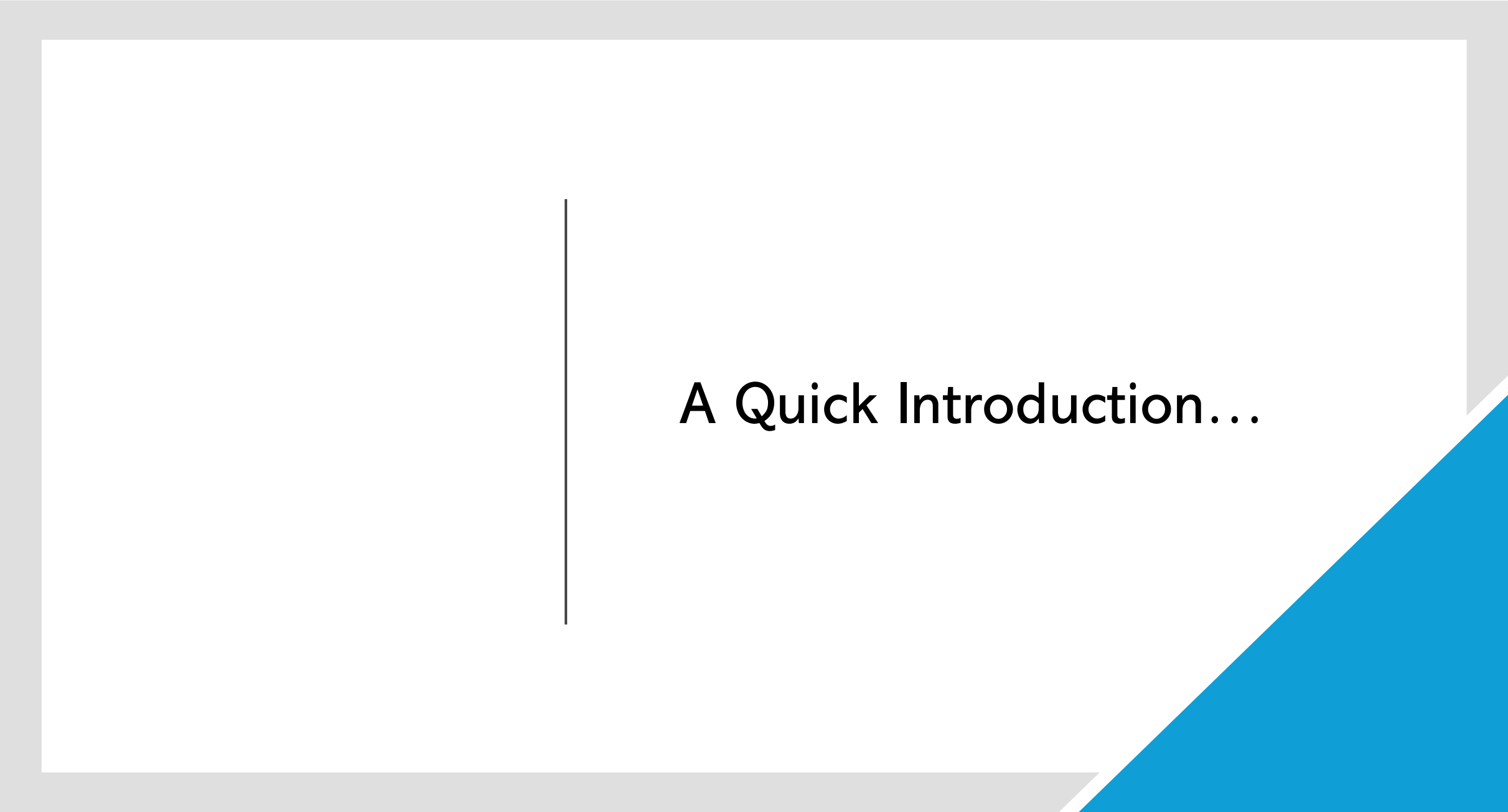




Managing Behaviour in Special Needs Secondary Schools.

Grace Looker-Heath

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A Quick Introduction...



FOR YOUR NOTES...

BEHAVIOUR MANAGMENT IN SPECIAL NEEDS
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Reward Systems





REWARD SYSTEMS

In Special Need Secondary Schools

Clear Objectives and Consistency

Communication is key when trying to establish what behaviours are desired and what ones are not (NHS Wales, 2021). Discuss with the pupil how they are able to change in order to achieve the desired behaviour (NHS Wales, 2021). Keep this consistent by ensuring all staff are aware of this award, which will avoid the child becoming confused about the goal they are striving to achieve (Aleman, 2021).

what is the reward?

Agree on a suitable reward for when the pupil reaches this behaviour influenced goal (NHS Wales, 2021). From experience it can be beneficial to base this on their special interests or hyper-fixation at the time as this can further encourage them to achieve a desired behaviour.

Reinforcement

Use the reward as a reinforcement strategy in situations where the child begins to present the undesired behaviour previously agreed on (Aleman, 2024). By reminding them of this you are remaining consistent and clearly reminding them that the behaviour being presented is incorrect (NHS Wales, 2021).

Always Remember...

- One goal at a time! You don't want to overwhelm the child.
- After the child has successfully altered their behaviour repeat steps with any remaining undesired behaviours.
- Ensure that all staff use shared language and expectations. (NHS Wales, 2021)

Ideas of Potential Rewards for special needs secondary school age...

- Extra Play Time
- Non Uniform Day
- Local Trip
- Time In Music Room
- Fidget Toy of choice

School Food Matters (2023)



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Sensory Tools



SENSORY TOOLS



Ear Defenders are a particularly useful piece of equipment for children who are noise sensitive. They help to reduce noise in loud environments, potentially preventing the child from becoming overwhelmed (Di-Toro et al, 2025).



Sensory toys may be considered a more modern form of sensory activity. The use of sensory toys can act as an outlet for wrestles energy, promoting concentration and reducing the risk of behaviour outbursts within the special need provision (Seashell, 2024).



Providing sensory rooms within special needs secondary schools can help special needs children learn the importance of readiness, and teach them more appropriate strategies to regulating their emotions, as opposed to acting out in the form of poor behaviour (National Council for Special Education, 2025). It provides them with a safe environment where they are able to calm themselves before returning to the classroom. Sensory rooms are also easily adapted and altered to suit the need of the child accessing them (Cardiff University, No Date).



Weighted Blankets can help a child to self regulate when feeling overwhelmed by their surroundings. This can positively effect their behaviour, lessening their anxiety, reducing the risk of outbursts (NHS Borders, 2023).



Movement breaks are an easy way to support focus, well-being, and learning, particularly for those with special needs. Short bursts of movement can help the brain process new information and can release built up energy which may be impacting a child's ability to behave appropriately within the education setting (National Council for Special Education, 2020).



The use of sensory gardens and outdoor learning for children with sensory difficulties can act as a natural energy outlet, and a safe space to meet individualised sensory requirements. Natural Sensory environments can be personalised to the specific needs of the children using it. From personal experience i have seen apparatus like swings and water trays being used in outdoor areas. These both provide sensory stimulation (Estyn, 2023).

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Parent Intervention and Engagement



IMPLIMENTING PARENT INTERVENTION AND ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNICATION

Create a clear line of communication with parents/guardians (foundations, 2025). This means creating an honest and trusting relationship about the reality of the child's home life so the school is able to offer the highest level of personalised support for the young learner (foundations, 2025). It may also be beneficial to consult other disciplinaries and professional workers within the child's life if this is relevant (Welsh Government, 2025). From personal experience I have seen this include people like social workers and councillors.

IMPLIMENTATION

Have an open and honest discussion with the child about why their behaviour can be considered 'inappropriate' and how their behaviour is impacting others (Scope, 2025). An agreement of the next steps should be concluded at this point (Scope, 2025). It is important for them to know that these changes should take place in both schools and at home (Scope, 2025). If possible the child should be made aware of the changes that their parent/guardian is making in order to positively impact their behaviours. This can help a child feel valued (Scope, 2025). From experience I have seen parents receive support in aspects including triggers, parenting strategies, use of language, emotional support and behaviour strategies, including the zones of regulation. This supports the parent/guardian, teaching them coping strategies for the home environment (Foundations, 2025). From experience children with special needs also tend to appreciate a clear idea as to what actions they must take, personally I find this can be supported through systems including reward charts and reward system.

EVALUATION

The monitoring and progress of the child should be noted and communicated with the parents/guardians, additional help strategies should be discussed and put into place at both home and school (Exceptional Lives, 2025). From experience this could impact the targets in the child's individual development plan. Evaluation of these targets should be discussed and altered when the parents and professionals feel that it is necessary (Exceptional Lives, 2025). If potential ACES are discussed professionals need to advise the parents or guardian as to what the best ways of handling this is, in order for it to have the least effect of this child (Hughes, 2021). Again, from experience the presence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) can have huge negative impact on a child's behaviour in school.

SUPPORT

Continued support should be accessible for the parent (Foundations, 2025). From experience within this kind of setting these strategies can include: specially designed parenting plans and classes, appropriate training, language training, counselling and family support services. I have also been able to observe the use of regular meetings and discussions which have seemingly had a direct positive impact on the child's behaviour at both home and school.

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The Sen Report (2022) case study concluded that the use of reward systems aided Autistic pupils in developing their self-esteem, ability to self-regulate and general Social Skills. Their study also showed the importance of consistency and routine for those with special needs, who attend special needs secondary schools, resulting in a reduction of anxiety. A lack of anxiety had a positive impact on the pupils' behaviour.

Emmerson (2022) found that trauma informed support may benefit pupils with additional learning needs, providing a more holistic approach, treating the core issues which could potentially be having an impact of poor behaviour in the classroom.

Estyn (2023) carried out a case study on providing an outdoor learning space for children with complex and sensory needs. The findings concluded that providing this natural environment can improve a child's attitude to learning, furthermore managing behaviour within the classroom.

Falkner (2020) conducted a case study which found that children with autism were better able to regulate their emotions with the use of sensory tools, in education settings. This in turn positively impacted both their behaviour and ability to learn.

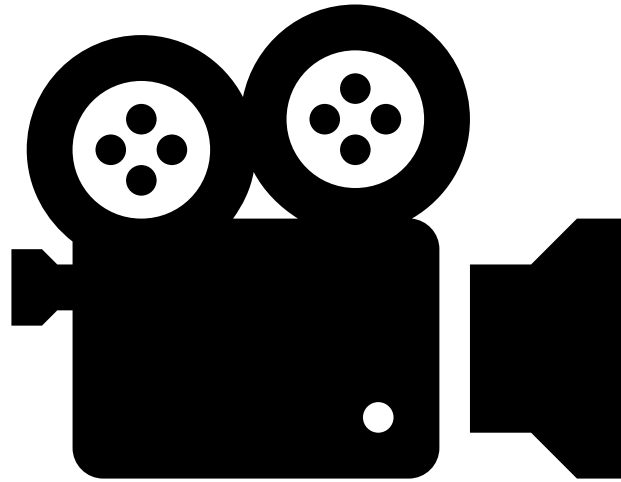
Split et al (2021) conducted research which was able to conclude that teachers who used co-regulation where necessary saw improvements in their special needs pupils' abilities to use emotional vocabulary, better reflect of personal experience as well as aided them in learning more appropriate coping strategies as opposed to acting out in the form of poor behaviour.

Yarza et al (2024) carried out a case study which showed that a positive parent-teacher relationship didn't only help a child's intellectual development, but also emotional and social progression, as well as an improvement in the behaviour of the child. This would suggest that this relationship can act as a behaviour management technique for children attending a special needs secondary schools.

Sottolare and Blair (2025) conducted a study which found that implementing the Check-in/Check-Out strategy into special needs schools helped improve overall classroom behaviour. It proved even more effective when paired with the use of sensory regulation strategies.



Now Let's Conclude...



Link to my recording...

[Recap: Meeting in "General" 01 January | Meeting | Microsoft Teams](#)

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