

NSW Department of Education

# Responding to student behaviour

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Behaviour Specialists

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# Acknowledgement of Country



We recognise the ongoing Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past and present as ongoing teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories.

We strive to ensure every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learner in NSW achieves their potential through education.



# Behaviour Specialist Team

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**Behaviour Specialist  
Officer**

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**Behaviour Specialist  
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# Australian Professional Teaching Standard 4

Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments



4.3.1  
Demonstrate  
knowledge  
of practical  
approaches  
to manage  
challenging  
behaviour.

# Learning intentions



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By the end of this session, participants will:

- Understand behaviour and its function
- Respond to and encourage expected behaviour
- Develop strategies to respond effectively to inappropriate student behaviour.

## Responding to student behaviour

# Understand behaviour and its function

1





# Understand behaviour

- It's functional
- Observable and predictable
- It's changeable
- Escalated through successive interactions
- It's learned

The consequences of the behaviour affect the future occurrence of that behaviour.



# Form and function

**Form:** The physical qualities of a behaviour – what it looks and / or sounds like. Is it *observable* and *measurable*?

**Function:** Behaviour communicates need. People engage in behaviour to “gain” something or “*avoid*” something.



# Are these behaviours observable and measurable?

Leaves  
desk and  
hits other  
students

Spaced out

Says she  
hears  
voices

Doesn't like  
classmates

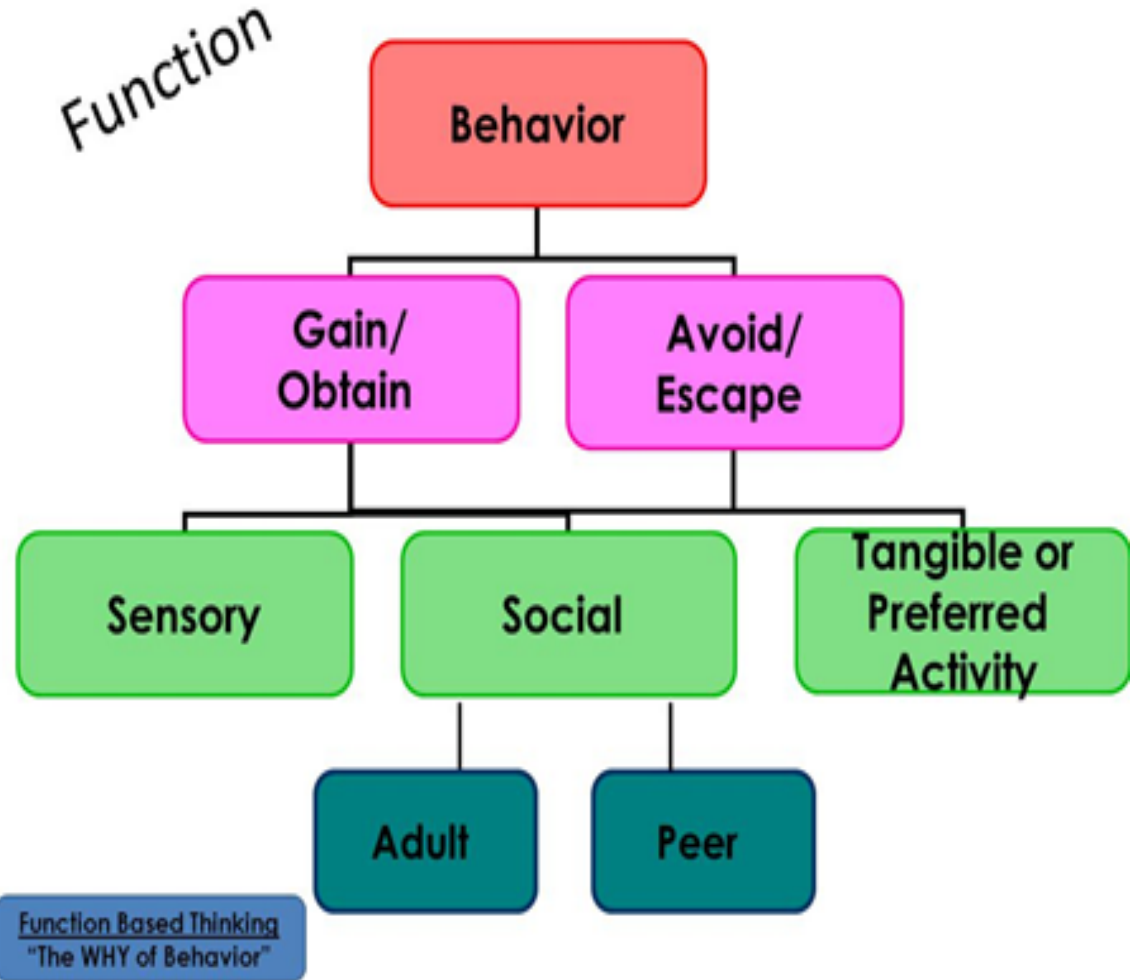
Has  
separation  
anxiety  
(from  
parent)

Reads 120  
wpm

Emotionally  
disturbed



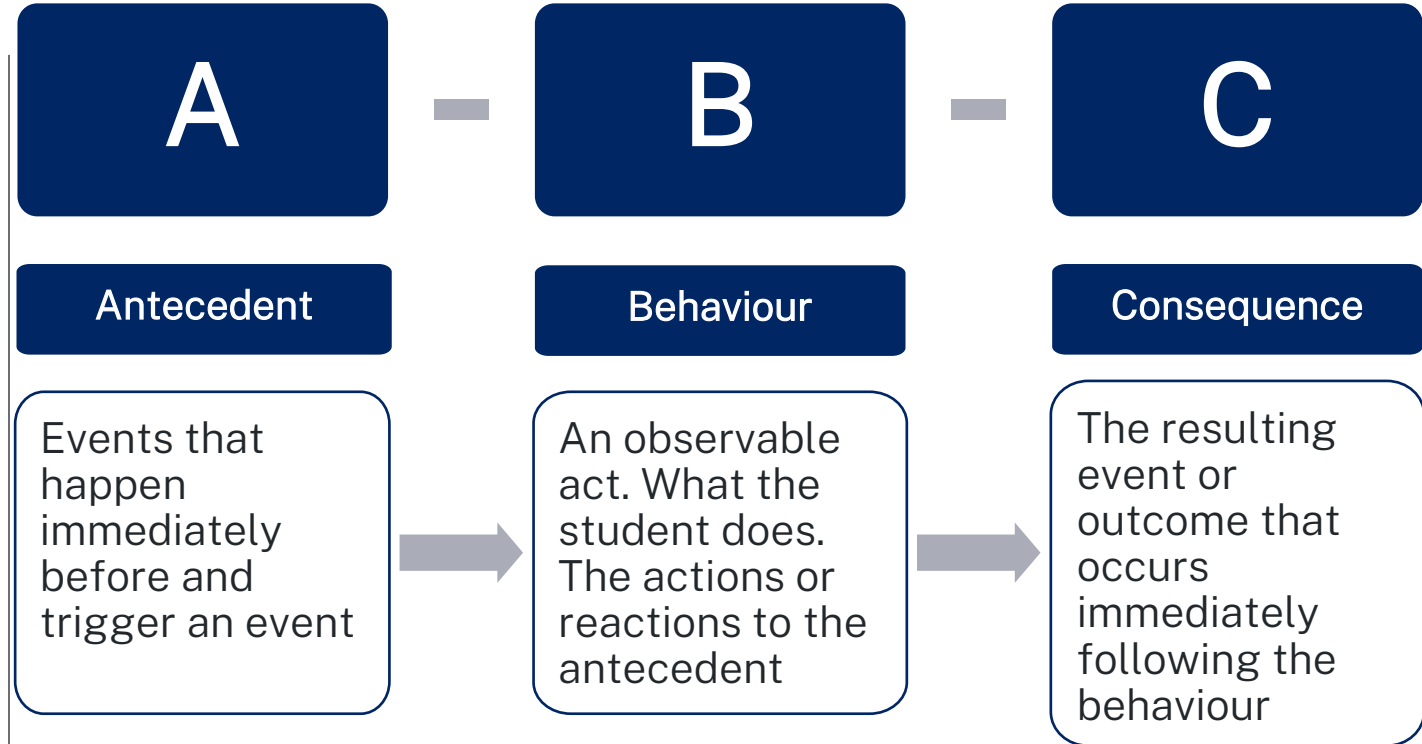
# Function of behaviour







# ABC continuum





# Teacher observation

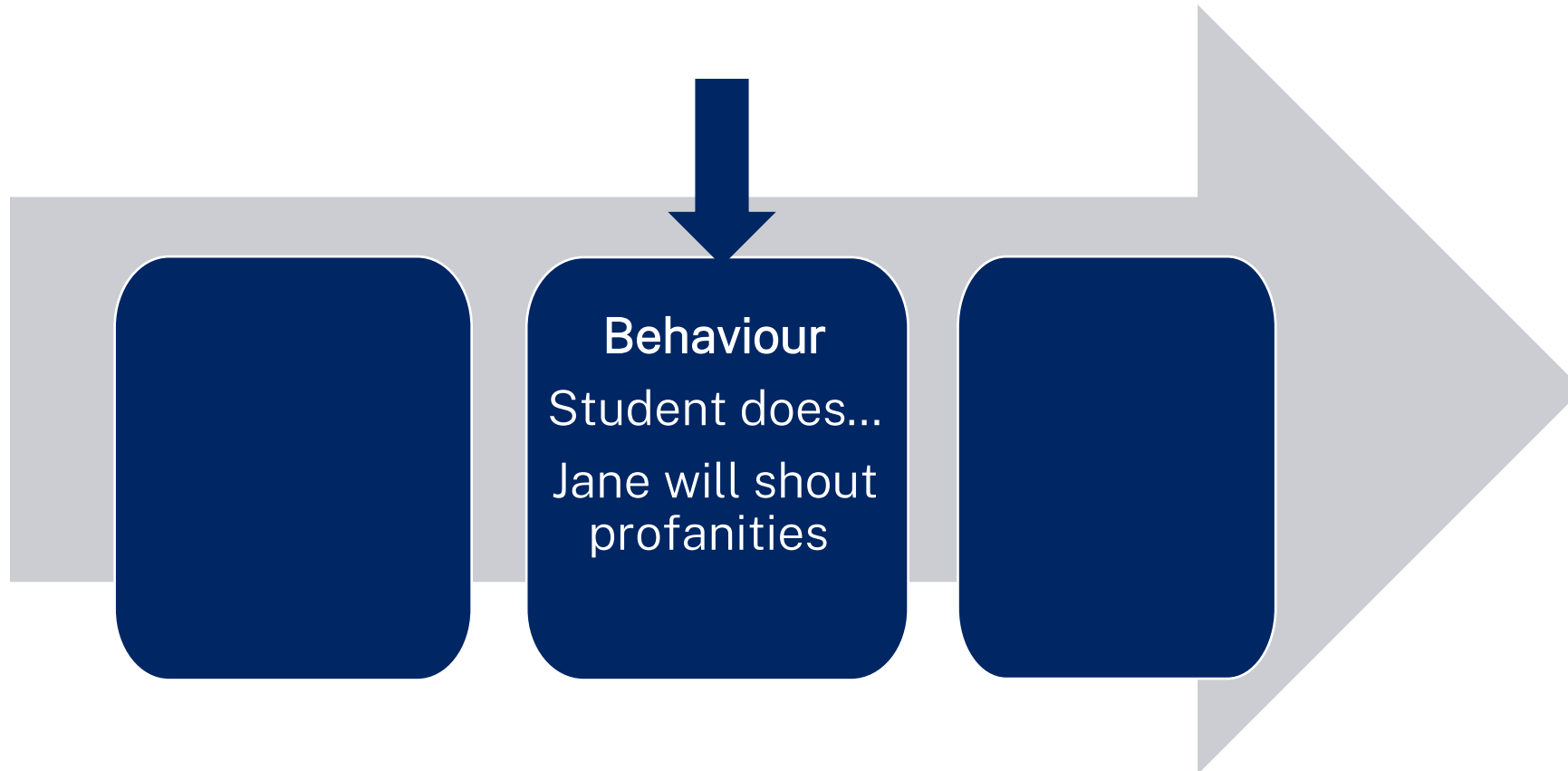
Jane, a Year 8 student, was referred to the student support team by her teacher for disruptive behaviour.

After interviewing the teacher and conducting several classroom observations of Jane, the team determined that during transitions (to and from lunch, recess, and dismissal) in the hallway, when staff are present, she shouts profanities.

After this adults spend time talking with Jane about her behaviour and the behaviour stops.

# Example Jane: Behaviour

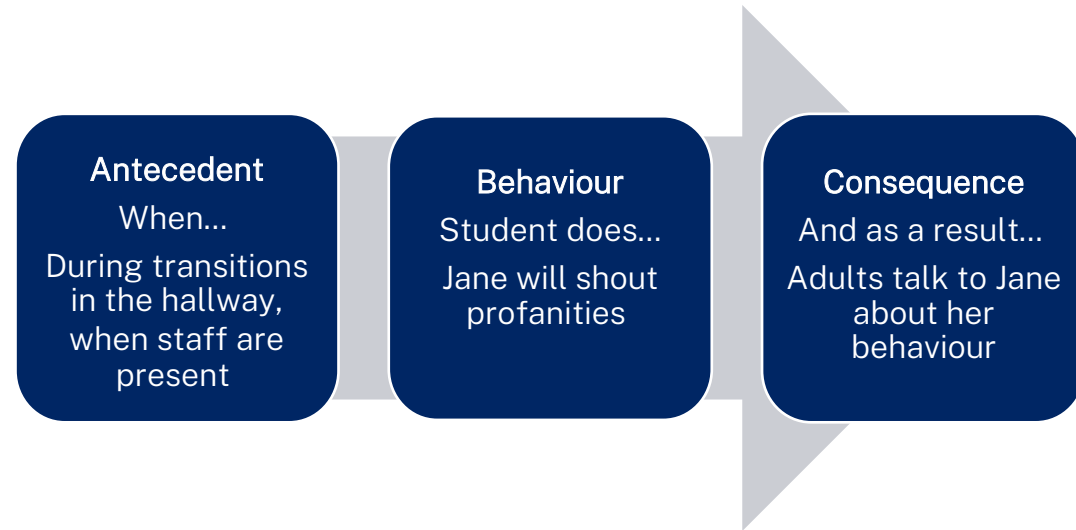
Always start by defining the behaviour





# Example Jane: function

GET/OBTAIN	AVOID/ESCAPE
Get social attention from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adult</li> <li>• peer</li> </ul>	Avoid social attention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adult</li> <li>• peer</li> </ul>
Gain tangible item: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objects</li> <li>• event</li> <li>• activity</li> </ul>	Avoid tangible item: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objects</li> <li>• event</li> <li>• activity</li> </ul>
Obtain sensory stimulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual</li> <li>• auditory</li> <li>• olfactory</li> <li>• kinaesthetic</li> </ul>	Escape sensory stimulation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• visual</li> <li>• auditory</li> <li>• olfactory</li> <li>• kinaesthetic</li> </ul>



Function =  
Gain (Adult Attention)

Responding to student behaviour

Responding to and  
encouraging expected  
behaviour

2



# Specific positive feedback

- ✓ Uses language from classroom expectations and rules
- ✓ Increases the likelihood that expected behaviours will be repeated
- ✓ Focuses teacher and student attention on expected behaviours
- ✓ Is essential to changing behaviour
- ✓ Supports a positive classroom environment





# Power of feedback

Antecedent	Behaviour	Consequence
<p>Setting events and/or triggers that happens before the behaviour. What happens <b>before</b> the behaviour?</p>	<p>Refers to observable and measureable behaviour. The action or reactions to the antecedent</p>	<p>What happens immediately <b>after</b> the behaviour or as a result of the behaviour?</p>
<p>Teacher asks questions in group discussion</p>	<p>Students raise hand and wait to be called on</p>	<p>Teacher reinforces students with positive feedback for raising hands and waiting turn to speak</p>





# Specific feedback

- Describe the observable behaviour using the language of your classroom expectations

*“Well done, Justin, you are being a learner. You opened your book and started working when I asked.”*

- Include a rationale of why the behaviour is important

*“Thank you for packing up your equipment quietly and quickly, now we are ready to go outside.”*



# Reinforcers

Should be:

- Paired with specific feedback
- Matched to student interests
- Include a “menu” of different types - social, activity based or tangible item
- Be decreased from frequent to intermittent and then to long term
- **Never** taken away once earned





# Examples of reinforcers

## Activities

- line leader
- game of choice
- music choice
- extra computer time
- tokens
- stationery
- canteen vouchers
- community rewards
- class party

## Social attention

- positive phone call home
- photo on notice board
- work with a friend
- lunch with preferred adult
- fast pass for lunch line
- homework pass

## Tangible items

- stickers



# Activity: True or false

1. Attention should be given after a desired behaviour takes place.
2. Specific positive feedback decreases the probability that students will display the expected behaviour again in the future.
3. “Well done, Bill, good job!” is an example of specific positive feedback.
4. Teachers should give more positive than negative feedback.
5. Reinforcers should be matched to the interests of students.

# Answers: True or false

1. Attention should be given after a desired behaviour takes place. **True**
2. Specific positive feedback decreases the probability that students will display the expected behaviour again in the future. **False**
3. “Well done, Bill, good job!” is an example of specific positive feedback. **False**
4. Teachers should give more positive than negative feedback. **True**
5. Reinforcers should be matched to the interests of students. **True**



## Responding to student behaviour

# Strategies to respond to inappropriate behaviour

# 3



# Low level behaviour

Low level disruptive and disengaged behaviours include:

- avoiding doing schoolwork
- disrupting the flow of the lesson
- disengaging from classroom activities
- talking out of turn
- being late for class
- using mobile phones inappropriately



# Prevention is key

Teachers should consider:

- Is my room planned and **organised**?
- Have I **explicitly taught** expectations, rules and routines?
- Do I consistently use **specific positive feedback** to encourage expected behaviours?
- Do I provide **pre-corrects** as a reminder before problem behaviour occurs?
- Do I **actively supervise** my class?



# Educative approach to behaviour

## Academic errors

Are accidental

Are inevitable

Signal the need for teaching

Students with learning difficulties need adjustments

## Behaviour / social errors

Are accidental

Are inevitable

Signal the need for teaching

Students with behaviour difficulties need adjustments



# Educative approach

- Identify error
- Re-teach expected behaviour in environment
- Model/demonstrate
- Provide guided practice and feedback
- Provide independent practice and monitor
- Provide specific feedback
- Correct and re-teach as needed

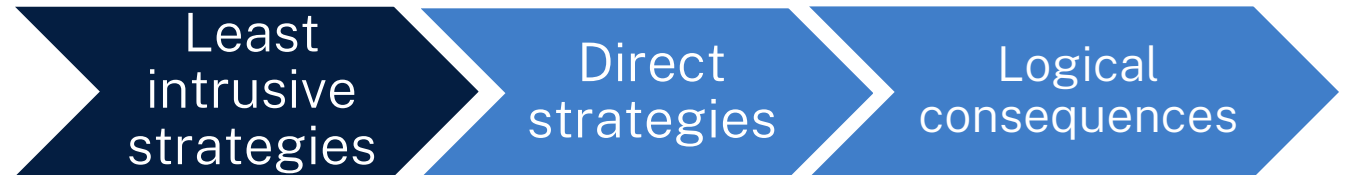


# How to respond to inappropriate behaviour

- Calm, immediate response
- Quiet and respectful interaction
- Specific and brief
- Provide wait time
- Refocus class if needed



# Continuum of response



- Proximity
- Signal or non-verbal cue
- Not attend / attend  
/specific feedback





# Continuum of response



- Redirect
- Reteach
- Provide choice
- Student meeting





# Continuum of response



- Instructional relevance
- Linked to the behaviour
- Usually applied as the less preferred option when providing choice



# Logical consequences versus punitive

Logical consequences	Punitive
Emphasises what a student should do	Emphasises what a student should not do
An ongoing process	A one-time occurrence
Sets an example to follow	Insists on obedience
Leads to self-control	Undermines independence
Helps students change	Is an adult release
Is positive	Is negative
Accepts students need to assert themselves	Makes students behave
Fosters students' ability to think	Thinks for student
Shapes behaviour	Condemns misbehaviour

# Examples

Billy runs down the hallway into class. The teacher immediately sends him out to the staffroom.

Illogical  
Consequence is not a logical outcome for the behaviour

Billy runs down the hallway into class. The teacher instructs him to re-enter the classroom safely.

Logical  
Opportunity is provided to learn/practise desired behaviour

Claire refuses to stop talking to her friend. The teacher re-teaches the expectation and gives her the choice to either remain on-task or move desks.

Logical  
Teacher provides choice. Both options help improve the learning environment and outcomes for the Claire

Jared consistently calls out in class. The teacher keeps him at recess time to pick up rubbish.

Illogical  
The consequence is not a logical outcome for the behaviour

Jared consistently calls out in class. The teacher pulls him aside to explain the classroom rules and expectations.

Logical  
The teacher provides Jared with the opportunity for a student meeting to re-teach the expectations and rules

# Scenario

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Sonia is sitting up the back, tapping her pen on the desk, talking and avoiding work

1. Tactical ignoring

2. Non-verbal cue

3. Proximal feedback

4. Take up time

5. Private word

6. Redirect Private

7. Choice

8. Follow through /follow through



# Suggested responses

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- "Sonia, do you need help?"
- "Sonia, time to get working thanks".
- "Get to work now thanks Sonia".
- "Sonia, I can see you're struggling, what do you need? What can I help you with to get started"?
- "Sonia, make a smart choice to start your work now or you will need to complete it at home"...follow up.



# Chronic, persistent or complex behaviour

- Seek advice and help from a mentor
- Consult year advisor or assistant principal/head teacher
- Refer student to learning and support team
- Refer to an executive
- Refer to 'Team Around a School'- Assistant Principal Learning and Support, Behaviour Specialist

## Responding to student behaviour

# Where to next?

# 4



# Other professional learning and reading

[Positive Behaviour Support - Reinforcement.pdf](#)

[Positive Behaviour Support - Consistent and Fair Consequences.pdf](#)

[Positive Behaviour Support - Explicit Teaching of Social Skills.pdf](#)



[Classroom Management Fundamentals eLearning](#)  
[Functional Behaviour Assessment \(FBA\) eLearning](#)  
[\(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

