

April 2011



# Behaviour services and support

The Ministry of Education, Special Education provides services and support to schools to help with children experiencing severe behaviour difficulties. We have a team of specialists that your school can call on. Our behaviour teams have specialist knowledge, strategies and experience.

Good behaviour can be taught and difficult behaviour unlearned. Our behaviour teams provide parents and teachers with appropriate strategies and support so you can make changes to a student's learning environment – both at home and in the classroom – to help your student learn more positive ways of coping and relating to others.

## The Severe Behaviour Service

This service is for students in Years 1–10 who behave in a way that significantly affects their learning or safety, other students' learning or safety, or their own ability to relate positively with other people. The focus is on students whose main difficulty is behaviour, which is severe.

### How to access this support

Your school can apply for the service in consultation with the student's parent/s. Contact your local Special Education office to make a referral.

We encourage parents to discuss their concerns with the teacher, principal or a kaitakawaenga (Special Education Māori cultural advisor) if they believe their child has a significant behaviour difficulty that needs to be addressed. You might have someone on the staff whose role it is to work with the parent/s, such as a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO).

### Support available through the service

A Special Education caseworker, such as a psychologist or a special education advisor, will work with your student, their family/whānau and you to explore the issues that contribute to your student's behaviour. You will all develop strategies to manage and change their learning environment and behaviour.

Everyone will work together to develop an individual education plan, or an individual behaviour plan. When this is done, the caseworker will work closely with you and the family/whānau to implement the strategies

in the plan. Parents are expected to be involved so they understand how the behaviours are being managed and how to back this up at home.

A kaitakawaenga might also help your school to work in culturally appropriate and responsive ways if your student identifies as Māori.

### Help for students who need more intensive support

A small number of students referred to the Severe Behaviour Service require even more intensive support, in and out of school. These are often the most complex and challenging students. Their Ministry caseworker might suggest they get support through the Intensive Behaviour Service.

### Support available through this service

A child's parents have the choice of their child going to a residential school or to a local school with support in place (what we refer to as a 'wrap-around' service).

In either case, children will receive:

- ▶ a comprehensive assessment of their needs and a detailed intervention and resourcing plan
- ▶ support from psychologists from the Ministry of Education
- ▶ a transition service to ensure they are supported to return to their local school.

### The Behaviour Crisis Response Service

If you have an emergency behaviour situation in your school, you can call on specialists from the Ministry of Education's Behaviour Crisis Response Service. They can provide you with immediate support to help:

- ▶ stabilise your school
- ▶ make sure everyone is safe
- ▶ prevent the situation deteriorating further
- ▶ put an immediate plan in place which will link to an effective and sustained behaviour plan
- ▶ link you to other resources and support.

This service complements the Interim Response Fund which can be used to stabilise a situation and meet a student's immediate needs while a comprehensive intervention plan is put in place.

### Other support

Your school might be able to access Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) who work in a similar way to Special Education behaviour staff. RTLB can provide teacher guidance and support for whole-class or individual behaviour and learning issues. Your school also receives a Special Education Grant, which can be used to help students with special education needs. Your school can

spend this in a variety of ways – on resources, teacher training and teacher's aide time and for individual students or groups of students.

If your student is being supported by the Ongoing Resourcing Scheme and has severe behaviour issues, then these will be addressed as part of their ORS service (see our information sheet *The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme*).

Depending on the situation, other agencies such as child mental health and/or social service agencies might be a more appropriate option. If this is the case, Special Education staff will discuss referring your student to these agencies.

### Additional help with behaviour issues in your school

#### Incredible Years

Incredible Years is a series of programmes that help reduce challenging behaviours in children and increase their social and self-control skills. If you have children with challenging behaviour in your classroom the teacher programme will:

- ▶ provide you with strategies to help improve the way things are managed in your classroom
- ▶ help you promote pro-social behaviour in the children in your class
- ▶ help you reduce a child's aggression and non-cooperation with their peers and teachers.

Incredible Years also has programmes for parents.

#### The School-Wide approach

School-Wide is an ongoing framework that supports schools to create a culture where positive behaviour and learning thrive.

The School-Wide framework is consistently applied across both classroom and non-classroom settings (such as the playground, corridors, buses and toilets). Expectations of each other within the school are clearly defined and taught. The focus is on:

- ▶ preventing problem behaviour
- ▶ developing students' social skills
- ▶ reinforcing desired behaviour
- ▶ consistently addressing and reducing inappropriate behaviours
- ▶ using data-based assessment and problem-solving to address concerns.

Every year there are opportunities to participate in the Incredible Years programme and in School-Wide. Contact your local Ministry of Education office.

## For more information

If you're unclear about any part of our service or have questions about the help your student receives, please talk with staff at your local Special Education office, or call the Special Education information line on **0800 622 222**.

You can get more detailed special education information, including *A Quick Guide to extra support*, under the Educator section of our website: [www.minedu.govt.nz](http://www.minedu.govt.nz), or on Te Kete Ipurangi, a website that provides educational material for teachers and schools: [www.tki.org.nz](http://www.tki.org.nz).

### New Zealand Government

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