'The Secondary School' Integrated Services (RISIS project)

Preliminary draft proposal

The RISIS Project is a multi-facetted integrated initiative instigated by 'The Secondary School' and managed by the Integrated Living Network (or dedicated organisation formed by the network) in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to provide welfare support for secondary school children. This support is extended to parents and teachers as they are key constituents of the children's immediate external environment.

The project intends to employ a cohesive strategy based on personal development, enhanced quality of experiential practices, nutritional re-balancing and other evidence-based propositions in order to positively promote internal and external personal changes.

The focus on personal changes include promotion of appropriate behaviour, enhancement of academic performance and development of self-awareness, self-confidence, inter-personal relationship skills and personal-responsibility. The practical application of strategy involves passive and active interventions. We seek to address causes rather than consequences [1].

The references included in this document are for the purpose of illustration and are not exhaustive evidence for effectiveness of any particular topic.

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[1] *The early correlates and consequences of child poverty for children and young adults include adverse trends in reading skills, unmanageable and aggressive behaviour at school, drug misuse, unemployment, teenage pregnancy, homelessness, crime, and suicide. These are the symptoms and signs of social exclusion, which has been defined as "the inability of our society to keep all groups and individuals within reach of what we expect as a society and the tendency to push vulnerable and difficult individuals into the least popular places." … Many initiatives come late in the process, addressing consequences rather than causes. Their targeted nature is also limiting.(* BMJ *2001;323:175-176)*

This document is divided into the following sections:

1. 'The Secondary School' – Assessment and comments

1.1 Background

I have worked at 'The Secondary School' for 5 months in order to know the children individually and gain first-hand experience of the issues related to the school. During this time I worked closely with the children delivering music education and had the opportunity to discuss some personal issues with some of them.

Informal conversations with members of the staff gave me an overall idea of their views on the work that they do at the school as well as their related personal issues.

I recognise that my personal experience with the children does not necessarily reflect their behaviour and performance outside music education sessions.

1.2 Findings

a. In my experience, the overwhelming common denominator within the three areas of the school (Therapeutic Support Unit, area 2 and core) is lack of self-esteem. The consequences of this are manifested in a variety of behaviour patterns.

b. Capacity to focus varies greatly between children - with unexpected high levels in some children such as within the TS unit.

c. My personal classroom experience:

Personal development: Some children demonstrated interest in the body/mind relationships (during 'talk time') and enjoyed the practical examples. As this was not the explicit purpose of our meetings (music education) we didn't go further than the demonstrations and did not explore how they could use those relationships to affect their behaviour and personal goals at the beginning.

Computer music programme(s): Children initially came into class with their own expectations and assumptions of what their choices were and what making music using the computer entailed. Because of their poor listening skills, it took a while until there was an opportunity to introduce them to this medium but, once they experienced what they could do, they started to develop an interest in digital music manipulation.

As they seem to have an affinity to computers, I was able to teach how music is put together, sound wave forms representation (which led to their learning about manipulation of sound using editing, effects, etc), different uses of music (as movies soundtracks, dance, etc) and how to give free rein to their creativity. The latter proved to be one of the most difficult aspects of the exercise.

Freedom of choice: After being shown the existing choices, children coming for music education were initially asked what they wanted to do as their main musical activity (goal setting), with explicit opportunity to change this at a later date.

Eight of them said that they did not want to do anything.
Six opted for the 'decks' but did not want to learn how to use it. They just wanted to play dance CDs.
Seven children could be given some structured music tuition and/or instrumental practice (including computer music skills) varying from one session to a maximum of seven during the first five months.
The remaining children did not know what they wanted but were open to suggestions (but did not necessarily take them up)

1.3 General comments (staff)

In general the staff seem to have a very positive attitude towards their work at 'The School'. It was noticed that there are a few teachers extremely skilled in personal development and that those had the most appropriate attitude and approach in dealing with behavioural issues at the school. The more skilled and the more personally aware teachers are, the more positive they seem to be and vice-versa.

However, a few comments were made in the spirit of improving the service for the children and staff:

- It is generally agreed that the school was better for the children and more effective in changing behaviour when it was residential - "there wasn't so much destruction of property" and "the children were not so abusive". (please refer to section 5.3)

- Some 'wish' that the school applied a zero tolerance policy (see Appendix II) but also an general acknowledgement that it would be ineffective. Exploring the subject further, it seems that what they mean is that they wish that there could be a way to be firmer with children with regards to behaviour but not necessarily applying zero tolerance. (please refer to section 5.2)

- The issue of reward for their work was mentioned. Apparently, some time in the past, 'The School' teachers used to be paid more than teachers at other schools, reflecting the special skills needed and their working conditions. Apparently this is not the case anymore. There seems to be a 'muted' resentment about this on the part of some teachers.

- It was noticed that the times of most disturbance at the school are when pupils have to change classrooms at the end of each period. It was suggested that the opposite could be helpful and that, if children could stay in the same classroom, this might have an effect on reducing behavioural problems seen at the corridors and following period.

- One of the staff mentioned that "it was better when staff used to informally meet every morning for a coffee and a chat" (which could also include talking about the children). "I think we started feeling less like a team when we stopped having the smoking room".

2. 'The Secondary School' – Remedial measures

There are a number of passive and active evidence-based measures which have shown to alter behaviour and academic performance in children. It would be desirable that those measures were applied together in an integrated programme for their synergistic effect. To my knowledge this integrated approach has not been done before and should prove a worthwhile experiment.

The objective of those measures are similar to those already successfully applied in a primary school project for children with difficulties similar to those at 'The School' (please refer to APPENDIX IV) and would be as follows:

- development of physical awareness and personal boundaries
- development of a sense and experience of how personal action contributes or detracts from collective efforts
- development of a sense of value (self-worth) and use it in an interactive way
- development of focus
- development of harmonic personal interaction while respecting each other's boundaries
- development of sensitivity
- improvement of academic performance

- promotion of awareness of themselves and others
- to release and re-direct energies in a conscious and controlled manner
- to give opportunities for expression
- to slow down their minds
- to take focus away from their minds and bring focus into their bodies ('grounding')

The tools proposed to deliver the above objectives' may be gender-dependent or age-dependent within individual or group settings, subject to perceived needs and findings from continuous needs assessment. Some of these are already employed at 'The School' but could be enhanced perhaps with the addition of external providers. These may include:

- **Arts & crafts:** The importance and effectiveness of arts and crafts (including drama, music and writing) is already well known[2, 3] and established within educational institutions. The different ways to employ music within the remits of this document are detailed under a separate heading.

  Regular large scale events (such as provided by Universal Connections and ImpactArts) would not only have a positive impact on self-esteem, team working, goal orientation and confidence but also on social inclusion and community integration should arts projects be open to the public.

- **Nutritional intervention:** Altered brain chemistry from the deficiency of even one nutrient can give rise to diminished mental capacity, and also to mental/emotional disturbances and behaviour disorders, eating disorders (anorexia and bulimia), drug and alcohol addiction, autism and violence[4, 5].

  The school already provides a fairly well-balanced diet but this is counteract by poor diet outside the school. Excess ingestion of starch and some allergen-containing foods and drinks normally interferes with the absorption of nutrients in the bowels. They can also be responsible for diminished academic performance and increased behavioural problems.

  Ample research confirms that children engaged in violent crime typically exhibit pronounced deficiencies of trace minerals such as lithium, chromium and vanadium. Nutritional deficiency has been shown to influence aggressive behaviour[6], delinquency[7] and antisocial behaviour[8]. Deficiency in minerals - especially iron[9] and magnesium[10] – have been associated with ADD and ADHD.

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[2] *Hanshumaker, J. (1980). The effects of arts education on intellectual and social development: a review of selected research.* Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education*, 61, 10-28*

[3] *Harland, J., Kinder, K., Lord, P., Stott, A., Schagen, I. & Haynes, J. (2000).* Arts Education in Secondary Schools: Effects and Effectiveness. *Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research*

[4] *Morgan, B.L. (1990). Nutritional requirements for normative development of the brain and behaviour.* Annals of New York Academic Science, Vol. 602: 127-132

[5] Int J Biosocial Research 1981,1: 21-41

[6] *Werbach, Melvyn: Nutritional influences on aggressive behaviour.* J Ortho Med 1995; v.7, no. 1. *(iron deficiency)*

[7] *Schoenthaler, SJ, Bier ID:The effect of vitamin-mineral supplementation on juvenile delinquency among American schoolchildren:a randomised, double-blind placebo-controlled trial.* J Altern Complement Med 2000; 6(1):7-17

[8] *Schoenthaler S: Vitamins Against Crime: supplementation and antisocial behaviour in institutions.* Medical Nutrition 1990; 34-37 *and Applied nutrition and behaviour.* J Applied Nutr 1991;43(1):31-39

[9] *Konofal, E. 2004 Iron deficiency in children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. Archives of Pediatric and adolescent Medicine. Vol. 158, pages 1113-1115*

[10] *B. Starobrat-Hermelin.* The effects of magnesium physiological supplementation on hyperactivity in children with ADHD. *Magnesium Research Vol. 10, 1997, pp. 149-156*

Re-balancing nutrient levels (vitamins, minerals, essential fatty acids[11] and amino acids) through nutritional therapy and 'functional foods' would be expected to have an extremely positive effect on behaviour and academic performance[12].

- **Bio-feedback:** 'Bio-feedback' refers to any process that measures and reports back on how the body is functioning. It uses devices or techniques that feed back information so that the person being monitored can learn how to actively control those bodily functions, which are usually unconscious. It induces positive effects on emotional and physical well-being by teaching to alter brain activity, blood pressure, muscle tension, heart rate and other critical bodily functions.

  Bio-feedback is a therapy in its own right in the NHS and private clinics throughout the UK. Conditions that respond to bio-feedback are generally stress-related, such as anxiety[13], headaches, insomnia, asthma, gastro-intestinal disorders, mild hypertension, muscle problems and over-excitement.

  Because of children's affinity with computer and computer games, it would be desirable that bio-feed back was delivered through the use of a computer game controlled nearly entirely through the use of breath and conscious production of alpha and delta waves in the brain.

  The bio-feedback component of the game measures a player's Skin Conductance Level (SCL) and Heart Rate Variability (HRV). SCL measures sweat gland activity. Increased perspiration indicates increased autonomic nervous system activation, which is associated with increased energy - both positive (e.g. excitement) and negative (e.g. nervousness).

  The game is set up so that players might have to raise either their sweat gland activity or heart rate in order to get through one particular barrier, while moving into a more balanced, calmer state to successfully navigate another area. Progress in the game depends upon how well players integrate these biofeedback skills to accomplish the varying events.

- **Personal management:** Giving the children a practical and theoretical understanding of self through the application of evidence-based tools - to tackle issues that are generally at the root of academic and behavioural outcomes - could show some benefit. Issues such as self-esteem and self-concept, for example, have been shown to affect attitudes, behaviour and academic performance[14].

  The proposed intervention is not problem-focused although solution-focused brief therapy and family mediation tools would also be of benefit depending on the therapist's skill[15]. The personal management intervention focuses on changing patterns and promoting the understanding of how the mind works and its interrelationship with feelings, attitudes, perception and the rest of the body based on individual experiences with practical

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[11] *Burgess, JR, et al. "Long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids in children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder."* American Journal of Clinical Nutrition 2000,Vol. 71, No. 1, 327-330.

[12] *Carroll D. "The effect of an oral multivitamin combination with calcium, magnesium, and zinc on psychological well-being in healthy young male volunteers": a double-blind placebo-controlled trial. Psychopharmacology. 150(2):220-5, 2000 Jun*

[13] *When 150 children received either biofeedback—six sessions of thermal training followed by six sessions of electromyographical training—or no treatment (controls), by the end of the study, the biofeedback had brought about a "significant reduction" in anxiety levels (J Clin Psychol, 1996; 52: 469-73)*

[14] *Electronic Journal of Research in Educational Psychology and Psychopedagogy, 1 (1), 95-120* and *Wigfield, A., & Karpathian, M. (1991). Who am I and what can I do? Children's self-concepts and motivation in achievement solutions. Educational Psychologist, 26, 233-261*

[15] *Dunkle, J.H., and Friedlander, M.L. (1996). Contribution of therapist experience and personal characteristics to the working alliance.* Journal of Counseling Psychology, 43*(4), 456-60*

demonstrations. A variety of interventions may be employed such as Brief Therapy, NLP, applied Dynamic Release, Human Givens and other related approaches.

The intervention is theoretical and practical, integrating a variety of games, music, lectures and is, essentially, the thread weaving through the various tools suggested in this document. If academic timetable constraints can be overcome, delivery would ideally be incorporated, at least in part, in the weekly academic agenda.

- **Dedicated help line:** Although there are a few issues related to this proposition, which need to be discussed, a 24-hour free phone help line attended by a qualified participating counsellor may be desirable in crisis situations including self-harm episodes.

- **Games:** Specially designed and delivered games can play an important part in the children's personal understanding and experiencing of issues outlined in section 2 above. Some have already and successfully been incorporated in a primary school project in Easterhouse (Glasgow)[16] and are more suitable for younger children (Team A and B at 'The Secondary School'). Other objective-specific games can be designed for older children.

- **Life skills for employability:** This course was commissioned by the Pearl Project to fill the employability gap that existed amongst many of their recruits. It is designed to help children leaving school become more employable and better able to compete in the marketplace. (see Appendix III)

- **Music:** Music has an important place in the mental/emotional development of children. Appropriate music has been shown to decrease release of stress hormones (especially cortisol)[17], to increase spatial reasoning (commonly referred to as the 'Mozart Effect')[18], to promote connections between emotions, thinking and learning[19], to encourage the brain to produce alpha and delta waves (associated with relaxation and deep relaxation respectively)[20], to mention just a few mental and physiological effects. Inappropriate music can also stimulate negative effects.

  In essence, all music that promote relaxation change brainwave patterns from beta to alpha or delta. This is the principle used in commercial and NHS relaxation tapes, 'world music' and 'piped' background music [21, 22]. The components of music (tempo, volume, timbre, etc) can be manipulated to control the state of mind and subconscious physical processes.

  Music can also support personal development and many of the objectives in this document (refer to section 5.4). One example of this approach is drumming workshops, where different participants are thought very simple rhythm patterns that, when played together, give rise to very complex rhythms. This shows how each individual's small contribution has an important role in the collective achievement. This type of workshop is extensively used by corporations as part of their team building strategies. Other team-building strategies can be adapted to be used with children.

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[16] *'Empowering children to thrive in adversity', The Therapist - Vol 4, No 2, 34-37*

[17] *Effects of music treatment on salivary cortisol in patients exposed to pre-surgical stress.* Exper. and Clin. Endocrinol*., 102, 118-120* and *VanderArk, S.D. and Ely, D. (1992). Biochemical and galvanic skin responses to music stimuli by college students in biology and music.* Percept. Motor Skills *74, 1079-1090.*

[18] *Rideout, B.E., & Laubach, C., (1996) EEG correlates of enhanced spatial performance following exposure to music, Perceptual and Motor Skills, 82, 427-432.*

[19] *Davies, NL (2000). Learning ... The Beat Goes On. Childhood Education, 148-153*

[20] *Thaut, M.H., & Davis, W.B. (1993). The influence of subject-selected versus experimenter-chosen music on affect, anxiety, and relaxation. Journal of Music Therapy. 30, 210-223*

[21] *Hallam S.; Price J. - Can the use of background music improve the behaviour and academic performance of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties? British Journal of Special Education, June 1998, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 88-91(4)*

[22] *Savan, A. (1999). The Effect of Background Music on Learning.* Psychology of Music*, 27(2), 138-146.*

- **Physical therapies:** Physical therapies (in the broader sense) were used in the primary school children project to help deliver some of its objectives. These included adapted versions of Tai Chi[23] and Yoga, Relaxation Therapy and hand/foot/face massage. Later developments have demonstrated the effectiveness of Dynamic Release in influencing mental/emotional changes (anxiety, panic attacks, general stress, etc). Dynamic Release is also a form of bio-feedback.

  Where trauma is present, short-term specialist evidence-based techniques can also be employed such as the 'rewind technique' (similar to the 'Silva Method') developed by the Human Givens Institute.

- **Aromatherapy:** Electric 'burners' containing appropriate blends of natural essential oils may be placed at various locations throughout the school, including classrooms. Essential oils have been shown to act as mood moderators [24].

3. Preventive measures

Extending this project to primary schools should have some effect in diminishing the likelihood that children will need to come to schools such as 'The Secondary School' because of behavioural problems or mental/emotional difficulties.

A 'stress management' service for primary school children has already been designed and successfully implemented in 1994. Structured sessions were devised in consultation with the participating children, who also decided on the appropriate disciplinary actions and chose each session's activities from a given selection discussed at meetings at the end of each session.

For further details, an abridged internal report can be found on Appendix IV. Tools developed after 1994 may also be added.

4. Evaluation

'The Secondary School' monitoring mechanism (Quantitative): 'The Secondary School' has well-developed tools to measure different aspects of pupils individual performance and behaviour similar to those used in Positive Behaviour Support (please refer to Appendix I)

As pupils assessments are kept on record, measurements of changes on the three indicators used by the school (behaviour, work & general conduct, arriving on time & staying in bounds) can be made before and after a set period of time after the project starts.

Cortisol salivary test (Quantitative)**:** Cortisol is one of the main hormones released in the presence of stress, anxiety and associated conditions and salivary cortisol concentrations are a convenient and non invasive biomarker of those conditions.

Cortisol levels should be measured before, after and, preferably, at regular intervals during the evaluation time – following the appropriate consultations and protocols.

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[23] *Maria Hernandez-Reif, Tiffany M. Field and Eric Thimas. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Benefits from Tai Chi; Touch Research Institute - University of Miami School of* Medicine: Thirteen adolescents with ADHD participated in Tai Chi classes twice a week for 5 weeks. Teachers rated the adolescents' behaviours on the Conners Scale during the baseline period, after the 5 week Tai Chi period and two weeks later. After the 10 Tai Chi sessions the adolescents displayed less anxiety, daydreaming behaviours, inappropriate emotions and hyperactivity and improved conduct. These changes persisted over the two-week follow up (no Tai Chi) period.

[24] *Woolfson, A & Hewitt, D (1992) Intensive Aromacare, International Journal of Aromatherapy 4(2) pp.12-13*

School psychologist (Qualitative): It would be desirable to involve the school's psychologist in the project. He has probably developed a rapport with the children in his case load and knows their history. Psychological evaluation would also become quantitative should the psychologist decide to employ suitable standard measuring tools.

Parents/carers observations (Qualitative): Behavioural assessments made by interviewing parents and/or carers could also be used as an evaluation tool. This may be realized through a simple evaluation questionnaire containing indicators relevant to the project's objectives and desirable outcomes.

5. Recommendations and suggestions

The following recommendations and suggestions are based on interviews with the staff, research evidence and my own experience working in the school and other projects. Implementation practicalities have not been taken into consideration as some are dependent on funding and other variants which can be discussed at a later stage.

5.1 Support for parents

It is important to give specialist support to parents in order to implement a cohesive strategy to achieve the objectives of this project. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) concluded that parental involvement in the form of 'at home good parenting' has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment [25]. Yet, with the exception of the 'Cottage', parental involvement in the school seems to be poor and a likely contributor to pupils' behavioural and academic shortfalls.

This does not necessarily reflect parents' lack of interest in their children's personal and academic development but may also be due to other facts such as lack of parenting skills and personal development. Where there is real disinterest, disengagement and a misconception about the role of schools by the part of parents, the Antisocial Behaviour etc. (Scotland) Act 2004 introduced new powers for Education Authorities to apply for a parenting order to help address children's behaviour in school.

The participation of parents can also have further beneficial effects e.g. increasing their child's self-esteem as reported in the research findings published as *'Improving Children's Behaviour and Attendance through the Use of Parenting Programmes: An Examination of Good Practice'* by Professor Susan Hallam, Lynne Rogers and Jacquelene Shaw - Institute of Education, University of London [26]

In order to maximise effectiveness, this children support programme should provide mental/emotional and physical support for parents (and teachers) through evidence-based therapies, seminars and workshops, including personal development [27] and parenting skills classes. It is important that those activities are practical and immediately applicable to real life situations.

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[25] *Desforges, C. & Abouchaar, A. (2003). The impact of parental involvement, parental support and family education on pupil achievement and adjustment: a literature review. London: DfES*

[26] *"The children's self esteem is raised by seeing their mother on a course and receiving a certificate. One boy described how it was much more fun at home and how they talked a lot more".*

[27] *Frequent rows between parents, which are aggressive and poorly resolved, have an adverse emotional impact on children. When researchers at the University of Cambridge Centre for Family Research questioned children aged 9 to 11 about parents' arguments, they found that children whose parents' arguments were aggressive tended to be less popular at school, to have lower feelings of self worth and to react negatively to emotional situations they encountered in their daily lives. Boys were particularly likely to be aggressive and were more easily provoked to anger by their peers. The researchers reported their findings at a British Psychological Society conference in Bristol.*

The rationale for this approach is the fact that personal well-being is often perceived as dependent on external influences e.g. family and social environments, employment, affluence, and so on.

Personal identity and aspirations are often associated with external forces which are generally perceived as unchangeable and are directly related to levels of self-esteem, confidence, perceived personal power and levels of aspiration.[28]

With regards to children's academic performance, there is general agreement amongst researchers that students who are underachieving at school are also likely to have low self-esteem.[29]

We take the view that behaviour and reactions to internal or external events (which generally cannot be changed) are direct consequences (i.e. symptoms) of perception and how the individual relates to those events (which can generally be changed).

Delivery of adults support (parents and teachers):

Many of the proposed tools used for adult support are the same as the ones proposed for the children except when they are specific to adult's needs. They are as follows:

- Bio-feedback
- Family mediation
- Personal management: one-to-one individual solution-centred sessions and groups (see 'seminars')
- Physical therapies: one-to-one bodywork and group sessions (e.g. pilates, yoga, Tai-Chi, Dynamic Release, deep relaxation, etc)
- Professional support for teachers: Specific courses and seminars for educators presenting the latest findings in education and practical evidence-based techniques to be employed in school setting.
- Seminars/workshops: A series of in-house and external seminars, lectures and workshops dealing with a variety of relevant subjects including parenting skills, life skills and bodywork courses.

5.2 School currency

Although 'The Secondary School's points system works extremely well, there are a few suggestions which may enhance its effectiveness even further.

One of the draw backs of having six coloured dots to monitor, reward or penalise pupils' actions in the school is that children's single negative behaviour episodes have to be tolerated to a certain extent before they lose points.

Furthermore, the concept of points (numbers) is abstract, and even though the children understand and use the system, this abstraction makes the points mechanism less effective during intense behavioural crisis episodes.

The creation of a school currency (e.g. coins) would address the two issues above.

For the sake of illustration, each of the existing six dots could be worth 10 school pennies. At the end of each day children would be given whatever they earned in 'school cash'. In this way, currency can be used as any other currency (to 'buy' goods or exchanged, for instance),

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[28] *Self-esteem is critical to learning. … There seem to be strong links between emotional development, self-esteem and school behaviour. [Usha McNab* "The Individual and the Whole Class*"]*
[29] *The self-concept in theory, measurement , development and behaviour Burns R B (1979) and 1982*

making it possible for the school to run 'special promotions', etc. Children may earn more through extra work of any kind and bank or withdraw it at any time. This would feel more like 'real' money and would more closely mirror life outside the school.

Fine rates may be lowered if a pupil agrees to rectify a transgression e.g. clean up after defacing a wall or any other rectifiable situation.

The fine system should be used consistently throughout the school. Employing this system would mean that staff could be firmer when dealing with behavioural issues. Children can then be fined per contravention every time it happens (e.g. swearing). Different types of contravention should attract different rates of fine according to seriousness of the transgressions.

Should this suggestion be implemented, all pupils should be explicitly informed and a table of infringements and their fines be clearly posted at the school.

5.3 Residential

Outside academic hours, school children could benefit from spending more time in an environment which could re-enforce appropriate behaviour and positive social experiences. It seems that this is not the case in the home environment for most children at 'The Secondary School'.

Without taking into account any practical reasons not to do it, re-converting the school into a residential institution seems to be highly desirable if we listen the unanimous opinion of the school's staff in its favour (3.1, first bullet).

This action, coupled with other suggestions in this document, could have a dramatic effect on behaviour, academic performance and general well-being. It would take children away from environments which exert a negative impact on their lives and enable them to participate in a healthier 'micro-society'.

5.4 Music education classes

Music Education is the only subject in the school which is not mandatory. This gives the school another tool to provide orientation for the children. In order for this to happen, there are a few steps that can be taken.

a. It should be made clear to all pupils wishing to participate in musical education classes that they will be expected to engage in a musical activity (goal orientation)

b. Pupils should decide what they want to do during music education classes in advance if possible, and should not disturb each other activities. Changes in initial activities are possible upon discussion with tutor (negotiating skills, boundaries)

c. The tutor should have the discretion to ultimately exclude any pupils exhibiting extreme disruptive behaviour for a week or more in addition to using the points or fines system (consequences of action)

d. More emphasis should be given to computer music activities keeping in line with current children's interests and software interactivity. Digital music manipulation can support extra-musical subjects (e.g. physics, English)

e. Specifically to 'The Secondary School', the use of the 'decks':

e.1 Mixing decks are usually employed in dance events. The music played at events which most children at the school are familiar with is supposed to be loud. The small size of the music rooms cannot accommodate the loudest volume of the smallest amplifier. The volume generated far exceeds safety levels and will adversely affect the hearing of both pupils and tutor;

e.2 Most children claim that they are the 'wrong' type of 'decks';

e.3 Loud, fast music increases children's excitability and beta brainwaves;

e.4 Children tend to use 'the decks' to play CDs (as a musical activity). This can be done using a CD player

e.5 Children should be repeatedly reminded to bring their own CDs, should they wish to listen to music they like; (responsibility)

e.6 There is an argument in favour of the use of the 'decks'. They are useful for learning DJ technical skills. If a pupil wishes to learn those skills, an explicit request should be made and structured classes agreed. The decks are also useful tools for pupils to learn some components of music (such as rhythm, beats and tempo) and can be used in formal music classes.

e.7 Should the 'decks' remain, a limiter or similar device should be fitted to the amplifier so as to limit the volume to safe levels. Similar action should be taken with regards to headphones;

6. Implementation

In order to maximise positive outcomes, more passive interventions should be employed initially. These would include background music, aromatherapy, nutritional intervention. Nutritional intervention is both passive (diet) and active (supplementation). Progress should be expected shortly after the start of this phase.

It is expected that not all pupils (or parents) will agree to engage in the active interventions. They can constitute a control group for evaluation purposes in a cohort study.

8. Summary

It may be possible to alter 'The Secondary School' and other secondary school children's negative behaviour patterns and enhance academic performance through evidence-based integrated strategies which include support for parents and teachers. 'The Secondary School' itself has the potential to become an integrated resource centre for children, supporting all aspects of children's development, including those at primary school level, throughout the region.

Addendum

After this report was submitted to the relevant educational authorities, I stayed another three months while a permanent music teacher was found and to implement some of the strategies outlined in this document.

Only employing bodywork and 'talking' about the body/mind connections, I engaged six pupils who, by the end of that period, had achieved remarkable academic and behavioural changes. Some of them were trying to help their friends using what they learned.

For enquiries please click HERE

APPENDIX I

Positive Behavioural Supports (PBS)

Information for Educators

By Andrea M. Cohn

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviours and replace them with prosocial skills. Use of PBS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change.

PBS can target an individual student or an entire school, as it does not focus exclusively on the student, but also includes changing environmental variables such as the physical setting, task demands, curriculum, instructional pace and individualized reinforcement. Thus it is successful with a wide range of students, in a wide range of contexts, with a wide range of behaviours.

Blending behavioural science, empirically validated procedures, durable systems change and an emphasis on socially important outcomes, PBS always involves data-based decision making using functional behavioural assessment and ongoing monitoring of intervention impact.

According to IDEA '97, PBS is the recommended form of intervention for dealing with challenging behaviour in children with disabilities. In Fiscal Year 1999, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs in collaboration with Safe and Drug Free Schools supported a Centre for Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports with a grant of almost $600,000. Information from this centre is available at *http://www.pbis.org/*. Additionally, the U.S. government continues to support a project at the University of Kansas (Beach Centre on Families and Disability) to promote programs related to the personnel needs of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities; this program supports the use of PBS to help children with disabilities who demonstrate challenging behaviour.

Why Do We Need PBS?

- Problem behaviour is the single most common reason why students are removed from regular classrooms. Even though students with extreme problem behaviour represent only 20% of school enrolment, they can account for more than 50% of behavioural incidents.
- Harsh punishment and zero tolerance policies have not been effective at either improving behavioural climate in schools, or preventing students with problem behaviours from entering the juvenile justice system.
- Three years after being excluded from school, almost 70% of these youth have been arrested.

Failure to implement IDEA, due to a lack of incentives or negative attitudes toward children with challenging behaviours by administrators, policy makers and school personnel, is unacceptable. Students should *not* be excluded from school based solely upon inappropriate social behaviour. Appropriate services can readily address and modify many of these behaviours, leading to more positive outcomes than simple punishment.

How is PBS Implemented in School Settings?

PBS is based on *behavioural theory*; problem behaviour continues to occur because it is consistently followed by the child getting something positive or escaping something negative. By focusing on the *contexts* and *outcomes* of the behaviour, it is possible to determine the *functions* of the behaviour, make the problem behaviour less effective and efficient, and make the *desired behaviour* more functional. This often involves changing systems, altering environments and teaching new skills, as well as focusing on the problem behaviour.

The most crucial part of devising PBS plans is the *Functional Behavioural Assessment* (FBA), which reveals information about the antecedents, consequences, and frequency of challenging behaviour. FBAs also help to identify any co-occurring variables. Conducting FBAs doubles the success rate of an intervention.

PBS plans are *individualized* and *data-based* and include procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reassessing the process. PBS should be a *collaborative* effort among parents, school psychologists, teachers, counsellors and administrators; all partners should be committed to the plan and its implementation. PBS is more effective when it includes the target individual as well as other significant individuals (i.e., peers, teachers, and parents).

High *fidelity* of implementation is required to maximize outcomes; therefore, interventions should be applied by educators in the school environment. School psychologists are ideally qualified to conduct FBAs, implement PBS plans and train other educators and parents in behavioural intervention techniques.

What Are the Benefits of PBS?

All students, both disabled and non-disabled, can benefit from PBS:

- Research conducted over the past 15 years has shown that PBS is effective in promoting positive behaviour in students and schools. Use of PBS as a strategy to maintain appropriate social behaviour will make schools safer. Safer schools are more effective learning environments.
- Schools that implement system-wide interventions also report increased time engaged in academic activities and improved academic performance.
- Schools that employ system-wide interventions for problem behaviour prevention indicate reductions in office discipline referrals of 20-60%.
- Appropriately implemented PBS can lead to dramatic improvements that have long-term effects on the lifestyle, functional communication skills, and problem behaviour in individuals with disabilities.
- A review of research on PBS effectiveness showed that there was over a 90% reduction in problem behaviour in over half of the studies; the problem behaviour stopped completely in over 26% of the studies.

How Can We Improve Implementation of PBS?

Although it is commendable that many states require functional behaviour assessments before the development of significant behavioural interventions, they often occur reactively, or after the behaviour has become a significant problem (i.e., after a student's behaviour results in multiple suspensions or a drug/weapons infraction). After a crisis occurs, the focus is on punishment and exclusion.

Additionally, school-based interventions commonly consist of unproven strategies and are implemented by staff who lack the training to deal with the problems effectively. When coordination is lacking among schools and other agencies, the primary responsibility for behaviour is placed on families, who receive little support.

Effective implementation of PBS includes:

- An *FBA*, conducted when the problem behaviour is first observed or as a *proactive* activity
- Focus both on *prevention* of problem behaviours and *early access* to effective behaviour support.
- *Culturally competent, family-friendly* behaviour support
- Implementation with *sufficient intensity and precision* to produce behavioural gains that have a significant and durable impact on the academic, social and living options available to the student.

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FAIR AND EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE FOR ALL STUDENTS: BEST PRACTICE

STRATEGIES FOR EDUCATORS

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Disciplining students, particularly those with chronic or serious behaviour problems, is a long-standing challenge for educators. They must balance the needs of the school community and those of the individual student. At the heart of this challenge is the use of punitive versus supportive disciplinary practices. Though increasingly common in recent years, reliance on punitive approaches to discipline, such as 'zero tolerance' policies, has proven largely ineffective, even counterproductive. This holds true both for general education students and those with disabilities. Current research and legislation offer alternative 'best practice' strategies that support the safe education of *all* students. Such effective discipline practices ensure the safety and dignity of students and staff, preserve the integrity of the learning environment, and address the causes of a student's misbehaviour in order to improve positive behavioural skills and long-term outcomes.

Punish-Based Discipline Does Not Improve School Safety, Learning or Behaviour

In recent years many schools have adopted a zero tolerance approach to school discipline that usually entails the expulsion or suspension of students as an automatic consequence of serious acts of misconduct, particularly the possession of weapons or drugs. Unfortunately, an increasing number of schools apply a zero tolerance approach to behaviours that do not necessarily threaten the safety or welfare of others. Furthermore, harsh consequences are invoked automatically, irrespective of the severity of the misbehaviour or the circumstance involved, and without consideration of the negative impact of these consequences on the welfare of the offending student or on the overall climate of the school.

Research repeatedly has demonstrated that suspension, expulsion, and other punitive consequences are not the solution to dangerous and disruptive student behaviours. In fact evidence, indicates that dangerous students do not become less dangerous to others when they are excluded from appropriate school settings; quite often they become more so. Youth who are not in school and not in the labour force are at exceedingly high risk of delinquency and crime. Each year's class of dropouts drains the nation of more than $200 billion in lost earnings and taxes every year. Billions more are spent on welfare, health care and other social services.

Zero tolerance policies as usually implemented:

- Do not increase school safety.
- Rely too heavily on suspension and expulsion, practices that neither improve school climate nor address the source of student alienation.
- Are related to a number of negative consequences, including increased rates of school drop out and discriminatory application of school discipline.

- Negatively impact minority students and students with disabilities to a greater degree than other students—studies have shown that these students constitute a disproportionately large percentage of expulsions and suspensions.
- Restrict access to appropriate education, often exacerbating the problems of students with disabilities and achievement difficulties, and thereby increasing the probability that these students will not complete high school.

Positive Discipline Strategies Improve Safety and Outcomes for All Students

Positive discipline strategies are research-based procedures that focus on increasing desirable behaviours instead of simply decreasing undesirable behaviours through punishment. They emphasize the importance of making positive changes in the child's environment in order to improve the child's behaviour. Such changes may entail the use of positive reinforcement, modelling, supportive teacher-student relations, family support and assistance from a variety of educational and mental health specialists.

Research has proven that ***positive discipline strategies benefit all students*** because:

- Opportunities to forge relationships with caring adults, coupled with engaging curriculum, prevent discipline problems.
- Discipline that is fair, corrective and includes therapeutic group relationship-building activities with students reduces the likelihood of further problems.
- Strategies that effectively maintain appropriate social behaviour make schools safer. Safer schools are more effective learning environments.
- Positive solutions address student needs, environmental conditions, teacher interactions and matching students with curriculum.
- Reducing student alienation through 'schools-within-a-school' and other peer relationship can dramatically reduce acting out in schools, especially in large settings
- When students are given an appropriate education in a conducive environment, they improve behaviour and performance
- Appropriately implemented, proactive behaviour support systems can lead to dramatic improvements that have long-term effects on the lifestyle, functional communication skills and problem behaviour in individuals with disabilities or at risk for negative adult outcomes.

APPENDIX III

Life Skills for Employability

DEFINITIONS

What are 'life skills'?
Life skills include a wide range of knowledge and skill interactions believed to be essential for adult independent living (Brolin, 1989). They are the skills that *enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.*

They can be *behavioural* (e.g. communicating effectively with peers and adults) or *cognitive* (e.g. making effective decisions); *interpersonal* (e.g. being assertive) or *intrapersonal* (e.g. setting goals).

What is 'Employability'?
Employability is the combination of *factors and processes* that enable people to *progress towards or get into employment* (i.e. being 'job-ready'), to *stay in employment* and to *move on in the workplace*.

"Employability entails achieving a match between the abilities, attitudes and capabilities of an individual; the needs, expectations and attitudes of employers and the demands of current local labour market conditions". [Effective Interventions Unit – Scottish Executive]

Described in this way, skills that can be said to be 'life skills' are innumerable, and the nature and definition of life skills are likely to differ across cultures and settings. 'Life Skills for Employability' focus on issues concerning the workplace

'Life Skills for Employability' consists of three parts: Job-readiness, sustainability (applied when in employment) and career development. A separate course - Life Skills for Employers - is also available for supervisors, managers, and those responsible for employees' performance. 'Life Skills for Employers' ensures synchronous application of skills in the workplace.

PART 1
Becoming Job-ready

Pre-employment preparation to ensure that participants are familiar with general workplace expectations. This is an intensive, short-term component lasting 10-weeks, consisting of 25 days formal classroom training in a structured setting designed to prepare the client for successfully seeking and maintaining employment and 25 days closely monitored job placement.

A training day is divided into 5 hours of classroom work including role-play and lunch as part of social skills module. Occasional employer input will be provided within and outside classroom settings. Participants will also have access to one-to-one sessions in areas where they have difficulties when appropriate.

Typical activities include interview skills, general workplace expectations, conflict resolution, developing goal setting skills, decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, improving self esteem and self awareness, communication, and the behaviours and attitudes necessary to compete successfully in the labour market.

Understanding the mind (basic level)
Mechanisms involved in feeling, perception and attitude
Mechanisms involved in acquired patterns
Mechanisms involved in body language
Applying mind mechanisms to achieve goals

Communication skills
Introduction: a brief overview of the subject
Effective listening skills
    Phone messages
    Receiving instructions
    Receiving criticism/feedback
Barriers to Communication
Effective Interpersonal Relations
    Cooperating with others
    Accepting supervision
    Working in a diverse environment
    Resolving conflict
    Self-awareness
        body language
        the impact attitude

Good Work Habits
Introduction: a brief overview of the subject
Rules and policies
Organization, neatness, lateness, absence
Following instructions, safety, mistakes, use of property
Problem solving
    Recognizing that a problem exists
    Determining possible causes of problem
    Identifying possible solutions
    Implementing solution and evaluating consequence
    Working to prevent problems
Adaptability
    Working independently or as a part of a team
    Carrying out multiple tasks or projects

    Being innovative and resourceful
    Identifying and suggesting alternative ways to achieve goals and get the job done
    Being open and responding constructively to change
Asking for help/support
Job Performance/Satisfaction
Assessment

Social skills
Introduction: a brief overview of the subject
Good Relationships: Supervisors, co-workers, and public
Openness, motivation, loyalty
Health Habits: Eating, rest, exercise, drugs

Choosing a job
Introduction: a brief overview of the subject
Identifying personal skills
Identifying trained skills
Integrating personal and trained skills
Identifying the type of job
Getting a job: Interview skills

Social skills
Introduction: a brief overview of the subject
Good Relationships: Supervisors, co-workers, and public
Openness, motivation, loyalty

Health Habits: Eating, rest, exercise, drugs
Choosing a job
Introduction: a brief overview of the subject
Identifying personal skills
Identifying trained skills
Integrating personal and trained skills
Identifying the type of job
Getting a job: Interview skills

PRIMARY SCHOOL

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT   WORKSHOPS

SUMMARY REPORT

Background
The Project was originally established in September 1994 with a group of twelve participating children selected by the school representing a spread of classes from P2 to P6.

Programme
The sessions are scheduled every Thursday to suit the school timetable and follow a format which has evolved since our initial sessions. Each session begins with a half-hour one-to-one counselling session with one of the boys who has occasional serious behavioural problems in school despite being very bright and producing good school work when he is not in crisis. This is followed by a one hour session with the whole group, two therapists and a classroom teacher.

All adults are active participants in the games and exercises. The activities are especially designed to help the children develop skills which they require in order to better function in their environments, be it school or home.

Parents are encouraged to join their children at particular workshops as well as being given the opportunity to avail themselves of the Stress Management facilities.

At the instigation of the classroom teacher who participates with the therapists, a Personal Development Group for teachers meets once a week with two therapists.

Project Objectives
This Project has four main inter-related objectives:

1. To plant 'seeds' of self-awareness, self-confidence, inter-personal relationship skills and personal responsibility which can grow with the children into adulthood, giving the participants the understanding that they can shape their own lives regardless of their backgrounds.

2. To develop focus. Whenever the reasons, lack of focus is possibly one of the most important factors affecting a child's progress in school. Through special games and activities which demand 'focus' in order to be played, children are given the opportunity to develop their intent and appropriate attitudes to given tasks.

3. To promote awareness of themselves and others. When children learn how to bring focus into themselves and develop self-respect, they can also develop healthy attitudes which enable them to deal with their predicaments in the reality of their lives. This leads to their being more open to, and more respectful of, other people's predicaments. This results in greater co-operation rather than increased competition - to negotiation rather than demand.

4. To provide opportunity for expression. Throughout the sessions, children are encouraged to appropriately express themselves and their needs. This is achieved in a variety of ways ranging from dramatic games, music, planning meetings and decision making discussions. Children also make collective decisions about 'disciplinary procedures' adopted by the group.

Impact

At this stage in the Project, qualitative reports from children, staff and parents are most encouraging.

The feedback from children within the sessions is highly favourable. Teachers are also reporting not only a marked progress in the classroom behaviour of participating children but are also reflecting the children's expressed enthusiasm to participate in the activities.

Some of the activities e.g. children practising massage at home, are having a direct impact on enhancing closer relationships within the family. A recent visit by children and parents to the Stress Management Clinic has resulted in appointments being made by parents.

Consolidation and Expansion

Once the children with whom we are presently working achieve an adequate degree of understanding of this process there are two options for future expansion of our activities: expand this group utilising the participating children as catalysts or establish two or three new groups retaining two or three of the current children as core members.

PQ/JMcC May '95