

Appendix 7 Top Tips for Teachers

Understanding and managing 'angry' behaviours is a complex task and needs to be addressed on a very individual basis. These are some top tips for teachers:

- ▶ Children with social, emotional and behavioural issues often have **reduced skills and abilities** when it comes to *curbing impulses, regulating their responses, thinking through and problem solving*. They will tend to struggle to manage their behaviours even when they know the rules and care about the consequences. So, the behaviour management system will need to be **flexible**, and include strategies such as warning systems, time out or options for withdrawal and tolerance of low-level behaviours which do not put others at risk.
- ▶ Look 'underneath' **the behaviour** and try to respond to the message underneath, such as 'I can't cope', 'I don't know what to do' or 'I am feeling embarrassed or hurt'. What is the purpose of the behaviour? What function does it serve for the young person? This will be the key to determining the most effective response.
- ▶ Watch out as **if you stop or limit a specific behaviour** without addressing the underlying purpose or need, then other equally challenging behaviours are likely to be displayed. You still need to meet the child's specific need.
- ▶ **Positive behaviour systems** are more effective than punishment-driven systems. They will also limit any negative impact on the young person's self-esteem. Positive strategies include working towards incentives and rewards, opportunities to express and demonstrate strengths and 'shine', and rewards for every effort made.
- ▶ Watch out for the SEBD (Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties) child who is **socially vulnerable**, no matter how 'tough' they act. They are particularly prone to imitating negative role models in order to be accepted. They can often be cast in the role of the stooge. Be careful to observe and provide support for this.
- ▶ Key strategies for **long-term prevention and management** of problem anger include:
 - **Adjusting the environment and the child's support programme**, e.g. reducing distractions, breaking tasks into small steps, setting realistic (SMART) targets, creating an effective support structure and developing regular routines with any changes clearly prepared for.
 - **Teaching skills**: develop skills in areas such as stress and anger management, conflict resolution, social skills and communication skills, and ensure that the child has access to appropriate individual and/or group interventions to ensure the development of these skills.
 - **Try to prevent difficulties from escalating**: when the child appears to become distressed, provide a break, discuss the issue away from other children, don't 'force' any response and use basic distraction techniques.
 - **Plan ahead**: know what does and doesn't work for the child and prompt them to use their 'best' strategies and always ensure a 'safe haven' is available should there be an explosion. Ensure that you don't expect the child to discuss such an event until they are calm, i.e. allow enough time for this.