

## **INFORMATION FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS (SECONDARY SCHOOLS)**

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You have been enrolled on the Induction Course for teaching assistants (TAs) prepared by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). We hope that you will find this an informative and stimulating introduction to your work in this important role.

The course will consist of four full days of training away from your school, or eight separate sessions, depending on how your LEA decides to arrange it. Some schools are also being offered a session on supporting pupils for whom English is an additional language. You should have received with this document a Course Programme which gives a general outline of the course and a list of activities.

We have recommended that the school appoints a mentor from the staff to support you in the course, and to help you establish yourself in your job. The mentor, or a senior teacher from your school, has been asked to attend the first session of the course with you, and has been invited to attend any other sessions that are of interest to them.

On the first day of the course you will be given a file or course book (the 'TA File') which contains the set of materials which accompany each module of the course. You will need to have this file with you at each of the training sessions.

### **Pre-course activities**

In order to make the best use of time you are going to be spending on the course, we ask you to do some advance preparation. This involves looking at some materials and documents, and making two classroom observations, which you may well be able to do during the course of your normal work. These activities are to prepare you for the training course; they do not involve doing written work that is going to be 'marked' in any way. Your mentor will help you make any necessary arrangements.

The instructions for these activities form Annexes A to D of this document. When you receive the TA File you will find that there are details of a few further activities to be carried out during or after the course. These further activities will also either fit in with your normal work or involve a little extra reading. Please read each of the Annexes carefully before the start of the relevant session of the course. This document can be kept with the TA File when you receive it.

Before starting the course you should establish a good rapport with your mentor and find out the answers to anything you do not understand. To do this, try to establish a regular time to meet when you are both fairly confident of not being interrupted.

**Finally, please bring a copy of your job description with you to the first session of the course, Unit 1 of the Role and Context module. You will need to refer to it during the session.**

## **ANNEX A: PRE-COURSE PREPARATION FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

In order to make the best use of the time spent in the behaviour management training module, you first need to be aware of some key understandings, skills and ideas. The ideas outlined here will be more fully developed during the main training, where you will have an opportunity to discuss issues with colleagues. You will also watch video clips illustrating a wide range of practical strategies to use with pupils and you will be asked to make observations about them.

The pre-session preparation consists of a discussion activity and some background reading. It is recommended that you discuss the information here with your mentor so that you can gain a wider understanding of how it affects your work in school. It will also be valuable to discuss queries, issues or ideas generated from the background reading with your mentor.

Please make sure you bring the information you collect here to the training session, as some of it will be used in activities.

Managing behaviour effectively requires the use of both skills and strategies. Fortunately, these skills and strategies can be learned. There are three key issues here:

- personal skills and qualities are very important
- positive relationships are at the heart of managing behaviour
- effective practitioners manage behaviour within a framework.

It is suggested that as you go through this pre-session preparation you consider how these ideas will work for you. Think of the pupils you support and how you work with them. Can you see how a specific skill would help? Are there certain ideas you like the sound of or would feel particularly comfortable using?

### Key underpinning principles

Throughout these materials there is a consistent theme which is underpinned by the following five key principles.

- Pupils make choices about their own behaviour. Therefore it is not possible to directly control a pupil's behaviour. Rather, what effective practitioners do is to *influence* behaviour by consciously affecting the consequences (in the form of rewards and sanctions) which arise from the pupil's choice.
- By using the language of choice (see page 13), we are fixing the locus of control, i.e. the personal responsibility and sense of control, within the pupil. In other words, when they choose a particular behaviour they are also choosing a particular consequence which may be a reward or a sanction. Both consequences result directly from the pupil's choice.
- Sanctions do not, in themselves, change behaviour. They simply apply the limits to behaviour that enable us to reward and reinforce the (hopefully) more positive choice the pupil subsequently makes. Any system that seeks to rely largely, or wholly, upon sanctions will simply teach pupils how to become effective at avoiding sanctions.
- Effective sanctions are those which inconvenience the pupil but also remain within their best interests to help them become more successful. Therefore, sanctions should be fair, reasonable and related wherever possible to the behaviour; for example, damaging a text book leads to re-covering a number of others.
- Positive consequences (rewards) are the key to the promotion of pro-social behaviour. Systems that emphasise praise for socially acceptable behaviour are consistently more successful in teaching pupils to make more positive choices.

## Considering rules, consequences, rewards and sanctions

Your work in school will be most effective as part of a team approach. When adults who are working together demonstrate consistency and predictability, they have a significant and positive impact on the choices pupils make about their behaviour and learning. These choices are linked to the nature and frequency of the feedback (i.e. rewards, sanctions and other consequences) the pupils receive about their performance. The reality of secondary schools is that pupils might experience as many as fifteen different 'teacher styles' during the course of a week. Your positive support and encouragement may sometimes provide the vital element of consistency.

The aim of this exercise is to allow you to familiarise yourself with the structures in your school that are designed to support appropriate behaviour in pupils. Your school will have a behaviour policy, which should clearly describe the way adults manage and respond to pupils' behaviour. It is very important that your approach fits in with the procedures outlined in this school policy. Any concerns you have about this must be discussed with your mentor.

Being familiar with the policies and procedures will help you become an integrated member of the team, not only from the teachers' perspective but also in the eyes of the pupils.

Knowing the rules, consequences, rewards and sanctions that operate in your school is clearly vital for the effectiveness of your work. However, no policy, procedure or school rule ever altered pupils' behaviour by itself. It is the quality of your interactions with the pupils and how you collaborate with the class teacher in the consistent application of rules and the use of consequences (rewards and sanctions) that will make the biggest impact on good behaviour. To work this way effectively means considering carefully what strategies are available for you to use and, crucially, how you employ them.

There are several key points to understand and appreciate:

- A vital part of encouraging and sustaining good behaviour is rewarding it when it happens. As a TA you can play a very important role in noticing when pupils make a good choice about their behaviour, even if, for some pupils, the examples are small or infrequent. It is extremely effective, and therefore very important, to apply a consequence to that good choice, i.e. give them a reward. Common examples of this are approval with smiles, nods, and approving phrases like 'well done'. When you do this you are creating a direct connection for the pupil between the choices they make and the consequence that follows (the reward). This gives the pupil both an understanding of their personal responsibility and a sense of control over the choices they have. As a process this is the crucial way in which you help the pupil to make more socially acceptable choices in the future.

- When a pupil makes choices about their behaviour that are inappropriate and interfere or infringe the basic rights of others (see the 4Rs framework on page 16) it is also important that a consequence is applied as a direct response to their choice. This consequence could be disapproval or a more formal sanction. This is not only a signal that the behaviour is inappropriate but it also creates the connection for the child between their choice and the consequence received, in other words that they have *chosen to receive a particular consequence*. Using consequences this way effectively places limits on the pupils' behaviour.
- Effective practitioners frequently use a very wide range of low-level, 're-directive' responses before using any formal sanctions. Examples of these may include:
  - non-verbal signs of disapproval such as a head shake, frown or stern look
  - distracting the pupil by using a question or changing their task
  - removing attention by moving away to help other pupils
  - having the pupil sit by the adult or on their own
  - talking to them about their behaviour, referring to previous good choices
  - asking them to make better choices.

The list is very long!

- In the case of more serious infringements of rights or repeated inappropriate behaviour the consequence of the pupil choosing this behaviour should be the use of a more formal sanction. Examples of these more formal sanctions include:
  - warnings
  - time aside from others
  - losing parts of break or other privileges
  - discussions with teachers after class or detentions.
- Some schools will have an agreed hierarchy of formal sanctions arranged from low- to high-level responses. They may display these in writing in the classroom together with rewards. In any event, discussion with the class teacher and understanding how these consequences are applied is an important feature of effective support.
- The decision about using a more formal sanction is, in most cases, likely to be the class teacher's.

You will see a wide range of these responses being used in the video in Unit 2.

The teachers you will be working alongside have overall responsibility to manage the curriculum content and monitor pupil progress. However, for parts of the lesson you will be managing the work and the behaviour of an individual or groups of pupils. For all sorts of reasons some of these pupils will experience difficulties, and these difficulties can manifest as poor behaviour.

The key to effective support work is a coherent and consistent approach from both the teachers and support staff. Within a secondary school setting, limited time and logistics make this coherence an important challenge, which should be discussed with your line manager. The success of this approach is greatly influenced by having a clear understanding of the nature and scope of your respective responsibilities. The pupils you support will really respond to the levels of consistency you as a TA display. One crucial area in which this can be shown is your ability to use low-level rewards, sanctions and other consequences to shape the pupils' choices.

As you examine the information available in your school about consequences, rewards and sanctions, you are asked to match their application and use with areas of responsibility. In simple terms, are there consequences available to you in response to the choices (both good and bad) about their behaviour that the pupils make that you may use freely without reference to the teacher? Can you only apply some consequences after consultation with the teacher, and are some interventions solely at the teacher's discretion?

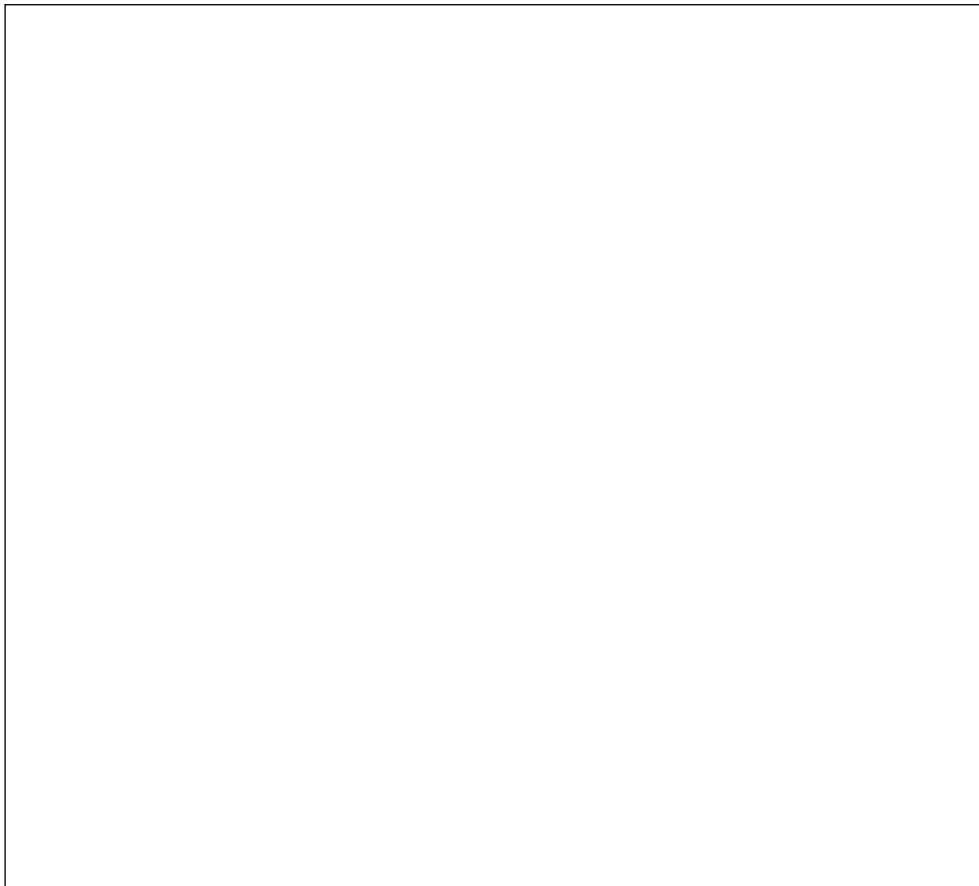
It is expected that you have access to the school's behaviour management policy and any other relevant documents. We also advise you to discuss the issues with your mentor and preferably also with a range of other teachers in your school.

#### (a) Using rewards as a consequence

*The information gathered in this activity will be used during the main training session. Please bring this material with you.*

Use the space below to make a list of all the rewards that you know to be available for use in your school.

NB. Some rewards, like merit marks, are both formal and tangible. However, many, such as verbal approval, are not. Explore as wide a variety as possible.

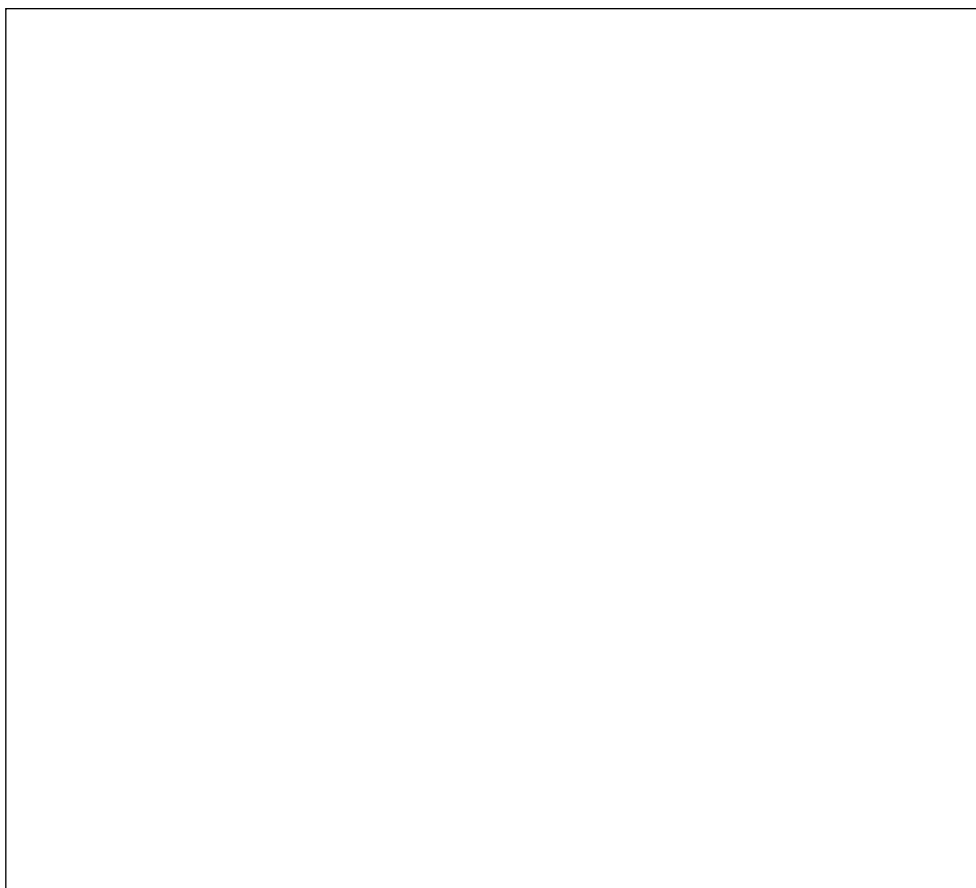


Working with a partner such as your mentor, look at your list and explore the following questions in relation to it. Note down your views.

- Are there any other ways of rewarding pupils that might be effective and appropriate?
- Are any of these rewards unattainable for some pupils?
- Which of these rewards do you personally use most frequently?
- Are there some rewards that you use infrequently or not at all? Why is this?
- Which of these rewards can be used for pupils who just do what is expected of them?
- In your experience, how do pupils react to being rewarded?
- Do you have any concerns about the effect of rewards?

(b) Using sanctions as a consequence

Does the school's behaviour policy have a list of sanctions teachers may use? Are they arranged in some kind of order, such as from the least serious to the most serious? Draw up a list of sanctions that you know to be available in your school.



It is likely that most of these formal sanctions will only be used by the teacher. However, when you are working with pupils and they make a poor choice about their behaviour, you will still need to teach them that there is a consequence to their choice.

*It is suggested that you talk this through with your mentor.*

As you look at the consequences available to support you, are there any areas of concern?

Are there ideas about consequences that you would like to discuss with the teacher so that you can be more effective?

In your opinion, what are the things that make consequences most effective?

How much does the way in which they are applied affect the outcome?

What, in your experience, do you do that makes your use of consequences effective?

Which types of consequences, in your opinion, have the most impact on getting pupils on task and behaving well – redirection, rewards or sanctions?

### (c) Rules

With your mentor consider the following questions from the perspective of *your* experience in the school:

- What are the rules that apply in the classroom(s) that you work in?
- Is there a difference from subject to subject? Does this have an effect on your work?
- Are the rules published or available for pupils to see?
- If you asked the pupils, would they be able to tell you what the rules are?
- Do they apply everywhere in the school (class/playground/lunch, etc)?
- How do the pupils learn the rules?
- Do they understand what they are? How do you know?
- What, specifically, do the rules protect?
- Are all the staff, including mid-day supervisors and administrative staff, familiar with the rules?
- How did the rules come to exist? What were the processes that went into drawing up the school rules, and who was involved?
- Are they easy to follow/operate for
  - the pupils
  - the staff?

NB. The information that you share with teachers about pupils can be an important resource for them. For example, you may have observed that a pupil responds best when corrected in a particular way or reacts best to praise in certain specific circumstances.

## Background reading

### (1) The learning climate – building relationships

This document will provide you with a basic awareness of ways in which you can structure your work and build a relationship with pupils that enables them to learn effectively and enjoy a sense of achievement.

Research into learning indicates that pupils learn best when they:

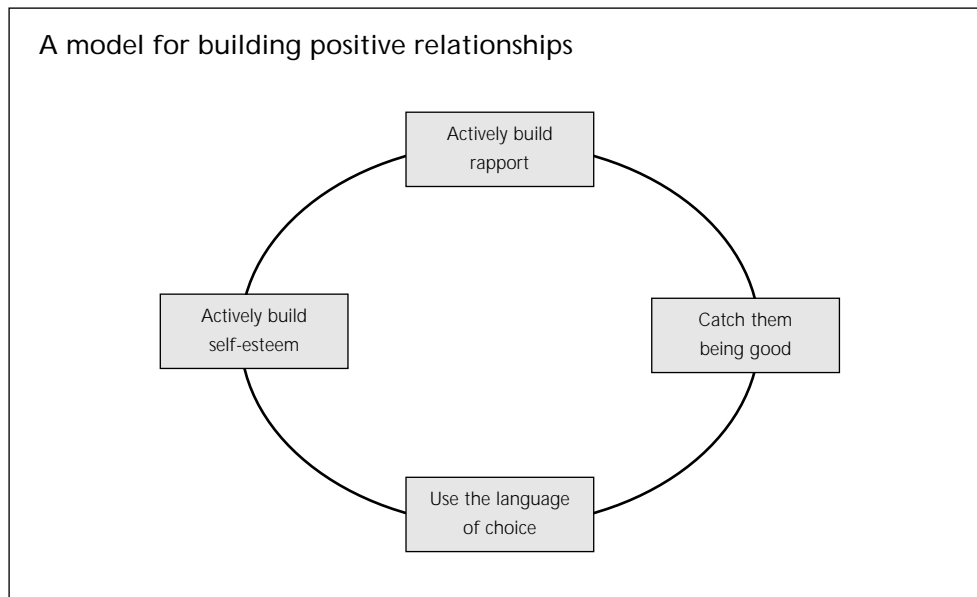
- are relaxed
- feel safe
- are engaged in activities which challenge but do not generate anxiety
- receive regular feedback that is positive, detailed and helps them to improve on past performance
- believe they can be successful.

There are certain skills in working effectively with pupils which characterise high-quality relationships, encourage positive attitudes and secure successful learning. Approaching your work with these in mind will enhance your ability to influence, guide, encourage and direct your pupils towards success. In other words, they allow you to help them become successful in the classroom.

You will have an opportunity to discuss these skills with colleagues during the training and observe them in action in the training video. As you read through the descriptions of these skills it is a good idea to consider how they fit into your personal experiences of working in your school. It is crucial to remember that, although you will have little influence over the style and approach adopted by the many teachers the pupils meet during the week, this doesn't prevent you developing your own consistent approach within the following model.

It is useful to consider these skills as part of a model for creating positive relationships. The advantage of a model is that it allows you to examine individual skills and reflect on how you use them.

The diagram below is a model for building and sustaining effective relationships and supporting positive behaviour.



### Actively build rapport

This is the process of getting to know people. It involves social interaction that may have little or nothing to do with the taught curriculum. Obviously, to build rapport effectively it is necessary to share your experiences with others and demonstrate an interest and an understanding of their world. This is not the same as trying to be everyone's best friend, because maintaining a professional distance is also important. Pupils need adults to be friendly, but not to be their friend. There are certain obvious considerations of courtesy, too, such as not continuing a conversation with the pupil when the teacher is trying to talk to the whole class.

Building rapport with pupils requires effort, commitment and skill. It happens in many simple ways. Learning names and greeting pupils in the corridor are examples. Showing genuine interest not only in the things pupils do but also in them as human beings is a powerful base from which to lead and encourage them to be successful because it builds trust and confidence. In order to influence and guide pupils, you have to enter their world and be aware of their perspective.

It is worth highlighting the fact that this is not an automatic or speedy process. Many children enter secondary school having had experiences that tell them that adults are not wholly trustworthy. The mere fact of building rapport, and presenting yourself as a caring and interested adult, will not initially always be sufficient to overcome this. However, maintaining this positive, supportive and encouraging approach consistently over time is the best way of convincing the pupil that adults can be trustworthy.

### Catch them being good: the use of praise

This principle is one of the keys to successful teaching and learning. The balance you achieve between correcting mistakes and giving feedback and praise for doing things well is crucial. This does not just apply to especially good behaviour but the many regular and important things that pupils are expected to do. How would you feel if no one ever acknowledged or appreciated the routine, everyday things you do that help?

Thanking pupils for following instructions after an activity is a very powerful way of helping them make better choices about their behaviour. However, be conscious of how easy it is to sound patronising to an adolescent who may not be used to praise or find it easy to accept!

A key element here, when praising, is to let the pupil know what the praise is for. 'That was a good lesson, Mike. I noticed you giving eye contact to the teacher when she spoke, you stayed in your seat which was one of your targets and you kept your voice low in discussions. You're really making some good choices. I'm impressed,' is more effective than 'Well done, that lesson went much better,' because it actually tells the pupil specifically what behaviours they can repeat to gain praise and appreciation again.

### Using the language of choice

Is it possible to *make* a pupil write in a book, sit still or stop talking? The answer is obviously 'no'. What usually happens when behaviour is inappropriate is that, in some way or other, the adults present the pupil with alternative choices or consequences. Have you ever caught yourself saying to your own children, 'If you don't clear up that mess you're not going to watch TV!'

Using the language of choice as the foundation of your work with pupils is absolutely crucial. When you recognise and work with the principle that pupils make choices about their behaviour and their work you begin to:

- reduce instances of conflict arising from trying to make things happen
- teach them a sense of responsibility
- create an important link between choice and consequence
- help to empower them as individuals.

Effective classroom practitioners use the language of choice in an open and deliberate way. They give feedback to pupils about the choices they are making, letting them know whether they are good choices or bad choices. In other words, it becomes a familiar part of the language they use to give directions and feedback.

Examples of feedback are:

'Danny, the instruction is to work individually on the sheet. I'd like you to choose to do that now. Thanks.'

'I like the colours you've used Sheetal. Great choice!'

'Gavin, if you choose not to finish your work now, you'll be choosing to explain to Mrs Fallon and me after class why it's not done. Make a good choice and get back to work now. Thanks.'

In all these examples the choices that the pupil makes about their social or learning behaviour result in a consequence. When language is used in this overt way it emphasises the fact that the child *actually chooses the consequence*, be it a reward or a sanction, *by the choice they make over their behaviour*. This is not only a highly effective way of reducing potential conflict but it also reinforces the responsibility and sense of personal control the pupil has in these situations. It is clearly vital to establish agreement with the subject teacher about how you can work together on this issue, bearing in mind it is a fundamental component in creating consistency in the pupils' experience.

In all of this, the main aim is to create a learning experience: to make a connection in the pupil's mind between the choices they make and the outcome we create, and in this way to influence positively future choices.

### **Actively build self-esteem**

The concept of self-esteem is a complex one with many aspects. It involves a person making decisions about their experience of the world and then judging their value. If experiences in school are constantly negative and unsuccessful they will, in time, undermine the pupil's belief in their ability to be successful. In other words, pupils will create a model in their heads that accepts a lack of success as normal for them. It isn't a pleasant or motivating model and is likely to lead towards behaviours that avoid risk-taking and challenge (the very behaviours that characterise learning). These behaviours can often be challenging at varying levels and disruptive in many ways.

The good news is that self-esteem is not a fixed quantity. It is more an attitude or process that can be changed. If a pupil has a negative self-image (low self-esteem), you, as a significant adult, can help improve it. Again, it is worth emphasising the point that since a pupil may meet fifteen different teachers in a week, your role as a significant adult is highly relevant in the development of positive self-esteem, even if you only work with the pupil for a short time each week. The more we actively set out to let pupils know how much we value and respect them, the more we will improve their self-esteem. Naturally, this development occurs over time and as a

result of many minor pieces of information or feedback. As a TA you can provide a pupil with those small and highly significant pieces of feedback and praise which build into positive beliefs about themselves.

To summarise, this is not an instant process or one which involves any single major event. It is accomplished by the regular, simple, everyday interactions we have with the pupil: interactions that give them the confidence to make a mistake; feedback that frequently points out what they do well, how they might improve, and the good choices they are capable of making. It is also important to reassure them that even if they sometimes choose badly they are still valued. A key belief to present through your dealings with the pupil is that they are *not* the sum of their behaviour. It is a normal part of growing and learning to make mistakes, but these mistakes do not imply any problem with the pupil themselves or lasting deficit in them. They are the things that they chose to do at the time. Whereas you may not approve of their choices and may be directly involved with the class teacher in imposing some consequence, you do not regard the pupil as being inherently 'bad'.

## **2. Setting an agenda for classroom support**

You will be most effective in supporting pupils when you have a clear idea of what is expected of you. You will feel most comfortable when the subject teachers have explained and offered guidance to you to help meet those expectations. If you are unsure at any time, being reminded or given extra information should not be a problem. In fact, it will probably add to your feelings of belonging – of being a welcome part of the team.

The same principle applies to pupils. They will encounter a wide range not only of teacher expectations but also of working contexts, such as practical or academically formal, across the secondary curriculum. We should provide them with a known and understood way of working, help them feel safe, valued and a part of the team, and develop a sense in them of belonging to the learning group.

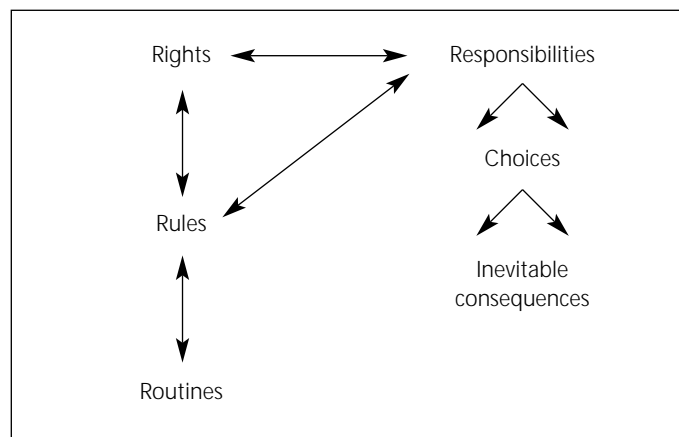
Naturally, there are many things about working with other adults in a classroom that need prior discussion and agreement. In relation to practical lessons, it is particularly useful for the pupils to see you engaged in these discussions and planning together. The SENCO will be an important reference point concerning the protocols and procedures of supporting in class, and their advice should always be sought.

One of the most important subjects on which you must have a consistent approach is the management of the pupils' behaviour. This will mean that the adults in the classroom have a clear idea of the agenda that explains how they will all work with the pupils. Clearly, at a formal level this agenda will be influenced by the school's behaviour management policy, and relevant class plans may be displayed in the rooms. On an informal basis, the opportunity to share your knowledge of what has

been successful with a pupil in other subjects, how they respond to certain contexts, etc., can be very valuable.

Any agenda that operates in class needs to make it easy for the adults to work with the skills outlined in the previous section. One especially powerful agenda is referred to as the '4Rs': rights, responsibilities, rules and routines. There are many variations on this theme in schools. Here it is a model that encompasses the nine core principles of behaviour management which form the basis of Unit 1 of the training module.

### The 4Rs



The 4Rs agenda helps:

- pupils make better choices
- keep the focus on learning
- give a sense of fairness to both praise and correction
- pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour and learning
- create a consistent and predictable framework
- adults to share a common theme and common language
- pupils know where they stand
- pupils feel safe.

## Rights

Most people agree that the basic rights that adults and pupils both share in a classroom are:

- the right to learn
- the right to feel safe (physically and emotionally)
- the right to respect and dignity

and that the teacher has the right to teach.

Using these rights as a way of supporting behaviour management allows you to move beyond the 'because I said so!' approach.

## Responsibilities

A fundamental goal in classroom management is equipping pupils to become responsible for their own behaviour. By far the most effective way of generating a sense of responsibility in people is to work within the concept that they make choices about their own behaviour. Working with the language of choice is a very powerful way of teaching them this vital idea. As they begin to realise that they are in fact making choices in many areas of their life (if you choose a chocolate bar you're also choosing not to have crisps), you can more easily guide them towards making more and more choices that are helpful to them and are socially appropriate.

Of course, part of the process of teaching them to make better choices is to ensure that we teach them that with each choice that they make, they are also, in fact, choosing a related consequence. The consequences of good choices are rewards such as smiles, verbal praise, stickers, etc. The consequences of poor choices are redirective behaviours such as disapproval or formal sanctions like detention. The wider the range of strategies you can use, the better.

Also, it is vital to connect personal responsibility to the enjoyment of rights. In our everyday dealings with pupils we have to make that connection clearly understood. In other words, just as you enjoy the right to feel safe, you must take the responsibility to behave in such a way that others can feel safe too.

There is a basic fairness to this idea that appeals to children of all ages.

## Rules

Most schools have rules. There may be different rules for moving about between lessons, for breaks and for the classroom. Familiarising yourself with what the rules are and, importantly, how the teacher interprets and uses them will help you work together. It can be very powerful to use the same kind of phrases so that the pupils recognise a connection between the adults working with them. At times you may be able to make the connection for the pupil that 'when Mr X says this, he is talking about this rule'.

The fact that there are rules, which may be printed on a poster on the wall, will not guarantee that pupils will either remember or follow them. Basically, the fewer rules there are, the easier it is to remember to use them effectively and to refer to them.

An important part of the work that goes on in a classroom is actively to teach pupils what the rules are. You will do this most effectively by acknowledging and praising pupils when they get it right.

'I appreciate you asking for help respectfully even though you may be a little frustrated with the work. Thanks.'

Obviously, you will also need to remind them to make better choices when they forget, but you should aim for a balance that favours catching them getting it right. Reminding them of the rule is a very good way of redirecting their choice rather than confronting it.

'Mohammed, remember our rule for moving around the lab safely. Thanks,' is more effective than 'Stop it, that's dangerous! You shouldn't be running like that!'

It is suggested that having read this you discuss the issues and links to previous activities with your mentor.

## Routines

If you imagine a typical week at work, there are a large number of routines to follow that help make the school tick along smoothly. Routines can be described as the things that 'oil the wheels' of the organisation.

In working with pupils it is wrong to assume that they know how to behave during these routine times. Teaching pupils exactly what sorts of behaviour you actually want to see when they hand in textbooks, move off to assembly, or pack away at the end of the lesson is important. You will also benefit from having established routines for conduct when you are leading an activity like moving from teacher instruction to supported small group work.

As with all of this, the quality and positive nature of the feedback you give to pupils during these routine times will help to fix them in their memories.

## **ANNEX B: PRE-COURSE PREPARATION FOR LITERACY**

### **Observation of an English lesson on reading**

Before attending the course it would be helpful if you would observe an English lesson in your school where the main focus is the teaching of reading. You will see that it has a four-part structure. As you observe the lesson, complete the English lesson observation sheet below and bring this to the first session of the Literacy training.

## English lesson observation sheet 1

Lesson objectives:

1. The lesson starter ..... minutes

Teaching activities and strategies:

Pupil activities and learning strategies:

2. Introduction of the main teaching points ..... minutes

Teaching activities and strategies:

Pupil activities and learning strategies:

3. Development of the main teaching points ..... minutes

Teaching activities and strategies:

Pupil activities and learning strategies:

4. Whole-class plenary at the end of the lesson ..... minutes

Teaching activities and strategies:

Pupil activities and learning strategies:

## ANNEX C: PRE-COURSE PREPARATION FOR MATHEMATICS

Before starting this session of the induction course you should complete this activity. Each secondary school is providing a catch-up programme for those Year 7 pupils who arrive at Level 3 and are working towards Level 4. This catch-up programme in mathematics is called Springboard 7. For the activity you are asked to make arrangements to observe a Year 7 mathematics lesson. If it is possible this class will contain pupils who are working on Springboard 7.

The training materials have been written on the assumption that you have seen a complete lesson. Lesson observations are an integral part of the course, which aims to prepare TAs to work with the Key Stage 3 age-range, from Year 7 to Year 9 and in particular with Springboard 7 pupils.

A form is provided for you to complete during your observations. The questions will help you to focus attention on aspects of the lesson that will be useful in training sessions. Study the form before you begin the observation and make notes on it while you are in the classroom. Read your notes through immediately after the observation and add any other thoughts that occur to you. This should take no longer than 10 minutes.

As soon as possible after the observation, you should spend 10 minutes with your mentor talking through what you have seen, using your notes on the activity sheet as a guide. *The discussion is essential* and is much more important than the filling-in of the sheet. You should also ask your mentor any questions that arise from what you have seen in the lesson.

You will need a copy of *The Framework for teaching mathematics Years 7, 8 and 9* with you in the first session of the mathematics course. Ask your mentor to supply you with one, and bring it along.

## Observing a Year 7 mathematics lesson

Name of assistant:

This observation was done of a class that is *mixed ability / grouped by ability*

In this class the catch-up programme Springboard 7 *was being used / was not being used.*

### The oral and mental starter

Sharpening number facts, oral work or visualisation skills

What is this part of the lesson about?

How many pupils answer questions?

Do they answer quickly and confidently?

**Do you think they are enjoying this part of the lesson?**

Say what tells you whether they do or not.

**Is there another adult in the classroom?**

If so, what does he or she do during this part of the lesson?

### **The main part of the lesson**

Some teaching and practical activities on a particular mathematical topic

**Does the teacher teach the whole class together?**

If so, for how long? How does he or she involve the pupils?

How much work do the pupils do as a whole class/in groups/on their own?

How does the teacher organise this?

Are any pupils stuck or having difficulties?  
If so, what do they do? How does the teacher respond?

Do any pupils finish early?  
If so, what do they do?

**Is there another adult in the room?**

If so, what does he or she do during this part of the lesson?

**Are there any pupils working on the catch-up programme Springboard 7?**

If so, how is this organised (such as: they work on different topics or activities, they get extra teaching from the teacher or another adult)?

### **The plenary**

Reinforcing the learning that has taken place in the lesson

**What does the teacher do in this part of the lesson?**

How does he or she involve all the pupils?

Is there another adult in the room?

If so, what does he or she do during this part of the lesson?

After the lesson

What have you learnt from watching the lesson?

List a few points.

## ANNEX D: PRE-COURSE PREPARATION FOR INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

### Supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

#### Inclusion

*Inclusion* is a key concept when considering SEN and disabilities.

The DfES published *Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs* in November 2001. This sets out the principles of an inclusive education service. The principles include the following:

- Inclusion is a process by which schools, local education authorities and others develop their cultures, policies and practices to include pupils.
- With the right training, strategies and support nearly all children with special educational needs and disabilities can be successfully included in mainstream education.
- An inclusive education service offers excellence and choice and incorporates the views of parents and children.
- The interests of all pupils must be safeguarded.

Inclusive education means that, whatever their needs, pupils learn together in age-appropriate classes in local schools. To get inclusion right, schools must be willing and able to meet the needs of a wide range of pupils; inclusion is therefore a whole-school commitment. This means that *attitudes, skills* and *resources* must be right.

As a teaching assistant, you need to remember:

- schools must be careful not to discriminate against children with SEN or disabilities
- what children have in common is greater than the differences between them
- *everyone* has a range of needs
- support is available to enable you to do your job.

However, you need to be aware of the danger that, in your efforts to help a pupil and the teacher, you can give too much support and end up doing the task for the pupil. It is really important that you remember that your role is *to promote independent learning* and that encouraging too much dependence on assistance is not helpful for the pupil.

### **What is meant by special educational needs and disabilities?**

Though often overlapping in the way they are dealt with in legislation, there are important differences between SEN and disabilities. For example, not all children with disabilities will have SEN. Nevertheless children with disabilities who do not have SEN may be at risk of being less favourably treated and need reasonable adjustment made for them under the protection offered by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995).

The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice describes four areas of need, as follows:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- behaviour, emotional and social development
- sensory and/or physical.

'SEN' is a relative term: need is dependent to an extent on the learning environment, the effectiveness of the teaching and the task to be done.

### **The Code of Practice**

This is a policy and procedural framework to help schools and teachers and LEAs understand their responsibilities. The Code specifies that pupils with SEN should have Individual Education Plans (IEP). Your job may involve supporting an IEP.

### **Where will I get support?**

Your main source of support in your work with pupils with SEN will be the class teacher, but there are other people who will make important contributions. Within the school you may be helped by the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), the year head or co-ordinator, and by other assistants. The Local Education Authority will have educational psychologists, learning/behaviour support staff, and advisory teachers to work with specific difficulties such as hearing impairment or visual impairment. In addition, the Health Authority staff will provide, as appropriate, speech and language therapists, and the community paediatrician (school doctor).

Do not be afraid to ask – you are learning, and learning is about asking questions, and making mistakes sometimes. If you are to be an effective assistant you need to ask:

'Is what I am doing, working?'

'Is the pupil settled, happy and learning?'