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Policy

VISION STATEMENT

We strive to create a school that truly equips young people for their engagement with the world and the challenges of this century, by fostering an attitude of learning with purpose and joy.

VALUES

Our core values include Truth, Courage, Moral and Ethical Responsibility and Growth.

1. Rationale

Sophia Mundi Steiner School's positive behaviour procedures outline clear expectations for behaviour within the school. These expectations are designed to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment, which encourages positive engagement between students and their teachers. We understand that any student may face challenges from time to time. Our strategy includes mechanisms to provide support and resources that are age appropriate for students who may need assistance in maintaining positive behaviour.

Sophia Mundi explicitly prohibits corporal punishment.

The following principles apply to all community members of Sophia Mundi Steiner School:

- All students have the right to a safe learning environment that is free from intimidation, distraction and disruption.
- The welfare of students and teachers is assisted by positive learning practices and strategies that build confidence, appreciation and self-esteem.
- Positive learning strategies encourage and sustain student engagement.
- All decisions relating to the management of student behaviour are made according to the principles of procedural fairness.
- Students and teachers acknowledge their duty to take reasonable care for the safety of all community members.

2. Scope

Positive behaviours are most effectively supported through relationship-based whole-school and classroom practices. However, it is recognised that some individuals and groups of students require additional support in the development of pro-social, positive behaviours. For most of these children and young people, the development of pro-social behaviour is achieved in stages and requires reinforcement and acknowledgement to support each step towards positive improvement.

To achieve this, SMSS has developed a comprehensive Positive Behaviour policy infused with principles from the Positive Behaviour Interventions and Support model (PBIS). The PBIS is a structure for supporting positive behavioural outcomes across the schooling environment.

The PBIS World Book, <http://www.PBISWorld.com>.

In the primary school this strategy supports a developmentally appropriate and progressive approach to improve behavioural and academic outcomes. In practice, this generally appears as 3 tiers of increasingly intensive and individualised behaviour interventions and supports.

Procedures

3. Preventative Strategies

Preventative strategies include anything a teacher implements to prevent behaviours of concern. Instead of waiting for problem behaviours to occur, proactive techniques implemented successfully decrease the likelihood of problem behaviours and promote positive behavioural choices in the classroom.

Teachers at Sophia Mundi consider, explore and implement positive and non-punitive interventions to support student behaviour before considering disciplinary measures such as withdrawal of privileges or withdrawal from class. Preventative strategies work by identifying the underlying causes of dysregulated behaviours – and work across the whole class to moderate these behaviours.

Teaching and implementing preventative behavioural strategies may include:

- demonstrate school-wide pro-social expectations.
- age-appropriate school-wide classroom practices
- provide feedback and evaluation for individual students.
- empower students by creating multiple opportunities for them to take responsibility and be involved in their own learning.
- Support the student's experience of feeling recognised, belonging and being valued by others.
- Reinforce the understanding that mistakes are ok and a necessary part of learning.
- PBIS strategies - link <http://www.PBISWorld.com>

3.1 Types of challenging behaviour

Examples of challenging behaviour include:

- **Withdrawn behaviours** such as shyness, rocking, staring, anxiety, school phobia, truancy, social isolation or hand flapping.
- **Disruptive behaviours** such as being out-of-seat, calling out in class, tantrums, swearing, screaming or refusing to follow instructions.
- **Aggressive, Violent and/or unsafe behaviours** such as head banging, kicking, biting, punching, fighting, running away, smashing equipment or furniture/fixtures.
- **Inappropriate social behaviours** such as inappropriate conversations, stealing, being over-affectionate, inappropriate touching.

3.2 Classroom rules

Basic Classroom rules for shared learning:

1. Listen and follow directions.
2. Raise your hand before speaking or leaving your seat.

3. Respect your classmates and your teacher.
4. Keep your hands feet and other objects to yourself.
5. Be punctual for lessons
6. Speak respectfully – no profanity or belittling language.
7. Be friendly and supportive of other children.

Limit the number of rules/expectation statements

1. *Involve the students in the process*
2. *Ensure all statements use positive language*
3. *Ensure the statements are specific*
4. *Create a poster and post them so they can be easily seen in the room*
5. *Explicitly teach and reteach the expectations to the students*
6. *Identify how teachers can reinforce when expectations are met and how they can correct behaviours when they are unmet.*

3.3 Classroom teacher strategies

Before moving to a disciplinary response, teachers should consider whether more effective and appropriate strategies can be put in place for the student, such as wellbeing, engagement and mental health supports.

Consequences for behaviour should always be proportionate to the nature of the behaviour and are most effective when they identify and address the causes and triggers of the behaviour.

Expected behaviors are taught systematically and explicitly through developing a safe environment; using positive reinforcement, creating predictable structures and routines; practicing skills in functioning situations; providing choice and celebrating achievement (PBIS).

The classroom teacher may utilize the following strategies:

- Be well-prepared yet understanding of student needs.
- Develop an understanding of the challenges of our time.
- Use the temperaments as a tool for understanding individual needs.
- Help students engage with classroom rules through role play, social stories or similar activities (*Note: Neurodiverse children do not understand metaphors)
- Be a role model for the behaviour you would like to see in your students.
- Use imaginative stories* to give a picture for solving social problems.
- Encourage responsibility.
- Foster an appreciation for truth.

For additional strategies refer to PBIS statements: **The PBIS World Book**, <http://www.PBISWorld.com>.

3.4 Reporting Inappropriate behaviour on Compass

Compass chronicles are used by Sophia Mundi staff to record a range of student behaviours and responses.

Guide to writing a Compass Chronicle – Behaviour

Compass reports go under one of the following categories:

- General Attitude/Behaviour/ Academic observation or concern/ Attendance
- Flag entry as Green, Amber or Red as a rating priority.
- Green: positive behaviour, Amber: minor behaviour, Red: major behaviour incident

Log into Compass > Quick Actions menu > Chronicle entry

- Staff visibility - Level 1
- Parent student visibility – Hidden
- Provide a brief overview – see guide below.
- Fill in the details and location.

Guide to Chronicle details:

- Describe the behaviour objectively, using facts, without personal interpretations or prejudice.
- Where did the behaviour happen?
- Are there any settings or events that might relate to the behaviour? These may include:
 - recent changes in medication, change in living arrangements etc.
 - other conditions, events or factors connected with when the behaviour happens?
Consider specific place, time, activity, person.

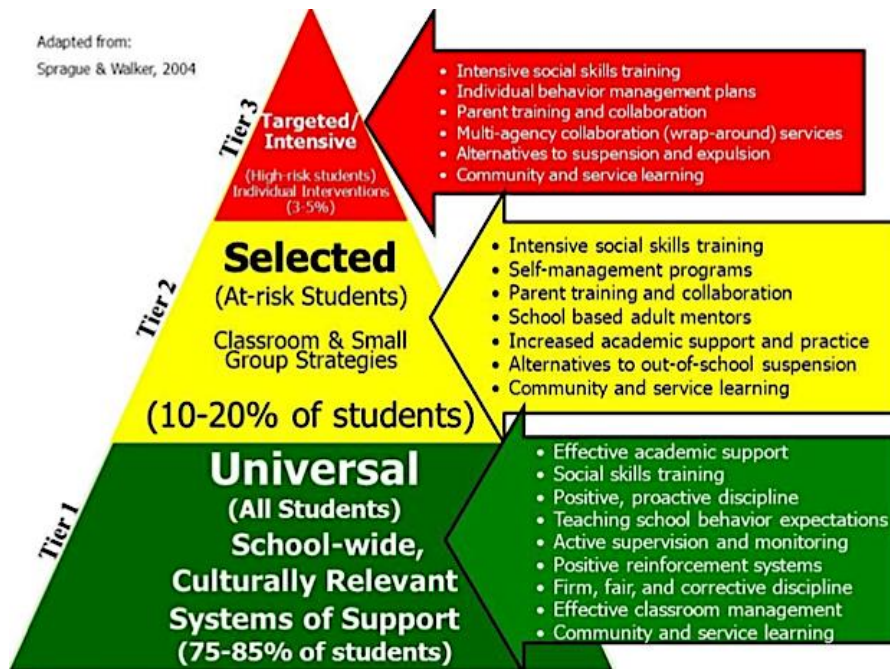
3.5 Tiers of behaviour Intervention

The Tiers of intervention aim to support and maintain pro social behaviour in the classroom.

There are three tiers (a summary infographic is below).

- The first tier addresses whole class behaviour to encourage positive behaviours. Strategies are preventative and provide a baseline of clear classroom rules and behaviour expectations.
- The second tier of intervention involves a smaller group of students requiring intervention within the classroom. It is activated when the goals of the first tier have not been met. For interventions involving ongoing behavioural issues this tier may include parents to engage the student's family to support them in making positive changes.
- The third tier of intervention is directed towards behaviour of individual students. **Behaviour plans** are used at this stage to set achievable goals to improve behaviour.
- If there is no change in behaviour at this tier, the Principal will consider suspension procedures and potentially cancellation of enrolment or expulsion.

Adapted from:
Sprague & Walker, 2004



4. Positive Behaviour Management – Primary school procedures

4.1 Low to moderate Behaviour issues - Behaviour is disruptive, unsafe or disrespectful:

Tier 1	<p>Apply teacher led strategies for immediate in classroom behaviour management and report behaviour/s to Compass where appropriate.</p> <p>Teacher strategies may include separating disruptive students using a specific seating plan.</p> <p>Other strategies are outlined in the PBIS – Tier 1 interventions such as: classroom and school rules, routines, rewards, expectations, consequences.</p> <p>These interventions are also listed by behaviour types being exhibited i.e. aggressive / bullying, anxiety, defiant, disorganized, failing to turn in work, frustration, hyperactivity, inappropriate language and others.</p> <p>Teachers do not use rewards and punishments, but more collaborative and proactive strategies.</p> <p>For tier 1 strategies and interventions (PBIS) The PBIS World Book, http://www.PBISWorld.com.</p> <p>At any part of stage 1, If there is no attempt to change/restore behaviour, move to Tier 2</p>
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Medium level Behaviour issues - If behaviour of a class group escalates and/or persists.

Tier 2.	<p>If there is no attempt to change or restore behaviour, move to tier 2 strategies (PBIS)</p> <p>Tier 2 strategies include moderately intensive and focused interventions formally taught and practiced on a small group and individual scale in a systematic and structured manner on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Interventions consist of more highly intensive interventions and require more support and instruction. They may be delivered on an individual basis or to small groups.</p> <p>If some aspects are working but not everything, include tier 2 interventions and strategies.</p>
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High level Behaviour issues - If behaviour of an individual students escalates and/or persists.

Tier 3.	<p>If there is no attempt to change or restore behaviour, move to tier 3 strategies.</p> <p>Tier 3 strategies at Sophia Mundi address high levels of disruptive and/or aggressive behaviours through individual student behaviour plans.</p> <p>The teacher and well-being coordinator complete and implement a behaviour support plan (Appendix B) with the parents/guardians and student (where appropriate) and add it to the student's ILP.</p> <p>Include agreed review timeframe.</p> <p>The teacher, parents and wellbeing coordinator assess if the plan is working.</p> <p>If the plan is working, resume as normal.</p>
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4.2 For Aggressive Behaviours or Physical Altercations

Staff should take proactive steps to reduce the risk of harm in all student altercations. These steps will depend on the individual circumstances but might include:

- Verbally intervening, using authority as a teacher, and issuing clear directions to the students to stop any threatening or violent behaviour.
- Reporting to Compass immediately under Amber or red.
- All incidents in this category are automatically escalated to Tier 3.
- For one off incidents, a behaviour **action** plan (Appendix A) is created to restore appropriate behaviour. This may be for classroom or playground incidents.
- In the case of repeated aggressive behaviour incidents, the student's behaviour support plan must be reviewed with immediately.

4.3 Suspension from Class:

When disruptive or unsafe behaviour continues and there is no attempt to change, the Principal may suspend the student from attending classes. The parents are notified by phone and email of the decision. A parent meeting is arranged by the Principal and Assistant principal or class teacher to assist with addressing the behaviour issues and working together toward finding strategies to return to the classroom. The behaviour support plan is reviewed, and achievable goals are set.

5. Behaviour Response Process

This section outlines processes that may be used in the Behaviour action plan or the Behaviour support plan. It includes SSG's, Community service and Withdrawal of Students from Class/School Activities.

5.1 Student Support Group (SSG)

The SSG aims to:

- develop an understanding of the child or young person.
- utilise data collection and monitoring systems that will inform decision-making.
- identify the child or young person's learning, social, emotional, behavioural and environmental strengths and needs and the support or resources the student requires for improvement.
- involve key specialist learning and wellbeing support staff i.e. support education, and student wellbeing staff and/or the school chaplain.
- develop strategies for the student's behaviour support plan with the classroom teachers/guardian and ensure support to implement the plan.
- recommend referrals to community support agencies for specialist interventions where required.

Meetings of student support groups must involve:

- Principal or delegate
- student (as appropriate)
- student's Class Teacher/Guardian
- parents/guardians*
- relevant subject teachers
- where applicable, professionals who have been supporting the student or their family, for example psychologist, youth worker, etc
- Minutes of all meeting procedures

* Parents/guardians may be accompanied and supported by an advocate at a SSG meeting if they wish. Parents/guardians are required to organise the attendance of this advocate, who cannot act for a fee or reward. The role of the advocate is to provide emotional and moral support to the student and/or their parents/guardians and to act as a witness to the process of the SSG. The advocate should attend only as an observer and should refrain from directing the process or answering questions on behalf of the student or their parents/guardians. The only circumstance in which the advocate should speak on behalf of or participate in the SSG is when a language or communication barrier has been previously identified by the student, their parents/guardians, or the school.

5.2 Withdrawal of Students from Class/School Activities

A student may be temporarily removed from regular classroom activities if their behaviour significantly interferes with the rights of other students to learn, the capacity of a teacher to teach, or where it creates a risk of harm to themselves or others.

Withdrawal of students from school activities is managed in consultation between the class teacher/guardian and the assistant principal or the Principal.

Following a breach of school discipline, staff members may withdraw a student from:

- Any class or classes of instruction pending the availability of alternate supervision.
- Temporarily withdraw a student to another class (often used in primary classrooms).

- Recess and lunch breaks, however, alternative breaks must be provided, and students must be supervised;
- Identified school activities, event or programs pending the availability of alternate supervision.

The withdrawal of a student from a school activity must be imposed in a timely manner that is as close to the occurrence of the incident as possible.

Staff members will only consider withdrawal when it:

- is used to provide students exhibiting disruptive behaviour with the opportunity to calm down, and reflect on their own behaviour;
- provides an opportunity to negotiate and plan behaviour management strategies.
- provides an opportunity for restorative processes to be implemented.

Staff members must ensure clear reasons for the withdrawal have been communicated to the student and Assistant principal. Clear goals for returning to class must also be negotiated with the student and recorded as part of their behaviour support plan or action plan. The teacher/s of missed classes are to provide the student withdrawn from classes with opportunities to complete assignments or assessments to fulfil course requirements.

Staff members must supervise students to ensure safety and security requirements are met at all times.

Decisions about the location, supervision arrangements and the duration of withdrawal must consider:

- the age and developmental status of the student.
- the potential emotional, academic and social impact of such withdrawal on the student.
- the safety of all parties involved or those in close proximity ie: visitors to the school (including parents and children), administration and other contracted employees.

Staff members must inform parents of their child's withdrawal from school activities and keep records regarding this process for themselves and on Compass.

A restorative conversation is strongly recommended following withdrawal to repair relationships and address positive learning goals and social strategies.

6. Definitions

Inappropriate Behaviour

Any behaviour which wilfully opposes the code of conduct; compromises safety; or distracts, undermines or deliberately interrupts the course of learning in such a way that teacher guidance or instruction is repeatedly ignored.

Aggressive behaviour

Behaviours that potentially cause physical harm to staff and students present a great challenge to school communities.

Disruptive behaviours

Disruptive behaviours where a student is uncooperative and prevents themselves and other students from working such as being out-of-seat, calling out in class, becomes dysregulated, or refusing to follow instructions.

Behaviour action plan – for Acute one off / reactive plan

Behaviour action plans are prepared in response to one off or acute behaviours. Intervention strategies are discussed with the student and their teacher. (For template document go to Appendix A). Copies of all action plans should be uploaded to SharePoint: Education > Behaviour plans.

Behaviour support plan – for patterns of behaviour

Behaviour support plans are prepared by a Class Teacher with support from the wellbeing or inclusion coordinator, the assistant Principal. Parents for part of this collaboration in response to ongoing or chronic behavioural patterns. Intervention strategies are discussed with the student, their teacher and parents. Involvement in the development of preventative behaviour strategies and monitoring of this plan. (Appendix B)

Breach of School Discipline

Any act or omission that impairs the good order and proper management of the school.

Educational Instruction

Delivery of appropriate education (programs) both in and beyond the classroom through a variety of contexts including teacher-centred learning, textbooks, peer-supported learning, audio, film and computer-based programs etc.

Education Program

An organised set of learning activities designed to enable a student to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes through experiences and situations relevant to the student's individual needs.

Parent

Includes guardians and carers and refers to a person who by law has responsibility for the care, welfare and development of a student.

Procedural Fairness

A process that demonstrates procedural fairness is one in which:

- decision makers act fairly and provide reasons for decisions;
- the person affected is given a fair hearing;
- all parties to a matter have an opportunity to put their case where an adverse decision or finding is made; and all relevant arguments are considered, and irrelevant arguments are excluded.

Restorative Practice

The practice of managing conflict and tension by refocussing the perception of participants toward repairing harm and strengthening relationships. Restorative practice endeavours to augment punitive disciplinary procedure with a “question and answer” based process that helps participants restore relationships harmed by wilful or accidental inappropriate behaviour.

School Activity

An activity that is organised or managed by a staff member as part of his or her duties.

School Community

All members of the school staff (both teaching and non-teaching); all students attending the school; and all parents and family members.

Serious Breach of School Discipline

A breach of the school code of conduct that adversely affects, or threatens, the personal safety of any person or animal either at the school or during a school excursion or camp.

Suspension

A suspension is a temporary removal of a student from all classes that a student would normally attend at school for a set period of time.

Whole School Approach

A whole school approach is the cohesive, collective and collaborative action in and by a school community that has been strategically implemented to improve student learning, behaviour and wellbeing, and the conditions that support these ideals.

7. Relevant Legislation

- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*
- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Education and Training Reform Regulations 2007*
- *Australian Education Amendment Act 2017*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Disability Standards for Education 2005*

- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Child Safe Standards legislation 1-11, 2023*
 - *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act (Vic)*
 - *Ministerial Order 870 January 2016 (Vic)*
 - *Crimes Act 1958 (amended) (Vic)*
 - *Betrayal of Trust Report 2014 (Vic)*
 - *Working With Children Act 2005 (Vic)*
 - *Wrongs Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse) Act 2017 (Vic).*

8. Policies and Procedures to read in conjunction with this policy and procedure

- *Student Engagement and Wellbeing policy and procedures*
- *Equal opportunity policy and procedures*
- *Inclusion and support policy and procedures*
- *Online communication, Mobile phone & digital technologies policy & procedures.*

<https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/behaviour-students/guidance>

Appendix A: Student Behaviour Action Plan

Intervention Tier 3:

Date of plan:

Student:

Date of review:

Guardian:

Teacher:

Subject:

Other people involved in this plan:

1. What happened?

--

2. What needs to happen?

--

3. Strategies to create change (at least one is the student's idea, note the author of each strategy):

Strategy (student, teacher, parent/guardian)	
1.	
2.	
3	
4	
5	

Review after x3 lessons or 1 week

Review of strategies (Teacher)
Write a brief follow up at the review; indicate how the plan worked, next step if required.

Teacher or Class Guardian:

- Upload this document to SharePoint>Education>Behaviour Plans
- Document any parent communications regarding this plan – Include date/s and time/s

Appendix B – Behaviour Support plan

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

INTRODUCTION

The premise of this behaviour support plan is to acknowledge that all behaviour is communication. When students exhibit concerning behaviour, this occurs in response to specific expectations the students are having difficulty meeting - called unsolved problems - and that these unsolved problems are usually highly predictable and can therefore be solved proactively. This plan will help teachers to identify the problems and to allow the students to have voice and agency in the response plan.

Step 1: Complete an ALSUP Meeting (Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems). Do this with people who are associated with this student (as many teachers as possible + parents if you can).

Step 2: Identify the two key unsolved problems you want to address with the child and write the 'unsolved problem statement'. See more detailed instructions below.

Step 3: Hold a meeting with the student. Ask the student the statement identified in Step 2. Use drilling strategies until you have identified the student's concern and feel empathy with them.

Step 4: Invite the child to solve the problem. Restate child's problem, add the Adult problem and state as a question, i.e. "I wonder if there is a way to solve your problem of _____ and the teacher's problem of _____?". Make sure the solution works for all

Step 5: Exact the solution, then review in 2 weeks.

STUDENT'S STRENGTHS:

LAGGING SKILLS

This section will help you understand why the child is responding so maladaptively to problems and frustrations. Please note that these **lagging skills are not the primary focal point of intervention**. In other words, you won't be discussing the lagging skills with the student, nor will you be teaching most of the skills explicitly. The primary targets of intervention are the unsolved problems you'll be documenting in the next section.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty maintaining focus	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty seeing "grays"/concrete, literal, black & white, thinking
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty handling transitions, shifting from one mindset or task to another	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty taking into account situational factors that would suggest the need to adjust a plan of action
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty considering the likely outcomes or consequences of actions (impulsive)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Inflexible, inaccurate interpretations/cognitive distortions or biases (e.g., "Everyone's out to get me," "Nobody likes me")
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty persisting on challenging or tedious tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty attending to or accurately interpreting social cues/poor perception of social nuances
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty considering a range of solutions to a problem	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty shifting from original idea, plan, or solution
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts in words	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty appreciating how their behavior is affecting others
<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty managing emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty starting conversations, entering groups, connecting with people/lacking other basic social skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic irritability and/or anxiety significantly impede capacity for problem-solving or heighten frustration	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty empathizing with others, appreciating another person's perspective or point of view
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sensory/motor difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/>	Difficulty handling unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, novelty

The **Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems (ALSUP)** is a discussion guide created to assist caregivers in identifying a child's lagging skills and unsolved problems. Lagging skills provide caregivers with new lenses. Rather than viewing a child's difficulties as attention-seeking, manipulative, coercive, unmotivated, lazy, or limit testing, lagging skills provide more accurate, productive, actionable lenses.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING LAGGING SKILLS:

How hard could it be to check off lagging skills? Not that hard, but here are a few important reminders:

- Go in order...you don't want to miss anything.
- Don't spend time hypothesizing or theorizing about causal factors (why the student is lacking these skills)...you can't establish cause with any level of precision, and your time will be better spent identifying lagging skills and unsolved problems
- Don't spend any time talking about the child's behavior either...the behavior is simply the way children communicate that there are expectations they are having difficulty meeting
- Checking off a lagging skill is not a democratic process and shouldn't take more than 3-5 seconds each. If any caregivers in the meeting think the lagging skill applies to the child, check it off.
- While lagging skills provide you with new lenses -- a worthy goal -- lagging skills are not the primary targets of intervention. The unsolved problems you'll be identifying are the primary targets of intervention. If you solve those problems collaboratively and proactively, the child's skills will be enhanced.

UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

Unsolved problems are the specific expectations a child is having difficulty meeting. The wording of an unsolved problem will translate directly into the words that you'll be using when you introduce an unsolved problem to the child when it comes time to solve the problem together. Poorly worded unsolved problems often cause the problem-solving process to deteriorate before it even gets started. Please reference the ALSUP Guide for guidance on the four guidelines for writing unsolved problems.

Are there specific tasks/expectations the student is having difficulty completing or getting started on?

Are there classmates this student is having difficulty getting along with in specific conditions?

Are there tasks and activities this student is having difficulty moving from or to?

Are there classes/activities the student is having difficulty attending/being on time to?

As you think about the start of the day to the end, are there any other expectations the student has difficulty reliably meeting or that you find yourself frequently reminding the student about?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS:

An unsolved problem is ***an expectation a child is having difficulty meeting***. Writing unsolved problems is harder, because the wording of the unsolved problem on the ALSUP is going to translate directly into the words that you're going to use to introduce the unsolved problem to the child when it comes time to solve the problem together. As such, there are four guidelines for writing unsolved problems:

They should contain no reference to the child's challenging behaviors. Since you won't be talking with children about their behavior, there's no need to include the behavior in the wording of the unsolved problem. Instead, almost all unsolved problems begin with the words *Difficulty*, followed by a verb (a variety of verbs are shown in the examples below as well). So you wouldn't write *Screams and swears when having difficulty completing the word problems on the math homework...* instead write *Difficulty completing the word problems on the math homework*.

They should contain no adult theories. So you wouldn't write *Difficulty writing the definitions to the spelling words in English... because his parents were recently divorced*.

They should be split, not clumped (so you wouldn't write *Difficulty getting along with others* but rather *Difficulty getting along with Trevor on the school bus in the morning*).

They should be specific. To make an unsolved problem as specific as possible, there are two strategies:

- Include details related to *who, what, where, and when*
- Ask *What expectation is the child/student having difficulty meeting?*

The above guidelines -- and a variety of sample verbs -- are embodied in the following examples (they're grouped based on setting, but the verbs apply across settings):

SCHOOL/FACILITY:

- Difficulty getting started on the double-digit division problems in math
- Difficulty completing the map of Europe in geography
- Difficulty participating in the discussions in morning meeting
- Difficulty moving from choice time to math
- Difficulty ending computer time to come to circle time
- Difficulty walking in the hallway between classes
- Difficulty raising hand during Social Studies discussions
- Difficulty keeping hands to self in the lunch line
- Difficulty lining up for the bus at the end of the school day
- Difficulty remaining quiet when a classmate is sharing his or her ideas in English
- Difficulty waiting for his turn during the four-square game at recess
- Difficulty retrieving Geography notebook from locker before Geography class

Written statement of the students' 2-3 key unsolved problems:

The goal of the Empathy Step is to gather information from the child about their concern or perspective on the unsolved problem you're discussing (preferably proactively). For many adults, this is the most difficult part of Plan B, as they often find that they are unsure of what to ask next. So here's a brief summary of different strategies for "drilling" for information:

REFLECTIVE LISTENING AND CLARIFYING STATEMENTS

Reflective listening basically involves **mirroring what a child has said** and then encouraging him/her to provide additional information by saying one of the following:

- "How so?"
- "I don't quite understand"
- "I'm confused"
- "Can you say more about that?"
- "What do you mean?"

Reflective listening is your "default" drilling strategy...if you aren't sure of which strategy to use or what to say next, use this strategy.

ASKING ABOUT THE WHO, WHAT, WHERE/WHEN OF THE UNSOLVED PROBLEM

EXAMPLES:

- "Who was making fun of your clothes?"
- "What's getting the way of completing the science project?"
- "Where is Eddie bossing you around?"

ASKING ABOUT WHY THE PROBLEM OCCURS UNDER SOME CONDITIONS AND NOT OTHERS

EXAMPLE: "You seem to be doing really well in your work group in math...but not so well in your work group in social studies...what's getting in the way in social studies?"

ASKING THE CHILD WHAT THEY ARE THINKING IN THE MIDST OF THE UNSOLVED PROBLEM

Notice, this is different than asking the child what they are feeling, which doesn't usually provide much information about the child's concern or perspective on an unsolved problem.

EXAMPLE: "What were you thinking when Mrs. Thompson told the class to get to work on the science quiz?"

BREAKING THE PROBLEM DOWN INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS

EXAMPLE: "So writing the answers to the questions on the science quiz is hard for you...but you're not sure why. Let's think about the different parts of answering questions on the science quiz. First, you have to understand what the question is asking. Is that part hard for you? Next, you need to think of the answer to the question. Is that part hard? Next, you have to remember the answer long enough to write it down. Are you having trouble with that part? Then you have to actually do the writing. Any trouble with that part?"

DISCREPANT OBSERVATION

This involves making an observation that differs from what the child is describing about a particular situation, and it's the riskiest (in terms of causing the child to stop talking) of all the drilling strategies.

EXAMPLE: "I know you're saying that you haven't been having any difficulty with Chad on the playground lately, but I recall a few times last week when you guys were having a big disagreement about the rules in the box-ball game. What do you think was going on with that?"

TABLING (AND ASKING FOR MORE CONCERNS)

This is where you're "shelving" some concerns the child has already expressed so as to permit consideration of other concerns.

EXAMPLE: "So if Timmy wasn't sitting too close to you, and Robbie wasn't making noises, and the floor wasn't dirty, and the buttons in your pants weren't bothering you...is there anything else that would make it difficult for you to participate in Morning Meeting?"

SUMMARIZING (AND ASKING FOR MORE CONCERNS)

This is where you're summarizing concerns you've already heard about and then asking if there are any other concerns that haven't yet been discussed. This is the recommended strategy to use before moving on to the Define Adult Concerns step.

EXAMPLE: "Let me make sure I understand all of this correctly. It's hard for you to do your social studies worksheet for homework because writing down the answers is still hard for you...and because sometimes you don't understand the question...and because Mrs. Langley hasn't yet covered the material on the worksheet. Is there anything else that's hard for you about completing the social studies worksheet for homework?"

