

## Hidden Educational Challenges during the Pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on pupil behaviour

As an organisation supporting a wide variety of educational settings, Team Teach has surveyed staff and trainers views regarding the key challenges they have faced throughout the pandemic. The survey reveals the negative impact the pandemic has had on pupil behaviour and highlights new and emerging behaviour trends that have emerged as a result.

With over 20 years experience, Team Teach would be delighted to share our experiences and lessons learnt to support the Government and education system in developing solutions to tackle the impact of COVID-19 - [reducing the effects to the disadvantage gap, increasing outcomes for pupils, and mitigating teacher concerns about pupil behaviour and safety.](#)

### Insights from the sector

Has COVID had a negative impact on pupil behaviour?



Almost 70% of responses highlighted that COVID-19 has negatively impacted pupil behaviour.

The pandemic has led to a number of behaviour trends, with responses outlining that there has been an increase in:

- Anxiety driven behaviour
- Isolation / loss of social skills
- Lack of engagement
- Poor mental health

“ We have witnessed more anxiety, more self-harming behaviours”

“ Many pupils on return to school are struggling with being back at school, some have refused to re-engage with schools. These pupils have become more self-directed and seek higher need to control their environment and interactions requiring additional support to be put in place”

“ Deterioration in mental health wellbeing due to lack of opportunities and positive stimulation”

Has COVID led to the emergence of any 'new behaviours'? / Emergence of 'new behaviour' trends



Over 40% of responses outlined that they have witnessed the emergence of 'new behaviours' since the pandemic.

Responses described a number of emerging themes of pupil behaviour, including:

- Violence/ aggression towards staff
- Apathy/ refusal behaviours
- OCD tendencies/ repetitive behaviours

“ Physical violence towards staff and other children has become more extreme in a larger number of children”

“ Young children are extremely anxious and I'm seeing more repetitive behaviours emerge that weren't there before”

“ More 'what's the point' and refusal behaviours – a lack of trust in adults and the system, more apathy and low motivation”

### Team Teach Analysis

- ▶ While the focus of the Government's response to the impact of COVID on schools has primarily been lost learning, it is clear from these figures that the impact on children's behaviours has been profound
- ▶ The decline in behaviour standards experienced by over two thirds of respondents indicates an enormous issue that will continue to impact upon pupils, teachers and schools beyond the end of the pandemic
- ▶ Similarly, the rise in new behaviours reported by over 40% of respondents demonstrates that the pandemic is the driving force behind these changes in pupil behaviour
- ▶ The respondents give examples of the mental health challenges that accompany this behaviour, and decisive action must be taken to safeguard pupil's wellbeing if the education system is ever to return even to its pre-pandemic behaviour levels

### The solution – positive behaviour management training

- ▶ Managing behaviour has been recognised as key to successful teaching, with its value heightened during the pandemic. Increasing pastoral and behavioural support, alongside other out-of-school services – such as early intervention, mental health, and social services – can play a vital role in reversing the effects of the pandemic on pupil and classroom behaviour
- ▶ Providing effective pastoral and behaviour support for disadvantaged pupils, will be vital in levelling up areas where the pandemic has hit hardest
- ▶ It is also vital that education staff and parents have access to positive behaviour management training to ensure they are equipped to understand and respond to their child's behaviour/ new emerging behaviours as a result of the pandemic

### Asks/ what needs to happen

While we welcome the governments investment in tutoring as part of its education recovery plan, this research emphasises that without a similar focus on behaviour support there is a real and substantive risk that pupils will continue to face significant challenges.

Tutoring alone cannot solve the increasing number of pupils who are struggling to engage with learning as a result of the pandemic. Team Teach believe that behaviour support strategies should form the bedrock from which these tutoring programmes can thrive.

#### As a result:

- ▶ We are calling on the DfE to increase the provision of positive behaviour management training for schools, equipping teachers and parents with the skills to tackle pupil behaviour challenges resulting from COVID-19
- ▶ We are calling on the DfE to consider the implementation of positive behaviour management training programmes across 'Behaviour Hubs'. By embedding such programmes, the DfE can obtain consistency across all geographies to help assess regional differentiation in pupil behaviour and track progress at schools and MAT as they seek to improve their behaviour culture
- ▶ We are calling on the DfE to consider the introduction of a framework for behaviour training for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Such a framework will ensure consistency and help ensure that the next generation of teachers understand the important principles of behaviour management
- ▶ We also believe that opening access to behaviour management training for parents could have a huge impact on those most badly affected by the pandemic.

## About TeamTeach

Team Teach is an experienced and award-winning provider of positive behaviour management training for schools. We equip teachers and teams with the tools to manage challenging behaviour and build positive relationships, leading to better educational outcome experiences for pupils and teachers.

Since being founded in 1997, Team Teach has developed a nationwide reach in the United Kingdom, training more than 75,000 teachers in 4,500 schools, and an increasing number of parents every year.

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