

8.1 What is Behaviour?

Behaviour is something a person does that can be observed and measured.

In school setting, some student behaviour is labeled *misbehaviour* or *challenging behaviour* because this behaviour is disruptive or offensive to others. Challenging behaviours are often responded to with consequences or punishments, ranging from a loss of privilege to exclusion from school. This approach can work for some students, but students with chronically challenging behaviours often do not respond to these strategies.

To support students with challenging or complex behaviour, it is key to remember that, according to Jessica Minahan, author of *The Behaviour Code*:

- *Behaviour is communication.*
- *Misbehavior is a symptom and has an underlying cause.*
- *Behaviour has a function.*
- *Behaviour occurs in patterns.*
- *Behaviour can be changed.*
- *The only behaviour a teacher can control is their own*

In order to respond effectively respond to challenging behaviour, school staff needs to:

- Understand the pattern of the behaviour
- Understand the function of the behaviour
- Understand the underlying cause of the behaviour as an underdeveloped skill and teach that skill
- Understand how to effectively respond to the behaviour in a way that changes it

Functional or Positive Behaviour Plans are a strategy to meet these goals. Functional behaviour plans use behavioural data to identify the function of the behaviour, target the needed skills, and focus on the behaviour of the adults to improve the behaviour of the child.

For more information, please see Inclusive Education Procedures:

- 8.2 What is Functional Behaviour?
- 8.3 What is a Functional Behaviour Plan?
- 8.4 Functional Behaviour (FAIRS) Plan and ABC Templates
- 8.5 Complex Behavior Response Flow Chart