

Helpful teacher behaviours and communication

A suggestion for implementing the strategy
'Respond safely to challenging situations'
from the Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Includes:

- Demonstrate growth mindset and self-regulation
- Adopt helpful communication responses
- Setting limits and seeking assistance
- Avoid unhelpful responses
- Seek assistance from other staff members
- Useful resources

Demonstrate growth mindset and self-regulation

GROWTH MINDSET & SELF-REGULATION

INSTEAD OF THINKING... (FIXED MINDSET)

- HE NEEDS TO LEARN SOME SELF-CONTROL.
- SHE KEEPS GIVING ME A HARD TIME.
- MY CLASSROOM WORKS FINE FOR ALL THE OTHER STUDENTS.
- HIS BEHAVIOUR COMES OUT OF THE BLUE.
- NOTHING WORKS FOR THIS CHILD.
- SHE JUST NEEDS TO CALM DOWN.
- HE WON'T EVER LEARN SELF-REGULATION.

TRY THINKING... (GROWTH MINDSET)

- HE NEEDS HELP WITH SELF-REGULATION.
- SHE IS HAVING A HARD TIME. HOW CAN I HELP?
- EVERY STUDENT IS UNIQUE. WHAT CHANGES CAN I MAKE TO SUPPORT THIS STUDENT?
- LET'S LOOK DEEPER FOR PATTERNS AND SETTING EVENTS.
- WHAT ELSE CAN I TRY?
- DOES SHE EVEN KNOW WHAT CALM FEELS LIKE?
- HOW CAN I HELP HIM LEARN SELF-REGULATION?

GROWTH MINDSET AND SELF-REGULATION
DECREASE JUDGEMENT AND INCREASE CURIOSITY

FREE DOWNLOAD: northstarpaths.com

Source:

[North Star Paths](#)

<http://northstarpaths.com/>

[View full image \(1.5 MB\)](#)

Our own attitudes and expectations of students can significantly contribute to the behaviours we observe.

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Guide: [Behaviour and learning](#)

Strategy: [Respond safely to challenging situations](#)

Suggestion: [Helpful teacher behaviours and communication](#)

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Adopt helpful communication responses

The way we speak, our body language, and proximity can have a positive impact on an escalating situation.

- ✓ Talk quietly, even when the person is loud.
- ✓ Try to remain calm and respectful.
- ✓ Monitor your own body language and allow the student the opportunity to move out of the situation with dignity.
- ✓ Focus on communicating respect and your desire to help.
- ✓ Keep verbal interactions respectful.
- ✓ When appropriate, give the student clear choices and/or directions to help them feel more secure and regain control.

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Setting limits and seeking assistance

Reflect on your own communication responses.

Setting limits is about providing clear boundaries for the child or young person to respond. It is a step-by-step procedure aimed at helping a child or young person to feel more secure and to regain control. ([View example script](#))

A high probability instruction is one the child or young person is likely to follow. It aims to defuse a situation by diverting attention or giving the child or young person a face-saving way to extricate themselves from a developing situation.

Examples:

- Let's go for a walk around the playground.
- Will you go and get the swimming key for me?

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Avoid unhelpful responses

The way we respond can affect the outcome of a situation.

Taking an authoritarian approach can encourage opposition and defiance.

Lecturing, arguing, counselling, threatening, and answering back do not defuse heated situations.

The following are examples of common responses that are unhelpful:

- Ignoring (this is only acceptable if the behaviour is minor)
- Reasoning
- Reprimands
- Sarcasm and public humiliation
- Sending out of the room
- Threatening to inform whānau
- Restraint
- Informal suspension

Read the [Common responses information sheet](#) to find out why these responses are not recommended.

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Seek assistance from other staff members

Know when to seek assistance and have a clear understanding about what the other teacher's role will be.

Working in partnership, two teachers can set limits, with:

- Teacher A giving directions
- Teacher B in a supportive role, concentrating on managing and defusing the situation and thus protecting others.

NB. Seeing another teacher could cause a student's behaviour to escalate.

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Useful resources



Positive Behaviour for Learning information sheet: Common responses

Read time: 11 min

Publisher: Positive Behaviour for Learning

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