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# What is a Behaviour Support Plan?

Behaviour Support Plans (BSPs) assist schools to provide additional support and guidance to identified students.

## Why make a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)?

It is a school-based document designed to assist individual students who have experienced harm, are at risk of harm, or have caused harm to others.

This may include students who have been diagnosed with severe behaviour disorders, students who have bullied others, students who have been bullied, students who require additional assistance because they display difficult, challenging or disruptive behaviours, as well as students who can benefit from additional wellbeing support.

A Behaviour Support Plan (BSP) can help ensure that students and staff feel safe, valued and connected to their school community. An effective BSP contributes to building respectful relationships, resilience, and well-adjusted students who are able to learn effectively.

## Who benefits from a BSP?

Schools and students can benefit from an effective BSP. For example:

* Clearly stating expectations and planned support for a student in writing, demonstrates the commitment of the school to the student’s wellbeing needs.
* Behaviour change in the student occurs more readily when the focus is on support, building the skills needed for pro social behaviour, and increasing the student’s wellbeing.
* Problem behaviours are gradually reduced as triggers and cues preceding the unwanted behaviours are identified and addressed.
* Previously unknown causes or triggers of problem behaviour may be identified while gathering
* information and writing the plan. Issues can then be effectively addressed.
* Specialised guidance indicating how to respond to a student’s challenging behaviour, helps to provide boundaries, consistency and consequences for the student, reducing the need for punishment and in turn reducing stress for teachers.
* A sense of harmony and/or safety to a classroom and school may be restored.

## Who is responsible for BSPs?

One person at the school, or sub-school should be responsible for making, monitoring and reviewing all BSPs. For example:

* Primary schools and special schools: The Assistant Principal
* Secondary schools: The Student Welfare Coordinator, Year Level Co-coordinator or Assistant Principal

This person, the BSP Coordinator, initiates and coordinates the steps below. This person will also typically lead any Student Support Group (SSG) meetings held in relation to the BSP.

## Writing an effective BSP

The most effective BSPs are developed when eight steps are followed:

* Gather relevant information about the student.
* Convene a meeting of relevant school staff and the student’s parents.
* Convene a meeting of relevant school staff to draft the BSP.
* Refine the BSP.
* Sign the BSP.
* Provide a copy to staff, parents and if appropriate, the student.
* Review the BSP.
* Conclude the BSP.
* For further information see Guidelines for Writing a BSP.

## Caution

The effectiveness of a BSP relies on identifying the underlying causes of the student’s problem behaviours. To identify problem behaviours, school staff should consult their student services support officer, the student’s parents or guardians, psychologist or other appropriate specialist, or professional involved with the student. The failure to identify the underlying issue or issues can lead to problem behaviours continuing, escalating or being replaced by other problem behaviours.

It also needs to be understood that a student’s behaviour will often deteriorate before it improves when a BSP is introduced. Rewards and reinforcements used to promote pro social behaviour must be immediate and at a high frequency in the early stages of a BSP for maximum success, especially with younger students.

### c. Known triggers of impending behaviour

Review information from the BSP Student Questionnaire. Identify triggers.

List triggers. Aim to document conditions or situations that may lead to the problem behaviour, to help teachers to remove these triggers before the unwanted behaviour occurs.

If triggers are unknown or unpredictable add them to the BSP as they are detected.

### d. Preventative strategies and techniques

Review BSP Student Questionnaire. List techniques that can be implemented immediately. For example:

* Move close to the student, and quietly remind them what they should be doing.
* Keep talk to a minimum, support communication with hand gestures and pointing.
* Use the student’s name and calmly redirect the student, rather than reprimand.
* Help the student refocus on the work ‘(Student’s name) I’ll help you get started.’
* Identify a learning strength the student has and link the strength to the task.
* Set a working agreement with the student, which may include a choice.
* Maintain respect and a liking for the student but foreshadow
* a warning for the problem behaviour.
* Remind the class of the relevant classroom or playground rule.
* Use consequences aimed to resolve the problem or restore the harm.
* Signal the implementation of down time. Ask the student to move to a calm and safe space, or to take a note to another teacher asking them to provide 10 minutes of quiet time.

## Proactive strategies and techniques

Identify situations and/or environments that relate specifically to the student’s behaviour. Only fill in content for relevant situations and ignore irrelevant ones.

Consider possible problem situations and environments, such as when CRTs are present, environments where supervision may be reduced, or in secondary schools, when movement between classes takes place or when the student goes to the toilet. For example, the student may have no issues at break times but need specific supervision or modifications during physical education lessons. Therefore, physical education sessions would be included in this column, but not recess and lunch.

### a. Target behaviours

List target behaviours with their situations or environments, as described.

### b. Strategies

Think about the cause of the behaviour/s to help in developing effective strategies. Ask:

* What may be causing the behaviour/s? These may be identified in Step 1 and 2 of the BSP Student Questionnaire. The ‘cause’ may need to be carefully reviewed with the student support services officer, parents, or the wellbeing, welfare or health professional involved.
* What can we do about it? Tailor strategies to suit the student’s individual needs. Focus on reducing the cause of the problem. Both short term and long term solutions should be included. Consider the role a parent or carer might provide.

Ensure the listed strategies are holistic and achievable for the student. Consider:

* Research wellbeing information. Visit the DEECD website, the free resources section of the Psych4Schools website at www.psych4schools.com.au, review information held at school and knowledge gained from experience.
* Allow down time or calming options.
* Ensure appropriate academic interventions, allowances and modifications are being implemented. For example, for students who are slow learners, teacher
* Questions might focus more on knowledge and remembering. Whereas for more able students, allowing them to formulate questions can help to create deeper and richer understandings.
* Ensure allowances are made for appropriate supervision of the student. For example, at recess and lunchtime a ground plan may be needed to set limitations on play or activity areas and who the student plays or associates with and when.
* What might be one thing that can reduce ‘pressure’ or conflict, or help the student feel more connected at home or if living between homes, with all adults? What help and assistance can be provided?

Think about how the strategies are worded.

* Strategies or interventions must be specific. Rather than writing ‘social skills group’, write ‘Attend Ms. Low’s Term 3 social skills group focusing on turning taking, and playing by the rules.’

### c. Beginning date—Concluding date

What is the intervention timeline? How long will the strategy be in place? When will it begin and end? This helps when reviewing and modifying the BSP. It also helps school staff and the student know that the plan is not open-ended, that real change, through appropriate support, is expected. Many interventions are based on a five to ten week time frame. The maximum intervention may occur over several years, but term-by-term reviews help indicate that real change is expected. When real change occurs it should be celebrated or acknowledged.

### d. Who is responsible for implementation?

The BSP coordinator, relevant staff members and other persons will help implement and monitor the strategy. Be specific and use staff members’ names, rather than their year level or subject area.

## Good behaviour recognition

### a. What works to promote good behaviour for this student?

Examples may include:

* Provide immediate positive feedback. (sticker, stamp, house points, praise)
* Implement outcomes from a rewards chart.
* Grant extra time at a favoured activity. (computer, gardening)
* Acknowledge pro-social behaviour at assembly or class meetings.

Reward systems and praise don’t work for all students, especially those who are very defiant. The following can work well:

* Show the student you like and respect them, but not their behaviour.
* Foreshadow warnings and privileges, and give some control to the student.
* Use labelled encouragement. This describes the behaviour you are seeing ‘I like the way you have started on your own’ delivered in a neutral voice, and is said to the student quietly and privately.
* Offer a responsibility for on-going co-operative behaviour.

### b. How will we know if the recognition is successful?

There needs to be a system such as an electronic diary to record or graph behaviour.

### c. Who is responsible for providing good behaviour recognition?

Be specific and use staff members’ names, rather than their year level or subject area.

### d. When and how often is behaviour recorded?

For example, the Year Level Coordinator, Mrs. Barnes will record entries twice a day at 11am and 3.20pm.

## Consequences

### a. List consequences

Identify what will happen if the student does not follow the rules or continues to display challenging behaviour. This may be a series of statements or a step-by-step list. For example, the series of statements could be:

* Regular student discipline procedures will be followed. (This may include additional steps for this particular student, but will include additional steps for all students with disabilities or disorders).
* Address problem behaviour directly and immediately. Use the student’s name, name what they are doing wrong, and ask them to stop.
* Continue to ensure all consequences aim to resolve the problem or restore the harm.
* Use restorative practice techniques.

The step-by-step approach could be:

1. Regular classroom discipline warning system.
2. If the student does not stop the behaviour, call a ‘buddy’ teacher or a senior staff member. The student may be asked to leave the classroom.
3. If the student refuses to leave, the class teacher will remove the class. The ‘Buddy’ teacher or senior staff member will stay with the student in the classroom.
4. Student conference with Year Level Coordinator, Assistant Principal or Principal.
5. Call student’s parents to inform of behaviour.
6. Set a short-term verbal agreement for appropriate behaviour over the next day or two and/or until you meet again.

### b. Who is responsible for giving consequences?

Be specific and use staff members’ names, rather than their year level or subject area.

### c. When and how often are statements or approaches recorded?

For example, the Year Level Coordinator, Mrs. Barnes will record entries twice a day at 11am and 3.20pm.

## Crisis plan

### a. Behaviours

List observable behaviours or circumstances that would lead to the crisis plan being enacted. For example, if the following behaviours are observed:

* Physical threat
* Highly agitated—such as raised voice, making a fist, clenching and unclenching hands
* Violent or threatens violence.

### b. Actions

List the steps you will take when the student is ‘at risk’ of harm or harming others, or when a major incident occurs, such as, serious threats, actual violence, or when the student is out-of-control.

Consider whether mandatory and/or legal requirements need to be followed? Do agencies need to be contacted to support the student?

In extreme emergencies police and/or ambulance support should be included in this plan. For example:

* Call for assistance from Assistant Principal, Principal or senior staff member.
* Separate student from other students—either by removing the student, or if this is not possible removing the other students.
* Call parents to collect student. If unable to contact them, call others on contact list according to specified order.
* Call 000 if necessary.
* Log incident with the DEECD emergency management, phone (03) 9589-6266.

### c. Who is responsible?

List who is responsible for each step above. Be specific and use staff members’ names, rather than their year level or subject area. For example:

* Class teacher: Mr John Smith
* Class teacher or Assistant Principal/Principal: Mr John Smith, Ms Kathy Locke, Mrs Simone Black
* Principal/Office Manager: Mrs Simone Black, Ms Joyce Hunt
* Principal/Assistant Principal: Mrs Simone Black, Ms Kathy Locke,
* Principal: Mrs Simone Black

## Student’s preferred school staff contacts

List staff members the student trusts, likes and works with most frequently.

One or two of these staff members may be able to help restore calm if nothing seems to be working or the situation is in crisis. Safety of all concerned is a priority at all times.

## Review

### a. Review date

Write the date and time of the BSP review meeting.

### b. Who is involved?

List staff members involved in the review process. The parents and student may be included.

### c. How is it monitored?

Monitoring options include: teacher observation, student self-reflection, a behaviour diary and/or chart, term achievement list and Student Support Group meetings led by the BSP Coordinator. A combination of monitoring ideas will often be most effective. Actions that require the student to reflect on or self report positive achievements will often help.

## 4. Refine the BSP

Have relevant staff members, parents, other school professionals and if possible the student provide feedback on the plan, before it is finalised and signed off.

Modify as required.

## 5. Sign the BSP

Have key staff members agree to and sign the plan—including the Principal.

Have the parent, and student agree to and sign the plan.

## 6. Provide a copy to staff

Distribute to all staff who have contact with the student.

Confidentiality is paramount. Ensure that all staff store the plan securely.

Talk staff through the plan, ideally at a staff or department meeting.

Create a copy of the plan for the casual relief teacher (CRT) or the emergency teacher file.

## 7. Review the BSP

### Meeting

Those responsible for monitoring the student’s behaviour and the effectiveness of the plan should attend the review meeting. If all parties cannot be present at this meeting, those present review the plan based on information gathered from the missing parties. If this is the case, the reviewed plan should be shared with all parties before it is finalised.

### Roles and responsibilities

The BSP Coordinator is responsible for reviewing the BSB.

### Why review the BSP?

Regular reviews will ensure the BSP stays relevant. Reviews ensure appropriate behaviours are being targeted, and effective strategies and interventions implemented to support the student in changing their behaviour. New information can also be added.

### When should the BSP be reviewed?

Trial the plan for a week or two before full implementation. Depending on the student or the plan, the plan may need to be revised every two to four weeks and/or at least once a term.

### Emergency reviews

Emergency reviews, prior to the set review date, may need to occur in the following circumstances:

* On professional advice (such as a doctor, psychologist)
* Significant change in the student’s circumstances
* Challenging behaviour is escalating
* Additional challenging behaviour occurs
* The student is at risk of expulsion.

### Considerations

When reviewing the plan consider:

* Is it working? If not, why?
* Are all staff following the plan?
* Do we need to update rewards?
* Were our expectations for the student’s behaviour initially too high (does the bar need to be set lower)?
* Do the strategies match the student’s needs?
* Has an important factor or step been left off the plan?
* Has something changed? Timetable, staff member availability, family circumstances and so on.
* Is information missing? Who will collect this information?
* Rewrite or fine-tune the plan, then follow steps 5-7.

## 8. Concluding the BSP

### Roles and responsibilities

The Principal or Assistant Principal can sign off on the plan’s completion.

### Goals

The BSP aims to help ensure that students feel safe, valued and connected to their school community. General observation that harmony has been restored or diminished is a good indicator that the plan is achieving its goals.

### Conclusion

The BSP can be concluded when significant positive change has been demonstrated over four weeks or more, without incident, through improved behaviour and wellbeing, and new learning is being demonstrated.

At this stage the plan can be concluded and the student monitored for the following term.