

EUREKA



Behaviours of Concern

[Behaviours of Concern](#)

[Rationale](#)

[Scope](#)

[Related Documentation](#)

[Behaviours of Concern](#)

[Responding to Incidents Involving Behaviours of Concern](#)

[1. Ensuring Safety](#)

[2. Assessment of the Situation](#)

[3. Initial Response](#)

[4. Reporting and Communication](#)

[5. Support](#)

[Whole School Approach - Roles and Responsibilities](#)

[The Student Support Team](#)

[The Classroom Teacher](#)

[AEN Department](#)

[SNA](#)

[Ancillary Staff](#)

[References and Resources](#)

[Appendix 1: Behaviour of Concern Incident Report / Risk Review](#)

Rationale

This document acts as an addendum to the schools' Code of Behaviour which outlines the expectations for student behaviour Eureka. This document outlines the procedures for responding to behaviours of concern and is designed to promote a safe and positive learning environment for all students and staff.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at Eureka. It **outlines actions** such as disobedience, bullying, verbal abuse, vandalism, possession of illegal substances, and any actions that could lead to harm to self or others. The specific course of action taken will depend on the severity of the behaviour and the risk assessment conducted.

Related Documentation

This document is informed by the following legislation

- (i) The Education (Welfare) Act
- (ii) Children First Act
- (iii) Equal Status Act

It is informed by the following Department of Education Guidelines

- (i) NEWB Guidelines : Developing a Code of Behaviour
- (ii) Guidelines for Supporting Students with Behavioural, Emotional and Difficulties¹

It is aligned with the following school policies

- (i) Code of Behaviour
- (ii) Suspension Policy
- (iii) Expulsion Policy
- (iv) AEN Policy
- (v) Child Protection and Risk Assessment

¹ <https://assets.gov.ie/40687/d1be30390a2f492781f8c11c4e6c2753.pdf>

Behaviours of Concern

A behaviour of concern can manifest as either an isolated critical incident or a recognized pattern of escalating behaviours. It is any action by a student that disrupts the learning environment or poses a threat to the safety and well-being of themselves or others. These behaviours can range from minor disruptions to serious offences including but not limited to behaviours referenced at all levels in the schools code of behaviour.

Behaviours of concern arise from a student placing themselves or others at serious and/or imminent risk. It is acknowledged in many cases, there is no single “cause” of challenging behaviour, but may be the result of several factors (internal or external) and influences operating in combination.

Responding to Incidents Involving Behaviours of Concern

Eureka is committed to ensuring a safe and positive learning environment for all students and staff. In the event of a behaviour of concern, the following summarises the steps that will be taken to ensure immediate intervention and student safety and well-being:

1. Ensuring Safety

The immediate priority is to ensure the safety of all students and staff involved in the incident. Staff will de-escalate the situation and remove any student or individual at risk from harm.

In exceptional circumstances, regardless of a student's previous behaviour record and where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension necessary.

Physical Intervention

A **physical intervention** is the use of a physical act or restraint to prevent, restrict or subdue the movement of a student's body or part of a student's body. Physical intervention is only used as a last resort where there is a serious risk of imminent physical harm to the student or another person.

Before a physical intervention takes place a member of staff will use verbal direction to deescalate the situation.

The school management recognises the occasional need for teachers or SNAs to lift, move or handle students in the interest of Health and Safety. This can be particularly the case in relation to students with additional needs of a motor or sensory variety

The following are examples of incidents when the principal, teachers or SNAs may need to intervene physically.

- A high risk student runs toward the exit with the intention of leaving the school
- A student is a physical threat to themselves or another student
- A student is a physical threat to a member of staff
- A student climbs on an item of furniture and is at high risk of injuring themselves or another student or a member of staff.

Examples of Physical Interventions

- **Presence** - Standing in front of a student
- **Touching** - Lead, guide, usher, block-door handle - Student retains a lot of mobility.
- **Holding** - Student's hand held by one adult but retains a level of mobility.
- **Restraint** - Completely restrict mobility

On the use of Restraint

- Cannot be used in schools except in the case of a crisis where there is a serious risk of imminent physical harm to the student concerned/others.
- Should not be the first option and if used should be timely, measured and proportionate.
- It should be carried out by appropriately trained persons if possible.
- If used should be documented, reported to the board of management.
- Under no circumstances should the following physical interventions be used as they pose a serious elevated risk to the student
 - Restraining pupils face down / face up
 - The use of mechanical restraints to restrict movement.
 - Force arms
 - Head locks

2. Assessment of the Situation

In the event of an escalation of challenging behaviour, the teacher present must immediately notify the Deputy Principal responsible for the student's year group. Additionally, the Year Head will be informed.

Parents/guardians will be promptly informed of all incidents of challenging behaviour and any subsequent escalations.

The purpose of recording student behaviours is twofold. Firstly, it allows the school to identify patterns and pinpoint potential triggers that may be causing these behaviours. This knowledge is crucial in developing targeted support strategies to help students develop self-regulation skills and manage their emotions effectively. Secondly, detailed records equip classroom teachers with valuable insights into individual student needs. This empowers them to tailor their teaching methods and classroom environment to better support each student's success.

As is school policy if an incident is subsequently deemed low level it will be dealt with via the schools code of behaviour through the restorative practice framework

Formal Incident Reports will be completed for any instance of challenging behaviour that results in:

- (i) Self-injurious actions by the student.
- (ii) Physical contact directed towards staff or other students.

All incidents will be documented electronically in the student's individual file and/or on the VSWare system.

3. Initial Response

Steps will be taken to address the behaviour, the nature of these steps will depend on the severity of the incident. In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension necessary, regardless of a student's previous behaviour record, where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person.

For any scenario the principal may seek advice, support and/or interventions from external agencies to support the student / staff.

When parents/guardians are invited to meetings every reasonable effort will be made to arrange a time and date suitable to all. If parents / guardians fail to attend an arranged meeting without good cause, the meeting will take place in absentia and notes shared with the parents / guardians afterwards.

4. Reporting and Communication

All incidents of concerning behaviour must be documented and reported to the appropriate Year Head or School Management team. These reports will be analysed using the ABC Model, as endorsed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), to identify potential patterns and contributing factors.

	Meaning	Rationale
A ntecedent Event	Antecedents are the events that directly precede the observed behaviour and are also known as ‘triggers’. Describe what was happening before the behaviour occurred.	Once these have been identified, they can be controlled or eliminated from the child’s environment. Managing antecedents can greatly reduce incidents of behaviours of concern.
B ehaviour	The behaviour is the action which the student takes. Describe what the student is actually doing. Describe where it occurred, who was in the room, and how long the incident lasted.	In order to deal with behaviours of concern, it is important to record that behaviour in terms of its type, severity and frequency.
C onsequences	The positive or negative results of the behaviour. Describe what the adult / other students do. Describe how the student responds to this.	Recording the consequences experienced by a student following an episode of behaviours of concern will be helpful in understanding the reasons for the behaviour by identifying the child’s reaction to their behaviour of concern.

Communication with Parents/Guardians

The school prioritises open and effective communication with parents/guardians to ensure the best possible outcomes for students. This collaborative approach allows for the development of targeted strategies that address specific student needs. These strategies can then be implemented consistently in both the classroom and home environments, maximising their effectiveness.

Parents/guardians will be promptly informed of all incidents of challenging behaviour and any subsequent escalations. In addition, they will receive detailed information on interventions implemented to support the student. This includes outlining potential consequences for continued negative behaviour.

The following information will be shared with Parents/Guardians:

- Copies of relevant incident reports (redacted, if necessary) via written communication (letter and/or email).
- A comprehensive overview of all agreed-upon interventions being implemented.
- Follow-up emails summarising key points discussed and agreed-upon interventions following in-person meetings.
- Updates on the progress and outcomes of implemented interventions.

Copies of all communication will be maintained within the student's individual file.

As part of the support process, parents/guardians may be invited to attend meetings to discuss interventions in detail. The school will make every reasonable effort to schedule meetings at a time convenient for parents/guardians. However, interventions will still be implemented if parents/guardians are unable to attend.

5. Support

Following the immediate response, the school will determine the appropriate course of action based on the incident report and risk assessment. This may involve implementing support strategies, such as restorative justice practices, referrals to student support services, or external agencies like NEPS.

The school will use the NEPS Model of Graded Support, also referred to as the Continuum of Support Model, based on the identified needs of the student. This early intervention model provides support to students as soon as a challenge arises tailoring interventions to the individual needs of each student. This model aligns the inclusive nature of our school aiming at all times to keep students in school with the support of their parents/guardians, teachers and where necessary external agencies.

The model can be summarised as follows:

Tier 1: Universal Supports (Classroom Level)

This is the foundation of the model and applies to all students in the classroom.

It focuses on creating a positive and inclusive learning environment through effective teaching practices, differentiation strategies, and clear classroom rules.

Teachers are equipped with resources and strategies to support all learners.

Tier 2: Targeted Interventions (Small Group or Individualised)

This tier focuses on students who require additional support beyond what is offered in Tier 1.

Interventions may involve differentiated instruction, individual learning plans, or support from resource teachers. Collaboration between teachers, AEN personnel, and parents is crucial in this tier.

Tier 3: Specialist Supports (Highly Individualised)

This tier caters to students with significant learning difficulties or complex behavioural needs.

Interventions are highly individualised and may involve specialists such as psychologists, speech therapists, or social workers. This tier often requires collaboration with external agencies.

External Agencies

When implemented school interventions haven't yielded a significant improvement in a student's behaviour of concern, further exploration may be necessary. This could involve seeking additional support from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) for a more in-depth assessment

of the underlying factors contributing to the behaviour. In some cases, collaboration with external specialists like social workers or mental health professionals might be required. Ultimately, the goal is to identify a comprehensive support plan that addresses the student's specific needs and promotes positive behavioural change. If necessary, exploring alternative learning environments or programs may be considered, always prioritising the student's well-being and maximising their chances for success.

How the school approaches incidents involving behaviours of concern by student

Points to Notes

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal may consider an immediate suspension necessary, regardless of a student's previous behaviour record, where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person.

For any scenario the principal may seek advice, support and/or interventions from external agencies to support the student / staff.

When parents/guardians are invited to meetings every reasonable effort will be made to arrange a time and date suitable to all. If parents / guardians fails to attend an arranged meeting without good cause, the meeting will take place *in absentia* and notes shared with the parents / guardians afterwards.

Scenario 1: Student with no prior serious behaviour incidents exhibits a behaviour of concern

- The student will be spoken to directly by the classroom teacher
- The matter will be brought to the attention of the Year Head and/or Principal
- A report is written in accordance with the NEPS ABC model and placed on the students file.
- The incident will be reported to parents / guardians who may be invited in for a face to face meeting.
- Interventions are put in place to support the student and prevent reoccurrence of the behaviour

Senario 2: If the behaviour reoccurs or new behaviours of concern are exhibited

- The matter will be brought to the attention of the Year Head and/or Principal
- A report is written in accordance with the NEPS ABC model and placed on the students file.
- Parents / Guardians will be invited into the school to attend a meeting to discuss the behaviour in question, consequences if the behaviour continues and proposed interventions.
- Behaviour management plan will be put into place. Such a plan will contain behaviour goals set with parents and students. A suspension can be part of an agreed behaviour management plan where time is needed to give school staff the opportunity to plan other interventions.

Scenario 3: Escalation to Serious Infringements or a one off Serious Infringements that poses an immediate risk to the safety of the student / other students / members of staff.

- An immediate suspension of up to three days may be put in place to allow for the school to allow for any combination of the following:
 - Allow the principal to conduct a detailed investigation and make a recommendation to the board of management
 - Plan interventions
 - Contact external agencies
 - Provide respite to school staff.
- A meeting with parents/guardians and the student to try to find ways of helping the student to change their behaviour will take place. During this meeting the consequences of the students behaviour and the consequences of their behaviour will be made clear to both the student and their parents.
- Assistance will be sought from outside support agencies with the aim of providing more specialised interventions. (e.g. National Educational Psychological Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education)
- A behaviour support plan will be put in place
- Students' behaviour while on school property will be monitored and daily feedback will be given.

During the above Eureka will endeavour within its resources to ensure that a particular student with behaviours of concern can achieve their potential while also allowing everyone else in the school to do likewise.

If the

- student's behaviour is a persistent cause of significant disruption to the learning of others or to the teaching process
- student's continued presence in the school constitutes a real and significant threat to safety
- the student is responsible for serious damage to property.

As a last resort a proposal to expel the student will be made.

There may be exceptional circumstances where the Board of Management forms the opinion that a student should be expelled for a first offence. The kinds of behaviour that might result in a proposal to expel on the basis of a single breach of the code could include but are not limited to:

- a serious threat of violence against another student or member of staff
- actual violence or physical assault
- sexual assault
- consumption or supplying illegal drugs to other students in the school.

Whole School Approach - Roles and Responsibilities

The Student Support Team

The student support team has strong links with the behaviour support system of the school and can initiate preventative programmes for addressing issues that arise. The student support team is not responsible for disciplinary action following inappropriate behaviour of students but should be informed and aware of the school code of behaviour and relevant policies. They utilize their expertise to assist in recommending and developing targeted interventions, such as individual learning plans or social-emotional learning programs. The team also fosters open communication with parents/guardians and external agencies like NEPS to ensure a holistic approach to supporting students and promoting positive behavioural change.

The Classroom Teacher

Teachers play a crucial role in managing behaviours of concern within the classroom utilising a positive behaviour approach. Therefore, teachers are expected to implement clear and consistent classroom rules, utilise proactive strategies like positive reinforcement and differentiated instruction, and intervene promptly with low-level disruptions to prevent escalation. In cases of more serious behaviours, teachers are responsible for documenting the incident, reporting it to the Yearhead and/or Deputy principal, and collaborating with the student support team to implement interventions and ensure student wellbeing.

AEN Department

The Additional Educational Needs (AEN) department plays a key role in supporting students who exhibit behaviours of concern in the classroom. Aligned with NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) recommendations, the AEN department works collaboratively with teachers to identify underlying factors that may contribute to the behaviour, such as learning difficulties, social-emotional challenges, or sensory processing issues. They utilise assessments and observations to develop individualised support plans incorporating strategies like differentiated instruction, social-emotional learning programs, or assistive technology. Furthermore, the AEN department liaises with parents/guardians and other specialists to ensure a comprehensive approach to supporting the student and promoting positive behavioural change within the classroom environment.

SNA

SNAs when deployed by the school leader to work with a student exhibiting behaviours of concern, will at all times work in cooperation with, and under the direction of the class teacher. The SNA will address and provide support for the care needs of the student and will assist with the recording of behaviours. Under no circumstances should SNAs be asked or required to teach a student.

Ancillary Staff

It is important that ancillary staff (e.g. secretaries and caretakers) would be aware of the identity of students whose behaviours of concern might bring them into contact with the secretary or caretaker etc. e.g. a student who is a flight risk.

References and Resources

NCSE Behaviour Resource Pack

<https://www.ippn.ie/images/PDFs/Rachel-Markey-NCSE-Behaviour-Resource-Pack-for-Principals.pdf>

Guidelines for Supporting Students with Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties

<https://www.gov.ie/pdf/?file=https://assets.gov.ie/40687/d1be30390a2f492781f8c11c4e6c2753.pdf#page=null>

Appendix 1: Behaviour of Concern Incident Report / Risk Review

Eureka Secondary School

Part : Incident Details

Student Name	
Date	
Location	
Time	

What happened?	
What triggered the incident?	
Whom / what was at risk?	

Part 2: Student Welfare

List any deescalation/positive intervention strategies that you used to diffuse the incident.	
Did you need to use a restrictive practice or physical intervention?	
Why was this in the best interests of the student?	
How effective was it?	
Was the student distressed?	
How was the student assisted to recover / repair relationships with staff / other students?	
How can we reduce the risk of this happening again? (Consult with relevant staff / parents)	

Part 3: Student Restorative Reflection Sheet - To be filled out by Student who exhibited behaviour

Name

Date

What Happened?

What were you thinking / feeling at the time?

What have your thoughts/feelings been since/now?

Who has been affected and in what way? (Who is harmed?)

What could you have done differently?

What needs to happen next? (How to put things right?)

Part 4 - Student Restorative Sheet - to be filled out by the harmed person

Name:	Date
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1. What happened?

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2. What were your thoughts at the time?

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3. What have your thoughts been since?

--

4. How has this affected you and others?

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5. What has been the hardest thing for you?

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6. What do you think needs to happen next?

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Part 5: Staff Welfare - To be filled out by the staff member(s) in conjunction with the principal.

How many staff were needed to manage this incident safely?	
Were you or another staff member hurt?	YES / NO
Describe	
Did you or another member of staff find this incident distressing?	YES / NO
If yes, rate this on a scale of 1 to 5: (1 = little or no distress, 5 = very distressing)	
Which other staff were present?	

Signed	
Date	

Next Steps - Review by Principal / Deputy Principal

Intervention	Applied (Y/N)	Details
Parents / Guardians Notified?	Yes No Date: _____	
Medical Intervention Sought?	Yes No Date: _____	
Referral to SST and AEN Dept	Yes No Date: _____	
Placed on the school care list	Yes No Date: _____	
Request for involvement form has been completed and sent to NEPS	Yes No Date: _____	
Access to SNA	Yes No Date: _____	
Procedures for teachers agreed and shared	Yes No Date: _____	
	Yes No Date: _____	
	Yes No Date: _____	

Signed by Principal or Deputy Principal: _____ Date: _____