



What challenges

Do learners face in Welsh educational settings?



Personal barriers to attainment and thriving include challenging behaviour.

- Challenging behavior is a personal barrier to learning, attainment and thriving.
- Challenging behavior includes unacceptable negative behavior that is extreme, frequent and intense and can threaten the quality of life or physical safety of the child or young person or others. Meggit C pg 525
- Disruptive behavior, while often not malicious in intent can significantly detract from the learning experience for all students. Schultz pg 15.
- Examples of challenging behavior are as follows:
- Disruptive behavior
- Physical and verbal aggression such as assaulting others or damaging property. Bullying, threats, racist or sexist comments.
- Destructive behavior
- Antisocial or illegal behavior
- Withdrawn behavior
- Repetitive or obsessive behavior.



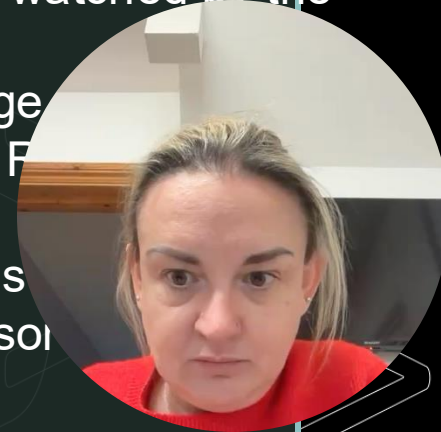
Causes of challenging



- Adversity in childhood can create harmful levels of stress, which impact healthy brain development. This can result in long-term effects on learning, behaviour and health.
- <https://www.liverpoolcamhs.com> date accessed 26/11/25
- Environmental factors include dysfunctional families, poor diet, poor role models, exposure to violence and aggression through abuse, bullying, media, peer pressure and gang culture.
- Biological factors include genetics, temperament, developmental delays or disorders, chronic illness and learning disability.
- Psychological factors such as low self-esteem, mental illness and poor coping skills.

Disturbing patterns of family dysfunction
Disruptive parenting patterns
Substance abuse

Generational unemployment
Asignificant lack of male role modelling (particularly in male children)
The characteristic diet of a child
The role, extent and T.V watched by the child
The kind of internet usage (children) (Howell, 1993: F 1979)
Additional learning needs and autistic spectrum disorder



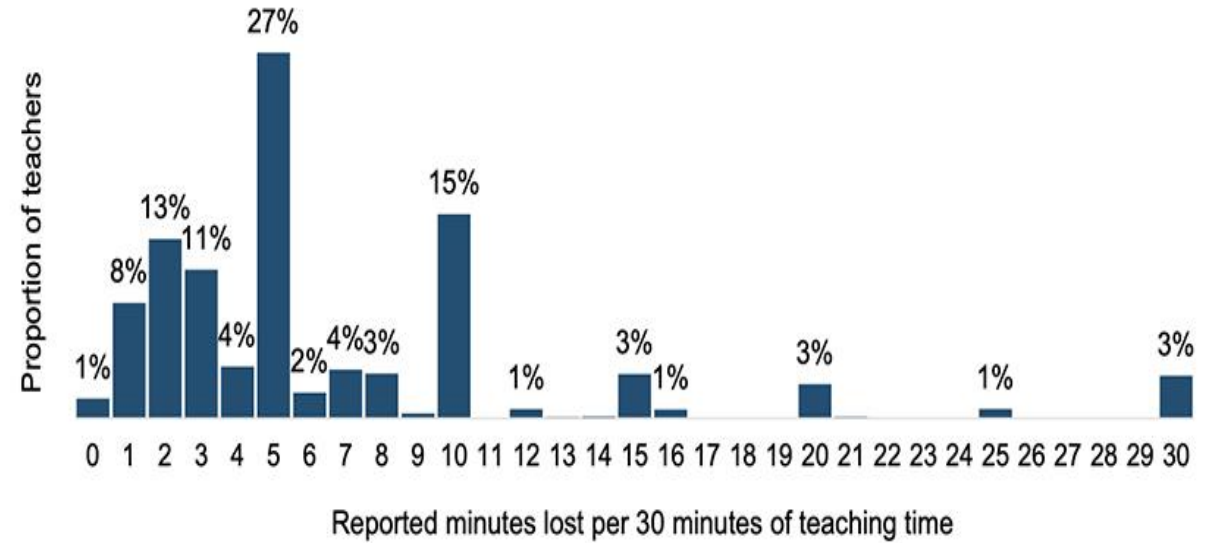
How challenging behaviour can be a barrier to learning.

Challenging behaviour such as disruption, defiance and aggression can be a barrier to learning as it not only disrupts the learning environment of the pupil exhibiting this behaviour but also the other pupils in the class. This can cause increased anxiety for the disruptive pupil and their classmates, resulting in decreased engagement and enjoyment of the learning experience for everyone. Negative impacts on the overall climate and culture of the school, as well as decreased teacher moral and satisfaction. These factors often inevitably lead to a reduction in academic progress of both the disruptive pupil and classmates. This is why it is so important to address challenging behaviour as early as possible to minimize these negative effects and create a positive learning environment for everyone.



There has been a notable fall in the standard of behaviour in secondary schools in England according to teachers, school leaders, and even students themselves.

Interrupted learning: In the survey week, 11% of secondary teachers reported disruption in every lesson due to misbehaviour; 28% said it happened in most lessons – the average amount of lost lesson time was 7 minutes -
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Most schools have a behaviour policy that they adhere to to help manage challenging behaviour. Placement A's Behaviour policies include aiming to

- Encourage a trusting and caring environment.
- Create a positive atmosphere so that the children feel self and secure and develop self-discipline and self
- Ensure each child in the school is equally valued irrespective of class, age, race, gender or d

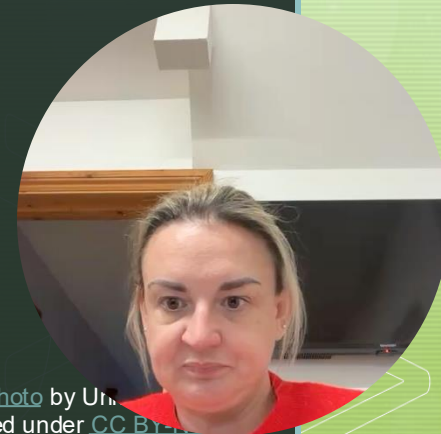


According to Rogers (pp 114, 2009), strategies to support challenging behaviour and make a difference with individual children and classroom groups include the following importance of:

Key principles and practices to support challenging behaviour

- Colleague/moral support
- Structural support
- Professional support
- A whole-school emphasis on behaviour
- An ongoing willingness to persist, coupled with a commitment to respect for the child
- The 'bad day syndrome': accepting fallibility in ourselves and others
- Separating the behaviour from the person
- Focusing on the child's effort towards change
- Focusing on the primary behaviour or issue

- Discipline
- The power of leadership-using our power for, and with our children
- Descriptive feedback to encourage students
- Conveying empathy
- Keeping a sense of humour
- Giving students a voice through classroom meetings
- Balancing the short term and longer-term aims



Systemic barriers to learning

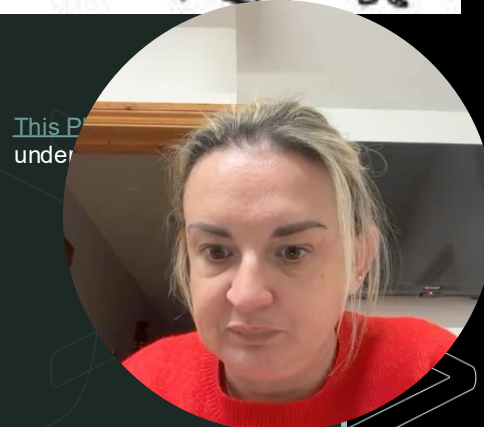
- For example, a lack of an Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) diagnosis can become a barrier to learning as pupils then do not receive personal, specific support and accommodations needed so that they can manage symptoms that interfere with their ability to learn and complete academic tasks.
- Key barriers resulting from undiagnosed ADHD include
 - Difficulty with sustained attention and focus
 - Executive function deficits
 - Poor working memory
 - Task initiation and completion
 - Inconsistent performance



Case study

Child T is a child in the reception class who displays very challenging, aggressive behaviour that regularly results in him having to be restrained for the safety of himself, other pupils and staff. This behaviour is at its most extreme when a demand to do his schoolwork is placed on him. He trashes the classroom by throwing everything. He runs across the back of the toilets, he takes the fire extinguisher off the wall and throws it at the staff. He shouts, swears, bites, spits, punches and pulls hair of both pupils and staff.

This behaviour is a personal barrier to child TS learning, as a lot of his learning time is missed due to him being “in crisis” or refusing to comply with mainstream rules and expectations. Because of his behaviour he has not been accessing learning in mainstream. The senior leadership team have decided that data of child T's behaviour needs to be collected as evidence so it can be agreed if mainstream is an appropriate environment for Child T. A personalised timetable has been set up to record the behaviour of child T and to see how much learning he is actually accessing in mainstream. This timetable is as well as his ABC behaviour charts to monitor the triggers, behaviour and possible functions of his behaviour. These are submitted and reviewed by the class teacher and senior management team daily, to discuss any plans for child T moving forward to help him to be able to regulate his behaviour, but also to access mainstream learning. One of the ways the senior management team want to encourage child T to



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noted systemic barriers to child T's learning. These include-

Lack of staff with appropriate expertise or training to support child T's high needs effectively due to a lack of a current diagnosis of any additional learning needs.

Systemic barriers to learning.

- Lack of criteria for child T to be put forward for an ADHD assessment (The child is only five and only displays the behaviour in school, according to mum, who herself has an ADHD diagnosis.)
- Despite Child T displaying behaviours that are not compatible with a mainstream child the education system first requires that Child T tries to access learning in a mainstream setting. When he had difficulty accessing learning without any extra support, after a lengthy process, the school eventually got funding for a one-to-one for the child. Despite a one-to-one child T was still not accessing mainstream learning, which is why the senior management team wanted to try a new approach.



Conclusion

- Teachers believe that they can and will make a difference to children's lives. That is why they chose a career in teaching and work towards removing those barriers to learning. However, the success of removing the personal behavioural barrier to learning depends on all of the staff having consistent expectations of good behaviour. The key to good behaviour in the classroom is setting teaching and learning activities appropriate to the needs and abilities of all of the children. Schools must have a strong moral code of conduct that supports behaviour proactively and positively and never re-victimise a child. Teachers can help to remove the behavioural barrier to learning with the right early education that confirms us in one set of habits or another. Aristotle (in his *Nicomachean Ethics*) says 'of every art' we become 'good or bad as a result of building well...' This is true of supporting a child with challenging behaviour.
- Systemic barriers to learning, such as an undiagnosed condition, prevent pupils from accessing tailored interventions such as educational support, behavioural therapy and sometimes medication. All these things are necessary for the pupil to achieve academic success or overcome their systemic barrier to learning.



Referencing

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