

# Top Ten Tips: Challenging Behaviour

1

## Follow school rules and behaviour policy consistently.

As a member of staff, make sure you are aware of the school's behaviour policy and follow it consistently. Ensure [school rules](#) are clearly displayed and referred to. Make sure pupils are aware of the consequences of not following the rules and that all adults are consistent with the consequences. Be mindful that pupils with SEND may need additional time and support in order to [regulate their emotions](#) and may take longer to recover from episodes of dysregulation.

2

## Forgive, forget and move on.

When dealing with challenging behaviour, it's important to remember that it is not personal. When in a heightened sense of emotion, pupils may lash out verbally and physically to those closest to them but it is not a reflection on your ability to do your job. In the aftermath of challenging behaviour, it is important to forgive, forget and move on. This can be difficult to do so don't be afraid to ask for a few minutes for yourself after dealing with challenging behaviour to compose yourself.

3

## Focus on positive behaviour.

If you're working with a pupil who struggles with their behaviour, praise and focus on the positives. Some practitioners use [reward charts](#) to praise positive behaviour but, as highlighted in a recent [Twinkl Digest article](#), this may not be appropriate for all children. Ultimately, you need to know what will work for the individual pupil you are with.

4

## Turn negatives into positives.

When communicating with a pupil, adapt the way you phrase things, e.g. instead of saying, "Stop shouting," say, "Talk quietly." Using [positive phrases](#) helps children with self-regulation and to think through their responses, rather than triggering further negative responses. This is because the brain, when in a heightened sense of challenging behaviour, may only be able to comprehend simple instructions.

5

## Communicate.

Depending on the pupil's understanding, following a period of challenging behaviour, try and find out why they felt the need to behave or respond in the way they did. Holding a [restorative conversation](#) will help children articulate and reflect on the incident as well as supporting them with their choices in the future.

6

## Use social stories.

Once you know what is triggering the challenging behaviour, you can then use that to build in some [social stories](#) around dealing with triggering behaviour. Social stories are short stories you can read daily and can be [personalised](#) to a pupil's needs and show how to respond and deal with difficult situations.

7

## Keep a record log.

Always [log](#) any challenging behaviour a pupil has, either in written or electronic format. Note the times and potential triggers to give a clear picture of any patterns. Within the log, it is also key to record successfulness of [strategies](#) used with each episode of challenging behaviour. If challenging behaviour is persistent, the record log can be shared with professionals who can help give alternative strategies.

8

## Offer a choice.

If a pupil is refusing to do something they are asked to do, give them a clear choice between two options. When offering a choice, make sure you are consistent with your follow-through and it is not a bargaining tool. Use a sand timer and explain they need to make their decision by the time the sand timer has run out.

9

## Develop positive relationships.

One of the most important strategies for dealing with challenging behaviour is to build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils communicate difficulties through their behaviour so if they are finding work difficult or something has happened that's made them feel unhappy, if you have a strong positive relationship with them, they are more likely to talk to you rather than display challenging behaviour.

10

## Ask for help when you need it.

Saving the most important tip for last: never be afraid to ask for help. When dealing with challenging behaviour, it is important to follow your school's behaviour policy in step-by-step order. The class teacher should be made aware of any behaviour issues you encounter but you should also make sure SLT are aware of any incidents that happen. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness or a reflection of your inability to do your job. Sometimes we all need help.

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