



# Behaviour Scenarios

A specially commissioned set of resources for tutors, school mentors and trainee teachers

Scenario 15: Managing a pupil who is angry

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A pupil is notorious in the school for having a “short fuse”. He/she “blows up” in your lesson. How can you help to calm the pupil down?

What do you do?

## Key Learning Outcomes

- \* Gaining confidence and skills in managing anger.
- \* Identifying ways of using school procedures to assist in difficult situations.

## What do you do?

1. Raise your voice and tell the pupil firmly to sit down.
2. Tell the pupil to leave the room at once.
3. Lower your voice. Tell the pupil that you understand that he/she is angry and that you will sort the situation out when he/she is calm.
4. Send another pupil for help at once.
5. Follow the school's Individual Education Plan for this pupil.

## What may be the *best* choice?

**4. Follow the school's Individual Education Plan for this pupil.** If no I.E.P. is available you may need to use a strategy to calm the situation down, for example,

**3. Tell the pupil you understand and will sort it out when he/she is calm**

If the pupil might be a danger to him or herself, or to others, because of the state of anger reached, seek extra help.

## How might you prevent a recurrence?

1. There should be a proper plan for what to do in this situation. It has happened before and needs a consistent approach based on what works best with this individual. Ask about it. If a plan is not available, request support.
2. Always stay calm yourself, do not get into an argument with the pupil– be firm but never aggressive.
3. Take part in the follow-up so that your authority is established and you find out about the school's approach in practice.

## Underlying principles

- There are many reasons why a pupil might become angry. The antecedents for this may well be out of your control.
- Anger management is a skill which most teachers find useful.
- Pupils who are angry respond better to a firm, understanding, calm, response than to one which attempts to control or admonish.
- Showing empathy, offering choices and dealing with the situation when the pupil is calm, are all useful approaches.
- If you need help, ask for it, don't put yourself or pupils at risk.

## Rights and Responsibilities

- Resolving this situation is the responsibility of the school as well as the individual teacher.
- It is reasonable for you to expect an intervention plan which provides advice and support for staff who work with or have contact with the pupil.
- Developing the skills needed to manage angry pupils is your responsibility. This includes risk assessment and risk avoidance.
- Many schools provide appropriate training for pupils and staff in anger management – all should.

## Activities to try

1. Think of situations where you were angry. What made it worse and what calmed you down? Share these experiences and list the approaches which could be successful for managing anger in the classroom.
2. Describe any incident you have seen in a classroom where a pupil lost his or her temper. Which responses from the teacher/trainee helped and which (if any) hindered or had no effect.
3. Devise and try out a role play to illustrate the above points. Present it to the group.
4. Ask to see any I.E.P.s in your schools for pupils with anger management problems. If none exist, devise one for a pupil you know and share it with the group.

## Want to find out more? References on the B4L site

- B4L item - [Managing Pupil Behaviour](#)
- B4L item - [Be cool, stay cool](#)
- Glossary item - [Social, Emotional Behaviour Skills \(SEBS\)](#)
- Glossary item - [Emotional Development](#)
- Teachers TV – [Primary Special Needs - Tackling Challenging Behaviour 1](#)
- Teachers TV – [Primary Special Needs - Tackling Challenging Behaviour 2](#)
- Teachers TV - [Primary Special Needs - Emotional Literacy: The Hightown ELSAs](#)
- Teachers TV - [Primary Teaching Assistants: Anger Management](#)