

‘When is enough, enough? Never is the answer’

‘We had one yesterday where I sent a year 9 teacher an email to say, in conversation with one of his boys, he said he’s behind in his subject, send me a list of the things that he needs to do and I can help him, encourage him, and make him or whatever, get them done.

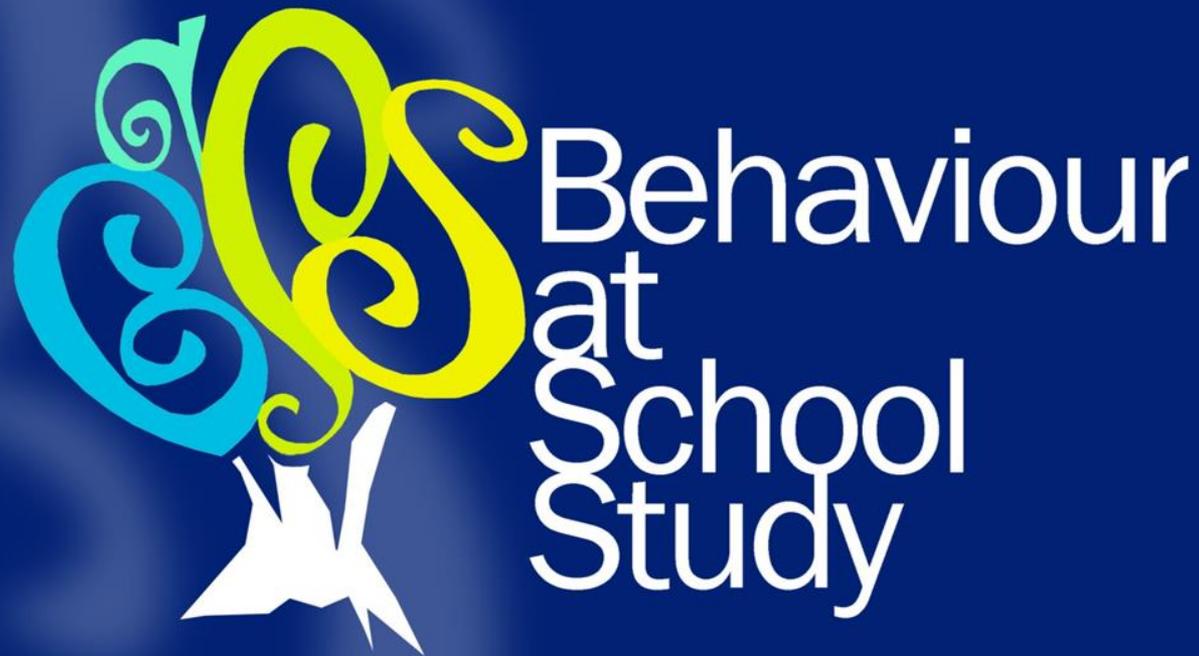
He sent me an email back saying, “No I’ve had enough of working with him, you know, I’ve given up enough of my personal consideration”.

Well that won’t be the end of that conversation. I’ll go back to that teacher now and say, “No, actually that’s not the end point”. He can’t just sign off on a kid like that. It doesn’t fit in with how we want to operate.’

‘When is enough enough? Never is the answer’

‘He’s been teaching here for about six years, so he should know. **It’s not how we do things here.** It sounds like, sometimes it sounds like a bit of an exclusive sort of phrase to use, but it is really important that people understand that. I can understand the frustration from the teacher’s point of view, but someone said to me once in a previous school, **“When is enough, enough? Never is the answer”. No you just keep working on it. You find a key. It’s just that determination to really make sure that each student is looked after.’**

(Leader, Bethlehem College)



Doing behaviour well in schools: Insights from an Australian study

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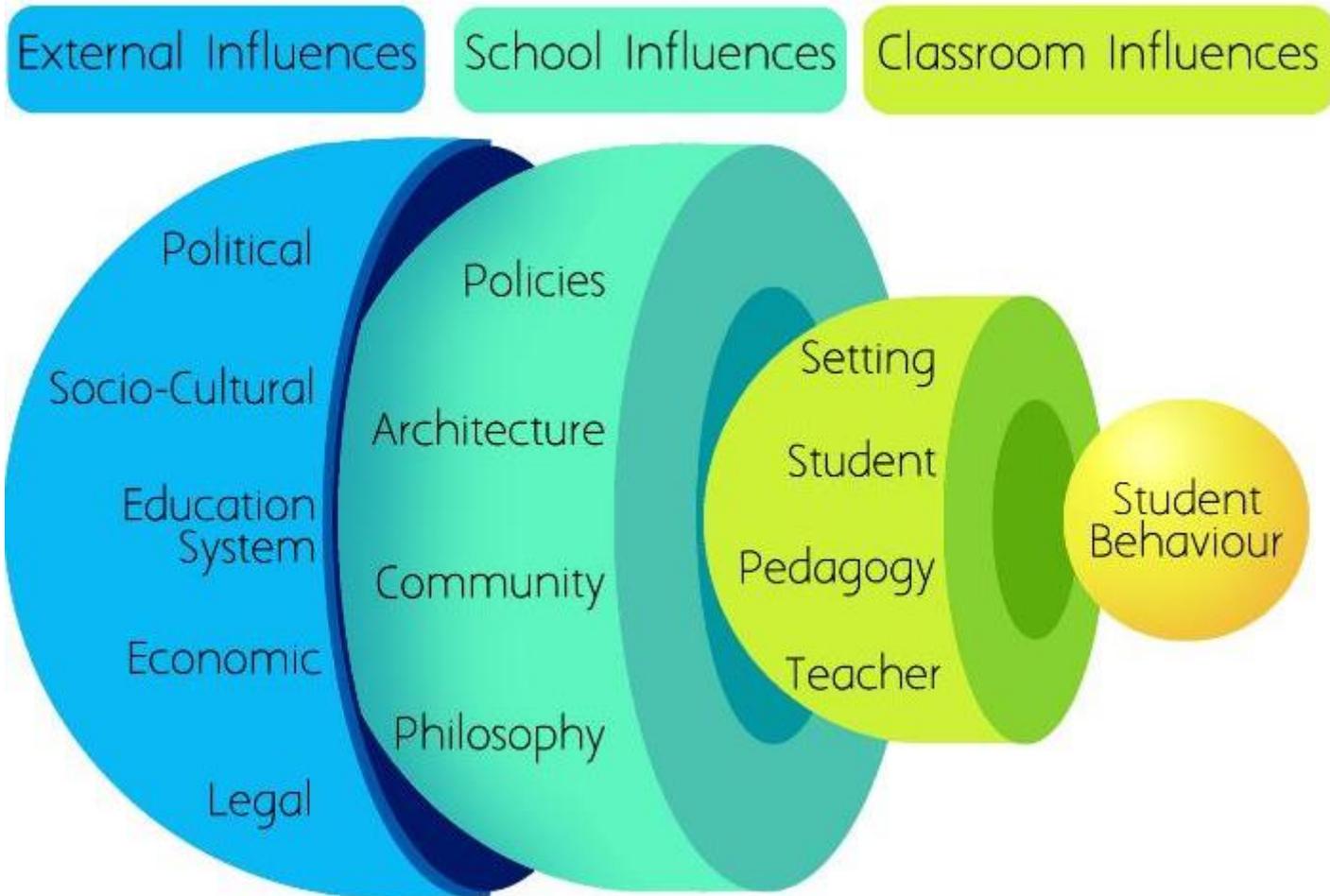
Background

- Student behaviour in schools continues to be problematic and contested.
- Common responses to ‘problems’ are punitive eg removing/excluding students, zero tolerance.
- Such approaches have been found to:
 - Discriminate against certain ‘groups’,
 - Do not ‘fix’ the problem.

Background cont...

- This study investigated an alternative perspective to this 'law and order' view of managing student behaviour.
- Draws on a more liberal approach that acknowledges students' basic human rights, respects their human dignity, treats them fairly rather than equally, and guides the development of pro-social skills that promote educational rather than managerial discourses related to behaviour (Slee 1995).
- A central theoretical premise guiding this study is that engagement in learning directly influences student behaviour.

Influences on Student Behaviour in Schools



Types of Behaviour Policies

- Anti-bullying and Harassment
- Attendance
- Assessment, Reporting and Evaluation
- Child protection
- Classroom behaviour/rules
- Code of behaviour
- Grievance
- ICT
- Internet use
- Mobile Phone
- Safe School
- Uniform
- Yard Behaviour
- Cyber

Aim

To investigate the ways schools reconcile contrasting behaviour management approaches in order to support student behaviour and to develop and implement school policies that promote productive student engagement.

Research Questions

- How do schools interpret, reconcile and make decisions about what student behaviour research, legislation and advice to consider when developing local student behaviour policies?
- What micropolitical skills and understandings do they employ to do this work?

Key Understandings

Policy is a composite of directives, policies, legal requirements, procedures, and local practices.

Policy work is “a process ... subject to ‘interpretation’ as it is enacted (rather than implemented) in original and creative ways within institutions” (Braun, Ball, Maguire, & Hoskins, 2011, p. 586)

- Schools receive policies and then they ‘do policy work’, that is they construct, translate, interpret and enact policies.
- ‘Actors’ in various roles do this policy work.
- As a result, schools do policy work in unique ways “within the limitations and possibilities of context(s)” (Braun, Ball, Maguire, et al., 2011, p. 586).

The Challenge For Schools

Policies can complement and/or contradict each other. When doing policy work, schools have to interpret, translate and enact the plethora of policies. This work is complicated by the involvement of numerous actors both from within and outside the school eg:

- Counselors
- Health service professionals
- Advisors
- Teachers
- Teacher assistants
- Leaders
- Students
- Police
- Parents

(Ball et al 2012)

What is Micropolitics?

- ‘use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in organizations’ (Blase 1991, p 11)
- ‘the strategies and tactics used by individuals and groups in an organisation to further their interests’ (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002, p 107)
- ‘occur in any organisation, in processes of collaboration as well as in resistance, and within the organisation as well as in the interactions with the external environment’ (Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002, p 107)

- In-depth case study methods within the South Australian context.
- 5 diverse schools chosen across Government and Non-government (Primary and Secondary).
- School tours and interviews with Principals, school leadership, teachers, SSOs.
- Photos, policy documents.
- 5-10 interviews conducted at each school.
- Thematic approach to data analysis.

School Contexts

	Arlington Park PS	Blue Cliff HS	Bethlehem College	St Xavier's PS	Carrick PS
School Sector	Government	Government	Non-government	Non-government	Government
School type	Primary	Secondary	Secondary	Primary	Primary
Year range	R-7	8-12	8-12	R-7	R-7
Location	Metropolitan	Provincial	Metropolitan	Metropolitan	Provincial
School ICSEA value (approx)	1030 →	1000	1150 →	990 →	950
Total Enrolment (approx)	440 Girls 210 Boys 230	610 Girls 310 Boys 300	760 Girls 370 Boys 390	850 Girls 470 Boys 380	160 Girls 70 Boys 90
Indigenous students	2%	1%	1%	1% →	13%
Language background other than English →	49%	2%	6% →	42%	2%
Student attendance rate	94%	89%	96%	93%	90%

A framework for developing and enacting humane behaviour policies and practices in schools

Philosophy for enacting humane behaviour policies

- Reject deficit views of students and their families
- Ensure students are central to all decision making and action
- Promote a school culture with guiding principles based on core values
- Utilise key ideas from a variety of sources to inform policies and practices
- Demonstrate a genuine ethic of care for students and families
- Foster and maintain social and emotional wellbeing
- Establish and sustain educative relationships
- Involve students in relevant and rigorous learning through engaging pedagogies
- Commit to working through and resolving issues and challenges

Staffing to enact a collective philosophy

- Adopt strong and visible leadership approaches that promote learner engagement
- Build a profile of staff which embraces a humane behaviour philosophy
- Establish a collaborative leadership team to take collective responsibility for students and staff
- Challenge staff through professional learning to place students at the centre of humane behaviour policies
- Implement performance management processes to ensure all staff embrace a humane behaviour philosophy

Prioritising place and space

- Allocate resources to ensure spaces support the enactment of the school philosophy
- Design and arrange the physical environment to promote collaboration through engaging pedagogies
- Promote a sense of autonomy by creating more flexible and relaxed learning spaces
- Ensure the physical environment is appealing to promote a sense of belonging and connection
- Provide a communal space for community gatherings
- Utilise technologies to promote collaborative learning and teaching

Fostering an engaged and supportive school community

- Engage all members of the community to develop a sense of belonging
- Build and sustain relationships within the community
- Value diversity and promote a sense of connectedness and belonging
- Use a variety of positive and respectful communication strategies
- Use a common language to communicate policies and practices
- Enlist members of the school community to promote a positive profile of the school

Enacting humane behaviour policies and practices

- Challenge and educate staff to enact humane behaviour policies and practices
- Focus on engaging pedagogies rather than managing behaviours
- Ensure behaviour management practices are aligned with the school philosophy
- Collect and use data to inform and justify policies and practices
- Enact preventative and respectful behaviour policies
- Implement educative rather than punitive approaches to managing behaviour
- Use equitable rather than equal practices with students
- Adopt a range of problem solving and conflict resolution strategies

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Reject deficit views of students and their families

You know where we're located [in a very disadvantaged area] and there's all these **kinds of assumptions** about the suburbs [in this area] and ethnicity "EAL-ness" [English as an Additional Language] ... **all of which we reject**. So, I don't discern any difference in the aspirations of parents for their children here or the children themselves. So, I've been peddling that for 12 years, and I think it's really kind of getting across now.

Reject deficit views of students and their families

This year we enrolled 162 Receptions, 48% of whom are EAL and a high percentage have all these other issues. So, **the excuses can abound**. If we were going to excuse bad behaviour or indifferent learning outcomes there's plenty of scope there, but we don't go down that track. ... **We don't see the diversity in the EAL and everything ... as a deficit.**

Broadly what it's about is that **we changed the conversation from the deficit view of the child and their family, and the community, all that blame factor, and the EAL, and the [disadvantaged] suburbs – we put that all aside.**

Philosophy for enacting humane behaviour policies

- Reject deficit views of students and their families

“That’s what they used to get called – those naughty feral children. Feral was used all the time for our kids”
(Primary principal)

“Every child is worthwhile there is no such thing as a bad child; unfortunately sometimes they’ll just do a wrong action.”
(Secondary teacher)

Mantras used to project values

Slogans, mottos or mantras	Values
<p>Bethlehem College ‘Firm in principle, gentle in manner’ ‘Rigour, relevance and respect’</p>	<p>Compassion, respect, justice and fairness, and having a fair go.</p>
<p>Arlington Park Primary School ‘We are here for the kids first and foremost’ ‘The kids come first’</p>	<p>Respect, resilience, responsibility, honesty, community</p>
<p>Carrick Primary School ‘A learning community working happily together in a safe and caring environment’</p>	<p>Respect, excellence, acceptance, cooperation and honesty.</p>
<p>Blue Cliff High School Respect of self and others</p>	<p>‘4 Rs’ : relationships, relevance, rigour and resilience</p>

Utilise key ideas from a variety of sources to inform policies and practices

“3 years ago we went from a much more punitive thing across to **restorative practice** as a way of dealing with behaviour issues within the school and again that supports our ethos”

(Secondary principal)

“One day the deputy and I went to a presentation on **restorative practices** by Terry O’Connell...we just looked at each other and went this is what we need for our school”

(Primary principal)

“The teachers...have been to four days training in the **Tribe’s philosophy and approach** because there is lots of activities that you do with children about getting along with each other”

(Primary principal)

Demonstrate a strong and genuine ethic of care for students and their families

“Underlying all of that is generally an educator’s strong sense of **philosophy around children**, and a strong sense of **belief of our children’s rights as learners in the education system** to have the best outcome both socially and emotionally and cognitively. ”

(Primary principal)

“I felt someone needed to **take responsibility**, so in terms of both the children and families feeling confident from the school, I decided it was me.”

(Primary principal)

The importance of ‘deficit views’

Educators who talk down students and their families are described as subscribing to deficit views (Valencia, 2010), that is they **adopt a deficit ideology and professional discourses** that often reflect society’s broader views of the “problem” (Winton, 2013).

In relation to behaviour, they believe that students and their families are responsible for “problem behaviour”.

The importance of ‘deficit views’

“Educators can challenge ... ideology by recognizing and challenging signs of deficit thinking in dialogues about education and **offering counter-narratives**, ... refusing to locate ‘problems’ in communities rather than systemic inequities”, but “they must first challenge their own deficit beliefs” (Winton, 2013).

Staffing to enact a collective philosophy

- Adopt strong and visible leadership approaches that promote learner engagement
- Build a profile of staff which embraces a humane behaviour philosophy
- Establish a collaborative leadership team to take collective responsibility for students and staff
- Challenge staff through professional learning to place students at the centre of humane behaviour policies
- Implement performance management processes to ensure all staff embrace a humane behaviour philosophy

Moving Beyond the War Zone: Carrick PS

“This is my fourth year here. It was **quite confronting** when I arrived here.

It was **really tricky**, because on one hand I was the new principal and I **wanted to be respectful to the culture and the history of the school**. I wanted to come in and feel like I was building a relationship with people around trust and respect.

But the **dilemma** was while I was aiming to do that I was **seeing things that were not appropriate”**.

Moving Beyond the War Zone: Carrick PS

“There was definitely a lack of hope in the children. There were large groups of children who were sad about their life, their school, their friends and their teachers.

The staff was very fractured and they didn't seem to like many of the children. Teachers called the students 'ferals'.

There was no community participation at all”.

Build a profile of staff which embraces a humane behaviour philosophy

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Tactics</u>
Use positive features of the staffing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Postpone declaring staff vacancies to avoid external ‘placements’• Describe teaching positions tightly and specifically to target ‘compatible’ applicants• Advertise leadership positions and appoint ‘compatible’ leaders.• Reject ‘incompatible’ applicants (even if incumbents).• Look for particular skills/interests in applications• Utilise external support (i.e. staffing officers and regional directors)

Build a profile of staff which embraces a humane behaviour philosophy

“Joan’s dealt with staff very carefully for a long time. Joan’s **very skilled at playing the game** like most experienced principals are, they **know how to manipulate the staffing process** and how to hold, when to hold, how to create a creative vacancy. So Joan’s done that extremely well. I think the testimony of that is the fact that people stay here for as long as they stay here, people aren’t looking to leave. She’s really skilled at staffing .” (Deputy, Arlington PS)

“We’ve had a reasonable turnover of staff. As I said, one of the things that made this work was having a lot of staff onboard from day one, but not everybody was of course and doesn’t suit everybody. There’s some brilliant classroom practitioners that wouldn’t want to work at this model, and that’s fine and **so some of those people have gone to other schools, with our blessing.**” (Principal, Blue Cliff HS)

Build a profile of staff which embraces a humane behaviour philosophy

“Relief teachers have been an interesting issue because not all of them get it. So we’ve actually now **trained a group of relief teachers** and we use those people exclusively rather than just putting anyone in there, because that was another disaster waiting to happen. We actually took them on tours, did a proper training, we actually paid them a TRT day to do the training.”
(Principal, Blue Cliffs HS)

“We do get a lot of relieving teachers with very limited knowledge in skills and understandings about children. So I had a quiet word and said you are more than welcome to come back but there would need to be some work done around these following things. We are very **proactive in enabling the reliever to have the very best day they can**. We have a folder with visual prompts in it, cue cards, the child’s pictures with all the strategies in it that support the child; curriculum reviews. Every teacher leaves resources set up for every child on the table with all the things so there is a predictable routine. We provide them with the opportunity to have a really successful day so that our kids have a successful day.” (Principal, Carrick PS)

Implement performance management processes to ensure all staff embrace a humane behaviour philosophy

“We had some teachers here who were really hard school very officious and very curriculum oriented and **we've been able to change that over time** to teachers who really value relationships and know that they can get the curriculum through to the children and get really good results by developing relationships.” (Principal, Arlington PS)

“The Principal said, “I’ve got one more knife in my back, what’s another one?” So he’s not going to be distracted by someone’s hurt feelings. **‘You either get on board or you get out’**, that’s his sort of attitude.”
(Teacher, Blue Cliff HS)

Implement performance management processes to ensure all staff embrace a humane behaviour philosophy

“Really, our whole philosophy is about restoring relationships and making that viable and making those work, and **if teachers are not prepared to do that, then you know – that needs to be pointed out to them, and it has been.**” (Head MS: Bethlehem College)

“Basically some had the opportunity to go, others didn’t have the opportunity, they went. Like when their time came up to reapply, someone else won the position, **someone else who had these beliefs.**”

(Teacher, Blue Cliffs HS)

“Just tell them it’s not the way we do it, and this is why, and it changes.”
(Principal, St Xavier’s PS)

A 'complicated conversation'

- Complex issues associated with leadership and staffing raised when exploring the process of policy enactment.
- School leaders had the 'complicated conversations' (Pinar, 2012) to ensure policy was enacted in ways that reflected their guiding philosophies. These 'conversations' reflected the ongoing tensions that placed students at the centre of decisions and actions.
- School leaders promoted a strong sense of agency and, more importantly, collective agency (Weiner, 2003).

Prioritising place and space

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Failing to notice

The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice. And because we fail to notice that we fail to notice, there is little we can do to change until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.

(Laing, 1970, p. 56)

What do you notice?



What is this?



- Large, open spaces which allow movement of sunlight across the room over the course of the day are favoured in Reggio Emilia facilities
- Light boxes, torches, mirrors, ‘nooks’ – tap into children’s curiosity about light and shadow

Change spaces to promote collaboration

- ‘We’ve got a flexible learning space now with different zones within it so the kids can work with anyone, anywhere in the space they want’ (Secondary principal)

Change spaces to promote collaboration



Change spaces to promote collaboration



Change spaces to promote collaboration



Create flexible spaces for different pedagogies

- ‘So most of the teaching is done in learning conversations with an individual or a small group rather than standing at the front’
- ‘The explicit teaching is done on request and when it’s needed, so they will say, ‘we don’t understand adding fractions, there’s four of us, can we have a lesson now...’

Create flexible spaces for different pedagogies



Create spaces that promote the use of technology



Create spaces that promote the use of technology



Create spaces to 'come together'



Create spaces to 'come together'



Create physically appealing spaces



Create physically appealing spaces



Conclusion

- We didn't enter our research schools looking for links between the physical learning environment and student behaviour.
- But ... we started to 'notice' how the two were related

Fostering an engaged and supportive school community

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“That one phone call was
a turnaround one”

“We have a student in Year 9 who is quite new to the school. He came from another school because he’d had some trouble there. He was disengaged and not working and got into trouble over petty little things all the time.

When he started, he came for a couple of days, and then wasn’t coming.

So it was the day before sports day and **I actually rang him, rang his mobile.”**

“That one phone call was a turnaround one”

‘I said, “I think you should come tomorrow. Tomorrow’s a good fun day.” And he said, “Oh I’m not in any events and I haven’t got anything to wear. What do I wear?” I said, “Well most kids will just wear casual clothes. If you can, dress in the colours of your house. But because it’s going to be hot, just wear something cool. And, I really look forward to seeing you in the morning.” I said this to him, and **he came, and he’s been every day since.** So **that one phone call was a turnaround one.**’

(Head of Middle School, Bethlehem College)

Engage all members of the community to develop a sense of belonging

Supporting families

‘There was an incident yesterday. The mother didn’t really know what to do with the other child. So he just stayed with us for an hour until mum could come back. **It’s about supporting the best way that you can**, knowing that if he then feels he’s in a safe and happy environment, then when he’s ready tomorrow to come back into his schooling, he will do that. **It’s about having that partnership with the family** - the mum knowing that, if she needs something out of the ordinary, the school will help out.’

(Principal, Carrick PS)

Ensuring there are teachers responsible for particular students

(Secondary)

Eg ‘advisory teachers’,
‘cases’

Working with and engaging the community

eg workshop with parents
on restorative practices,
playgroup

Use a variety of positive and respectful communication strategies

- Phone calls
 - ‘not only when things go wrong’ (Head MS, Bethlehem)
 - ‘beat the child home with a phone call to parents’ (Head MS, Bethlehem)
- Casual conversations with parents
- Photos in newsletters (class newsletters as well as school)
- Parent meetings – change for high school (advisory teachers)
- Email

- Schools demonstrated a move beyond current school rhetoric of community
 - Authentic
 - Lived
 - Deep
 - Intermeshed with other practices
- Improved engagement of students and less behaviour issues in schools
- Easier to manage behaviour issues when they arise

Enacting Humane Behaviour Policies and Practices

Enacting humane behaviour policies and practices

- Challenge and educate staff to enact humane behaviour policies and practices
 - Focus on engaging pedagogies rather than managing behaviours
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Moving Beyond the Conflict: Arlington Park

When I first came here it was a smallish school but it was a **very aggressive and very competitive community.**

We (Principal and Counsellor) just sat there and we looked at the video (on restorative practices) and we just looked at each other and went, **“This is what we need for our school”.**

So we talked to him and asked, “Do you do pupil free days for staff? Would you come and work with our students? Would you do workshops?” It cost us a lot of money but we decided that was the way we were going to go.

Moving Beyond the Conflict: Arlington Park PS

We came back to school and spoke to the staff. You could see some that were immediately excited and some who sat there going, “Yeah, here she goes again, yes she's mad.”

Now **the school and the community have changed**. You go out in the yard at recess and lunch times and it's **a very happy, peaceful place** generally.



Challenge and educate staff to enact humane behaviour policies and practices

“If someone comes to me and says such and such -instead of me going ‘yep I’ll sort it out.’ It’s well what do you want done about it? How can we solve it?’ So **it’s empowering the person coming to me rather than automatically solving that problem.**

I could solve the problem then I would have a really good relationship with that student. But then they’ll go back into the complaining teacher’s class and there’s no restoration that’s happened between them. It’s fine for me but it’s not for them. You get the ingrained behaviour.”

(Coordinator, Bethlehem College)

Challenge and educate staff to enact humane behaviour policies and practices

If someone comes to your door and they say, 'Johnnie's really misbehaving in class. He's being an absolute pain and I've had enough of him.' If then, as a leader, I say to them, 'Oh leave it with me, I'll do it.' Then you take a monkey on your back. And people initially think that's good for you to take their monkeys because they don't have to do anything more then. But what happens then, is you get so many monkeys on your back that you don't get to do the bigger picture things and, eventually they don't like that.

What we have to do is really **empower teachers to do something about it with the support of those people around so that they're empowered - they build the relationship with the child.** It's not taken away from them but you work on it together, as a team. And unless you have that team, the teachers can't do it because they are really under the pump.

(Head, Middle School Leader Bethlehem College)

Focus on engaging pedagogies rather than managing behaviours

“Sometimes children can be off task because they don’t actually know what they’re doing. So if you can pinpoint where they need to work on so that they **feel successful and they can actually work**, then there is no need – that they’re engaged – that they’re not disengaged.
(Teacher)

“The other things that helps behaviour here is that we try and **meet the children’s learning needs**”
(Principal)

Focus on engaging pedagogies rather than managing behaviours

“We used to have a **time out room that was the duty from hell**. You’d have 30 naughty boys all facing the wall, all laughing and jeering and doing all sorts of things. We don’t have a time out room haven’t needed one for a long time now...what I hated was having so many naughty kids in the room that you couldn’t speak to all of them and try and sort through what had happened. It was impossible to do, so this is a much better process. We still kept on with the time out room for a while but there became less and less children in there. And as **teachers became more aware of restorative practice they said, ‘Well there’s no point to having that room’**. So we went away from that and we just had the **sorting out duty**.”

(Allington Park Primary teacher)

Focus on engaging pedagogies rather than managing behaviours

“We didn’t set out on this aim of improving behaviour, we aimed to do it to improve education for the kids and as a result of what we have done, we’ve seen the behaviour improve markedly.”

“All that low level stuff, get back in your seat, can you be quiet ... doesn’t exist here anymore because the kids will be doing what they want to be doing at that time, so (a) they’re more engaged but (b) they’re not confined to a time and a space.”

“The simple data around behaviour management is there’s been a 97% reduction in kids being sent out of class. We were having a dozen a day. Last year, the entire year, in Year 8, 9 and 10 ... we had 12 students for the entire year sent out of class.”

‘[I was away], I got back and the staff said, “Oh yeah by the way Neil, we’ve closed the time out room”. ... The teachers voting to close the time out room when it was such a crutch before, there’s no way known that would have happened twelve months ago. But they looked at it and said, “Look we’re putting a full time staff member effectively in front of nobody.”

Blue Cliff HS Principal)

Adopt a range of problem solving and conflict resolution strategies

“That’s the benefits of the **restorative approach** and teachers talking through everything with their children”

(Primary principal)

“If there's a **problem we will sort through it**”

(Primary principal)

“Depending on the age of the children our first step is to sit as a group and **work through what the issues are**”

(Primary teacher)

“We look at why a child is misbehaving. Is there a reason? Is the work too easy? Is the work too hard? What are the problems at home? **What is happening?**”

(Primary teacher)

“Lots of talk... Sometimes I feel like that’s all I’m doing, but if the issues aren’t resolved then it doesn’t matter what I’m doing for the rest of the day, their students’ head is still back there and they’re hurting or they’re angry, and the **issues need to be resolved**”

(Primary teacher)

Conclusions

- Schools can develop and enact student behaviour policies in ways that are coherent, respectful and complementary.
- Schools do policy work related to student behaviour in complex ways and do not 'implement' top-down, externally generated policies.
- Principals acknowledged and utilised the power of other school leaders by forming teams of enthusiasts, narrators and transactors to influence and guide decisions and actions.
- School leaders, guided by clear philosophies that foregrounded the rights of students, orchestrated the collective efforts of staff by enacting behaviour policy as a 'collective enterprise' (Ball et al. 2011a, p. 9).

Conclusions

- An enduring commitment to reject deficit views of students and their families provided the essential rationale for active policy work and micropolitical activity.
- Continually emphasising student engagement rather than behaviour management helped focus policy work towards a caring approach to teaching and learning.
- School leaders in this study recognised the importance of contextual dimensions in influencing policy work. They actively worked on these contextual dimensions to help achieve a collective policy approach. Principals were extremely micropolitically active and savvy in adopting multiple policy actor roles, often simultaneously. They carefully employed and enlisted enthusiasts to facilitate policy work that aligned with their philosophical aspirations.

Conclusions

- Finally, in these schools, behaviour-related policy was enacted in ways that were largely consistent with the philosophical aspirations of their leaders.
- This study provides a deeper understanding of how school leaders and teachers interpret, translate and enact behaviour policies in a policy context full of contradictions and competing demands in ways that promote student engagement in schooling and respect the rights of students in schools.

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