

Being part of your own performance management

More and more schools are involving all members of their support staff in their performance management processes. As a consequence, it is likely to be important for you to understand what this entails so that, when given the opportunity, you can become actively involved.

NAPTA, through its **Workforce Development Programme (WDP)**, suggests that successful performance management or review usually involves a clearly defined annual cycle which involves five core principles:

1 Performance management is inclusive – The performance management cycle involves opportunities for all staff, within the context of the contribution they make to the school.

2 Performance management is based on an ongoing professional dialogue – Both manager and staff member have the chance to talk and listen. The process can then be seen as being led by an agreement, not an imposition.

3 There should be no surprises – The cycle follows a clear path, starting with an opportunity for support staff to self-review, and followed by a positive process of discussion and development. This enables everyone to be aware of what is going on at each stage of the process. You can also look to the future to plan your own professional development.

4 The cycle addresses the needs of individuals and the institution – There should be a balance between the needs of the school and your own aspirations.

5 The cycle is manageable for all – By using different approaches and tools, the whole process can be constructive and not too time-consuming.

Where the NAPTA **WDP** is in use, the overall process can involve:

- self-evaluation
- an individual review meeting to discuss your personal report and your professional aspirations, agree your targets for the coming year and decide on the evidence that you will need to gather and present
- being involved in appropriate development activities and having opportunities to take on wider responsibilities
- meeting again with your manager to ensure that you are happy and making the necessary progress
- continuing your personal development work.



Coping with aggressive children

Children can be aggressive by, for example, being over-competitive, intimidating, belligerent, confrontational, or even physically threatening. Clearly, this type of behaviour can be disturbing and very disruptive because adults are distracted by what the aggressive child is doing and the affect they are having on other children.

It is important that adults do not reflect the pupil's aggressive behaviour by being aggressive in return. As aggressive pupils usually tend to be very competitive and cannot bear to lose, it is important not to feel that you have to win every confrontation.

Dealing with such pupils, especially if there is more than one in a class, is far from easy. Stay calm and try to diffuse the situation. Try to prevent the aggressive child from getting anything out of a confrontation.

Some hints and tips

Try to:

- Give aggressive pupils time to calm down and cool off before trying to reason with them; take them somewhere calm and quiet.
- Talk to them alone – an audience can make things worse.
- Convince them that aggressive behaviour is not the only way to solve a problem.
- Encourage them to stay calm, back away from difficult situations, talk through disputes, avoid upsetting others, etc.

- Be as precise as possible. Rather than say, 'I want to talk about the problem you had at playtime' say, 'I want to talk about why you shouted in Jane's face and pushed her against the wall at playtime'.
- Praise positive behaviour.
- Set the child some easy goals to achieve with, for example, a star chart for good behaviour.
- Consider whether counselling might be appropriate – aggressive pupils can, for example, be unpopular with their peers and it might be possible to change this through regular counselling sessions.
- If there are predictable incidents that trigger a reaction, try to minimise them. Class mates may find it amusing to try to provoke such a reaction as often as possible.
- Talk to the rest of the class about the problem – when the pupil concerned is out of the room – and discuss strategies to avoid confrontations.



Sunflower competition

A big thank you to all schools who sent in photos of their wonderful sunflowers. We hope you all enjoyed our summer competition. We are pleased to announce that Saltersgate Junior School in Scawsby, Doncaster is the winner with the tallest sunflowers at over three metres high!

The school was presented with a gardening and outdoor activity kit plus a pack of science resources. See the NAPTA Web site at www.napta.org.uk for photos of the winning sunflower.

With winter now setting in, the sunflower seeds can be collected and stored for planting again next spring. Or the children may prefer to let the birds feed on the sunflower heads!



Winter competition

We would like to see your best photos from the bird-watching project that we launched in the spring. Have you taken a perfect picture, seen an unusual bird, or snapped birds behaving in an interesting way? Send your photos to birds@napta.org.uk. The winner will be announced on the NAPTA Web site at www.napta.org.uk.

Feedback

If you have any suggestions for future topics or questions, please email info@napta.org.uk.



Teaching assistants and music

The Esmee Fairbairn Foundation is trying to find out how much, and in what ways, teaching assistants are involved in supporting music-making and singing in primary schools. We need your help to do this. Let us know what happens with music in your school and how far support staff are involved in music-making and learning with your pupils. See the full article and the questions we would like you to answer for us on the NAPTA Web site at www.napta.org.uk.