school to school, however all schools mentioned that they are publicised on a regular basis and form the context of many tutor sessions, the PSHE curriculum and school assemblies.
- Restorative protocol if sanction is given. This MUST avoid shaming the pupil as this can lead to re escalation of the behaviour. This was something mentioned by every school in BANES with differing strategies being used. Key themes that were apparent were ensuring that the conversation happened. Ensuring the conversation happened at the appropriate time – this will vary based on the degree of the dysregulation of the pupil and the period of time it takes them to regulate. On occasions these conversations between a pupil and member of staff were mediated by another adult. Schools sometimes employed the use of restorative scripts. Some schools found these successful but other schools reported pupils “cottoned onto” the scripts and found them triggering. Some schools used reflective practice documents for pupils to complete – the evidence suggests these are used with varying success. Schools

should wherever possible avoid using the phrase “you chose to behave this way...” with pupils during restorative conversations. Some pupils will have made a choice but research into Polyvagal theory shows that pupils who have experienced trauma will have very little cognitive choice in decisions they make when they are dysregulated.

- Restorative practice in Scottish schools is fairly advanced and the Gov website is a good source of information <https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/additional-support/specific-support-needs/social-and-emotional-factors/restorative-approaches/>. Schools in Scotland are also a good source of advice for using a “nurturing approach” to behaviour.
- One school used a restorative conversation system at the end of a day for all pupils whether they had been given a sanction or not. Where attendance on the school register was signified with a pupil engagement score (1-4) rather than an attendance mark tutors and the relevant pupils visited the teacher who awarded pupils with a 3 in class (generally a 4 was used only when a sanction was given). This system proved very effective although required staff time and logistical challenges to ensure it worked.
- Pastoral leaders in many of the governments behaviour hubs around the country viewed behaviour as a learned action. Many behaviour hubs taught positive learning behaviours explicitly and separate from core curriculum lessons. This was done in general through the PSHE and tutor curriculum. Some schools included positive behaviour as part of their SMSC, RSE and Citizenship curriculum or positive learning behaviour was taught as a component of every lesson as an essential British value. The positive learning behaviours focused on listening and communication as well as each school’s individual set of values.
- Programs which teach pupils to know themselves (can be linked with careful teaching about trauma and attachment). Several schools in BANES are considering teaching all pupils about trauma and the impact this has on the brain, emotions and behaviour. Schools nationally, report that where this has been done behaviour school wide has improved. Schools also report that once pupils understand trauma informed practice, teachers are more able to use trauma informed teaching methods when dealing with poor behaviour. If schools do teach trauma informed practice to all pupils, they must provide a support system for pupils who learn they have experienced trauma during the teaching process (see the behaviour toolkit section on Mental health for further advice).
- Smaller year 7 intervention groups with higher levels of TA support. Year seven transition groups – educated in primary style. This idea has not been used in BANES but is used nationally in a small number of schools where year seven pupils have been highlighted as having extensive SEND needs. Used for a short period of time at the start of year seven this has proven to be very successful for several schools in reducing the generally much higher number of year 7’s that are permanently excluded compared to their year 6 counter parts.
- Hiring primary teachers. One BANES school is employing primary teachers to support some of their most vulnerable pupils. Nationally there are a few secondary schools that employ this approach very successfully. The basis for this appears to be the extensive training primary school teachers receive with regards to literacy and phonological awareness. The vast majority of pupils permanently excluded from school in BANES have a speech and language need or literacy difficulty. Having the

expertise of primary trained staff in a secondary school is hugely beneficial on many levels.

- Summer school induction programs – many pastoral leaders across BANES recognised that an early start to the relationship building process with year 6 pupils was key in ensuring a positive transition to secondary schools and therefore decreasing the likelihood of negative behaviour being exhibited. The BANES Educational Psychology team co-ordinate a range of activities specifically for pupils from black ethnicities to aid the transition process from primary to secondary.
- Choice, Chance, Change, consequence system to behaviour for SEMH pupils. Although not used in BANES some schools nationally use this approach where instead of getting a “warning” in class pupils are guided through the process of the choices they have at that moment with regards to their behaviour, they are given a chance to change the way they are behaving based on the choices they are given, and the consequences of each option are explained to them.
- Opportunities for online learning, courses or interventions – food hygiene, CSCS card etc. Lots of schools locally have stated that pupils’ behaviour improved when they were given the additional opportunity to gain an award in something they had a specific interest in. The CSCS card for pupils wanting to learn a trade has been particularly successful.
- Sleep training for parents and pupils. Opportunities for pupils to nap in a safe space in extreme cases. Some schools have recognised that when a pupil’s sleep patterns are very irregular it is impossible for the pupil to learn. Anna Freud offers some good advice for pupils and parents on sleep training. In one non BANES a separate safe space was available for pupils to rest in for a controlled period of time.
- Appropriate searching and “wandering” of pupils if needed. Although this could be considered as a part of the “policy” section of the behaviour toolkit some schools have been forced to use this approach. School should ensure that “wandering” is done away from all other pupils. If a search of a pupil is required schools should refer to the relevant government produced documentation.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674416/Searching_screening_and_confiscation.pdf
- Whole school pastoral provision mapping carried out by tutors. Focus on interests, hobbies, career pathway, family, strengths, difficulties etc. This has proven to be a very effective methods of getting to know pupils. Although it requires an investment of time initially from tutors schools report many advantages of using this type of information collection.
- Online programs like skills builder that easily shows pupils the progress they are making on their skills. This is also included in the SEND intervention section of the behaviour toolkit, however pastoral leaders have stated that programs like this help support pupils in their understanding of what positive learning behaviours actually are. It can also be used to show progress for pupils where academic progress may have stalled.
- United against bullying – anti bullying whole school policy.
- Use of resources on Anti bullying alliance website, Diversity role models, Equaliteach, Anne Frank trust and The Diana Award.

- Consider extended transitions for pupils in your at risk cohort. If the pastoral lead is not the designated teacher they should consider joining the final PEP in year 6/year 11. Pastoral leads should also consider joining the final annual review for EHCP pupils in year 6/11 (i.e. the one before November of their final year in the school) to aid transition planning.
- Consider student safeguarding teams. These teams of pupils will need enhanced training on safeguarding and detailed knowledge of passing on information to trained staff.