IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT ON THE FIELD
– A Handbook for Coaches

SCHOOLS’ POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME:
Promoting Well-being Through Physical Education in Schools
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This handbook has been designed to promote the use of positive behaviour management techniques by coaches. It provides coaches with an easy to follow guide to implementing positive behaviour management strategies as they interact with students on the field. It is hoped that coaches using this booklet will gain an understanding of the benefits of positive behaviour management and discover new and effective methods to positively support appropriate behaviour on the field.

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– Elaine King

– Lisa McClean-Trotman

Consultant: Nicole Lynch
POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT AND SPORTS

Managing our children's behaviour is always a challenge for adults. This is no exception for Coaches.

In the sporting environment some of the behaviour problems include lying, disrespect, non-compliance, tardiness, bullying, fighting, swearing, not wearing or bringing the correct gear. Some of these behaviours can lead to unsafe sporting environments and create unwanted disruptions. If these behaviours are not effectively managed, performance, learning and enjoyment of the sports can suffer.

Positive behaviour management offers a set of respectful strategies which aim to increase and maintain appropriate behaviour while decreasing inappropriate behaviour. In contrast to traditional approaches to discipline, which tend to be reactive and punitive, positive behaviour management is proactive and places an emphasis on teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviour.

There are several benefits associated with the use of positive behaviour management on the field.

- Increased time on task equals more time for learning and playing
- A positive group climate which is characterized by trust and respect
- Clearly defined rights, relationships and responsibilities between everyone in the sporting environment
- Motivated participants
- Increased self-discipline
- Increased self-esteem and confidence
- Safe, orderly environments
- Consistent and fair consequences for problem behaviours
WHAT ARE THE PRINCIPLES OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT?

**PRINCIPLE #1: Recognise that discipline is more than punishment**

PBM sees discipline as a process to teach a child acceptable social behaviour by promoting positive values and proactively focusing on the behaviour that we want the child to learn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline is achieved through:</th>
<th>Punishment is viewed as imposing a penalty for wrong doing to control behaviour through means such as:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The promotion of values</td>
<td>- Threatening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Teaching the expected behaviour</td>
<td>- Slapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Acknowledging correct behaviour</td>
<td>- Insulting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Correcting misbehaviour</td>
<td>- Shouting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Respectful communication</td>
<td>- Hitting with objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Non-violent strategies</td>
<td>- Embarrassing the child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Excessive physical activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRINCIPLE #2: Lead by Example**

As a coach, you set the tone for the behaviour in your group. To manage players’ behaviour effectively it is essential that you first understand your own behavior and make adjustments where necessary. By improving your behaviour management style you create a more positive sporting environment.

Ask yourself these questions:

**Question:**

- How do I you react to misbehavior?
- How effective has this reaction been?
- In which situations does it work best?
- In which situations is it ineffective?
- Is my style appropriate for all participants?
- How can my management of behaviour be improved?

**Question:** *What is my discipline style?*

Discipline styles can be thought to fall along a continuum. Where are you along the continuum?
This table describes the attributes of coaches based on their discipline style. The arrow below it shows the impact on student self-responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assertive</th>
<th>Laissez Faire</th>
<th>Aggressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Is firm but fair</td>
<td>✓ Allows players to do as they please</td>
<td>✓ Is harsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Builds positive relationships with participants</td>
<td>✓ Appears uninterested</td>
<td>✓ Impairs relationships with harsh interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Helps participants understand what is expected of them</td>
<td>✓ Has few behavioural expectations which are seldom outlined to players</td>
<td>✓ Does not always explain what is expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Provides opportunities to practice the expected behaviours</td>
<td>✓ Does not take the time to provide opportunities for participants to practice</td>
<td>✓ Expects participants to “know” how to behave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Reinforces appropriate behaviour</td>
<td>✓ Is inconsistent in reinforcing appropriate behaviour</td>
<td>✓ Rarely acknowledges positive behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Communicates calmly</td>
<td>✓ Is withdrawn</td>
<td>✓ Shouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Provides fair and consistent consequences for misbehaviour</td>
<td>✓ Ignores misbehaviour</td>
<td>✓ Responds severely to misbehaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Listens to players and allows them to participate in meaningful ways</td>
<td>✓ Does little to encourage meaningful participation</td>
<td>✓ Rarely allows for student input</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question:** Do I practice and model calm, respectful behaviour when dealing with players who pose a challenge?

**These tips can help you to respond calmly:**
- Take a breath before responding
- Think before you react
- Choose your words carefully
- Pay attention to your body language
IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT ON THE FIELD

**PRINCIPLE #3:** In order to support behaviour effectively we all must share a common understanding of behaviour.

Behaviour is subjective. How we view and respond to behaviour is influenced by many factors such as our personal values, past experiences and our upbringing. Coaches, teachers and other persons working with youth often have different standards of acceptable behaviour. However, in order to manage behaviour more effectively, all those involved must move towards a common understanding of behaviour.

**DO YOU KNOW WHAT INFLUENCES MISBEHAVIOUR?**

PBM recognizes that there are a variety of potential factors underlying misbehaviour during sporting activities.

**Here are a few examples:**

1. Biological factors (hunger, fatigue, illness)
2. Fear factors (the dark, new places, new people)
3. A need for attention
4. Past or ongoing trauma
5. Boredom
6. Lack of the required skills
7. Students not taught the specific routines, behavioural expectations or procedures
8. Inadequate adult supervision

**PRINCIPLE #4:** Positive behaviour stems from healthy relationships between coaches and participants.

Children tend not to give of their best if they think adults don’t care about them. Building positive relationships between coaches and participants can lead to greater motivation and better performance during sporting activities.
How to Build Positive Relationships during Sports

- Get to know your players
- Listen
- Model appropriate behaviours and attitudes
- Create a no-blame culture
- Build a culture of tolerance
- Celebrate successes
- Demonstrate fairness, respect, warmth and empathy
- Recognize and appreciate the strengths, differences and abilities of all players

SIX STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT ON THE FIELD

STRATEGY #1: Define in advance what are Acceptable and Unacceptable Behaviours

Rate the following behaviours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviour</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE</th>
<th>UNACCEPTABLE BUT NOT SERIOUS</th>
<th>ACCEPTABLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disrespect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disruption</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsafe Play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tardiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Show for Game</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swearing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lying</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disobedience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teasing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical aggression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimidation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of cell phone during training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once you have defined unacceptable and non-acceptable behaviours, your decision should be communicated to all participants and parents. With older players you can have them sign off on these in the form of a contract.
STRATEGY # 2: Set clear expectations

Select three to five expectations to guide behaviour for participants, assistant coaches, parents and spectators.

Expectations should be positively stated, memorable, concise and clear. They should also be applicable to all settings (e.g. playing field, practice session, bathroom, group discussions). Here is an example of expectations:

- Be Prepared
- Be Productive
- Be Fair
- Be Cooperative
- Be Committed
- Be Respectful

Acronyms can be used for added impact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Be the BEST!</th>
<th>REACH!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be ready</td>
<td>Respect self, others and the environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strive for Excellence</td>
<td>Enjoy the game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Safe</td>
<td>Accept differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Tolerant</td>
<td>Communicate positively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When setting expectations consider the following:

- What behavioural challenges do you experience in your groups?
- What behaviours do expect from your students?
- What kinds of qualities would you like them to demonstrate in their interactions?

STRATEGY # 3: Communicate the expectations

Once the expectations have been selected, they should be taught to players using various techniques and these include:

- Role plays
- Demonstrations
- Guided practices
- Using examples and non-examples
- Teachable moments
- Newsletters
- Memorabilia
- T-shirts etc.

Have frequent booster trainings to review the expectations. The beginning of a new term, a new season or return from a break provides a natural opportunity for the review.

The expectations should be communicated to parents and spectators through correspondence, notices, signs and posters. A reminder should be given at each training session and game.

**STRATEGY # 4: Establish clear consequences for problem behaviours**

Although you have established clear expectations, there will still be some participants who engage in inappropriate behaviour. A system should be created beforehand to pre-determine how minor and serious misbehaviour will be handled when they occur. This system should be communicated to all participants, their parents and Assistant Coaches.

**Responding to Minor Behaviour Problems**

How we respond to misbehavior can either diffuse the situation or increase the misbehavior. An effective response to minor problem behaviours should include the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCEDURE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompts – with a visual or verbal cue to signal the occurrence of the misbehaviour</td>
<td>“Jason, I noticed you ______.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redirect – Restate the matrix behaviour that is expected</td>
<td>“Shara, right now you are expected to ________.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reteach – Tell, show, practice and acknowledge the expected behaviour. Pre-correct before the matrix behaviour is expected in the future.</td>
<td>“What are you expected to do right now Marc?” (Wait to see if student can state.) “You are expected to _______. Show me what that looks like.” Reinforce when expected behaviour is done correctly. Next time Marc is asked to perform that behaviour give a pre-correct such as, “Marc, remember this is when you ______.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference with the student- Have a private conversation with the student to problem solve together how the student can meet expectations. Report cards, individual behaviour charts, think sheets can be introduced during the conference with students. Be sure to discuss with parents.</td>
<td>Privately say, “Sheryl you are (state misbehavior). Right now you are expected to _______. How can you (expected behaviour)?” “Let’s practice (expected behaviour). Here is a chart that will help you.” (Describe how the individual behaviour chart will work.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sometimes it’s not what we say but how we say it. By following these guidelines you will increase your chances of your corrective feedback being positively received.

- **Be Calm** – Using professional and composed voice (tone and volume)
- **Be Consistent** – Respond in the agreed manner when infractions take place
- **Be Brief** – Short and concise response, disengage quickly
- **Be Respectful** – Polite response, free of sarcasm, given in private where possible
- **Be Specific** – Identify the observable behaviour from your expectations that was violated

### Responding to Persistent or Serious Misbehaviour

In some instances, despite correction and prompts, participants will continue to misbehave. In these cases a consequence is required. The following are examples of appropriate consequences:

- Verbal warning
- The “look”
- Verbal reprimand (without being abusive)
- Removal of privileges (e.g. not allow to play in an upcoming match or game regardless of how good they are at the game)
- Time out (for younger children)
- Completion of a Think Sheet (see appendix)
- One-on-one meeting with student
- Behaviour Contract
- Note sent home
- Parent conference
- Parent/ player Conference
- Referral for counselling

**TIP**

- Consequences do not need to be harsh to bring about a change in behaviour.
- Sports provide training for life! The discipline of sports helps students to gain valuable life skills which help them to cope with life’s challenges, think critically, exercise judgment and problem solve.

**DID YOU KNOW?**
STRATEGY # 5: **Use a visible system to assign consequences and help participants to monitor their behaviour during activities.**

Some students need the support that a visual behaviour tool provides.

A colour coded card system is cost effective and easy to implement especially for younger players. (Please see appendix for an example of a system for older players.)

Example:

Green = On task/ Following Expectations

Yellow = Warning

Red = Consequence (e.g. Time out, Student/Coach conference)

Purple = Report to Parents

Students start out with green cards. When an infraction is committed they are given a yellow card. If they correct their behaviour they are allowed to return the yellow card and recover their green card. If behaviour persists they receive a red card and a consequence is given. A purple card is given for persistent inappropriate behaviour despite receiving a consequence or for serious infractions. Those who have remained on green for the session receive a non-tangible or tangible reward.

STRATEGY # 6: **Acknowledge appropriate behaviour**

Acknowledging positive behaviour is an essential feature of positive behaviour management. A culture of acknowledgement builds a positive sporting environment and encourages positive behaviour on and off the field from everyone involved.

*Wondering how to acknowledge positive behaviour?*

In sports we tend to acknowledge the players who score the most goals, make the most runs and win the tournaments. But with positive behaviour management we also celebrate and recognise those who consistently make the good choices and who demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes you desire for your team. For example those who are always on time, those who always turn up for practice and who are always correctly attired. Let players know by your words and actions that you are pleased that they are following the expectations which you taught them. When children know that you notice and appreciate the good efforts they’re making, they will be more motivated to continue to give of their best.

*Remember to acknowledge those players who give of their best even if their efforts don’t lead to them becoming top scoring players.*
The following techniques will help you to encourage appropriate behaviour and reinforce it.

1. Marbles in a Jar: Drop a marble into a jar when you notice a participant following the expectations, or when the whole group is following directions. When the jar is filled, reward the team with a fun activity.

2. Share Good News with Parents: Often parents receive news only when there is a problem. Send home positive notes and make positive phone calls to let parents know when their child is behaving appropriately.

3. Verbal Recognition

4. Chants/Cheers

5. Positive gestures: Claps, winks, handshakes or a pat on the shoulder

6. Caught Being Good Ticket

7. Celebration at School Assemblies

8. Team Player of the Month Award which goes to the team member who exhibits respect and the other attributes that are in your expectations

DID YOU KNOW?

- Having an acknowledgement system need not be expensive. Non-tangible rewards are very effective! In fact, one of the most powerful reinforcers of appropriate behaviour is positive adult attention.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER - DEVELOPING A BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Now that you have some strategies that will help you to implement positive behaviour management with your players, the next step is to determine which ones you will use. It is suggested that you develop, communicate and post these strategies in the form of a written behaviour policy.

A behaviour policy helps to define standards of behaviour expected from coaches, participants, parents and spectators. It holds all stakeholders accountable and serves as a reminder of agreed standards. The policy should be reviewed with participants and parents regularly.

The behaviour policy should outline:

- 3-5 Positively Stated Expectations
- Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour
- Incentives for Encouraging Appropriate Behaviour
Outline your behaviour policy below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectations:</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequences:</th>
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<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incentives:</th>
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</table>

**Involving Parents More Effectively in Sports**

We know that students do better when their parents are involved but it can be a challenge to find ways to encourage greater parental participation in sports. Here are some guidelines for involving parents more effectively:

- Meet with parents at the beginning of your activities with the children
- Get to know the parents. What are their skills? How can these skills be used to support the team?
- Discuss the group expectations with parents and encourage them to have similar expectations at home.
- Communicate frequently with parents in varied forms. (Fliers, Newsletters, Parent Notes, Websites, Facebook, E-mail, Telephone calls, Parent Meetings)
- Provide parents with varied methods to provide feedback (suggestion box, surveys, feedback forms)
- Use positive notes to share good news with parents more frequently. Letters, e-mails and phone calls can also be used.
- When there is a disciplinary problem, discuss the issue with parents in a supportive manner.
- Acknowledge parents’ contributions of time, support or funding.
APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLE OF A THINK SHEET

THINK SHEET

The expectation I chose to ignore was:
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

The inappropriate behaviour I displayed was:
_________________________________________________________________________________________

Reasons for my behaviour:
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

How did my behaviour affect my team-mates?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

How did my behaviour affect me?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

Describe what you will choose to do differently next time?
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________

Signature ___________________________________ Date ______________________________
APPENDIX 2 EXAMPLE OF A BEHAVIOUR CONTRACT

BEHAVIOUR CONTRACT

I, __________________________________________ declare on this date, __________________ that I agree to do the following:

1. ______________________________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________________________

My efforts at meeting these goals will be considered successful when:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

When I successfully complete the terms of this contract, I will be rewarded by:

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

I understand that the consequences of not meeting these goals will include:

1. ______________________________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________  __________________________
Player’s Signature            Coach’s Signature

______________________________
Parent’s/Guardian’s Signature

______________________________
Ending Date of Contract
APPENDIX 3 EXAMPLE OF A VISUAL BEHAVIOUR TOOL FOR ADOLESCENTS

TICKETS: A Visual System for Monitoring Behaviour

Goal cards are given to participants who meet expectations. Tickets are raffled to choose to randomly select a participant or two to receive a prize.

Yellow Cards are given to participants who display moderately inappropriate behaviour. Examples of consequences for these participants include think sheets, time outs or a conference with student.

Red cards are given to participants who commit major offences or who continue to commit moderate offences. Examples of consequences for these participants include parent and school notification, parent conference or referral to counsellor.
APPENDIX 4 EXAMPLE OF A BEHAVIOUR POLICY

STRIDERS ATHLETIC CLUB

Behaviour Policy

Here at Striders Athletic Club we expect that coaches, players, parents and spectators will be:

► Respectful
  – We will follow the behaviour policy
  – We will use non-offensive language
  – We treat others as we would like to be treated
  – We will observe the dress code
  – We will accept the official's decision gracefully

► Responsible
  – We will arrive on time
  – We will have the appropriate gear
  – We will prepare for games
  – We will accept and learn from consequences
  – We will adhere to the behavioural expectations
  – We will lead by example

► Fair
  – We will follow the rules and spirit of the game
  – We will display good sportsmanship at all times
  – We will be transparent in our decisions
  – We will accept that it is not about winning at all costs

We will use the following disciplinary consequences for players who do not meet the Club's expectations

- Verbal correction
- Withdrawal of privilege
- Completion of a Think Sheet
- One-on-one meeting with student
- Behaviour Contracts
- Note sent home
- Parent conference
- Parent/ player Conference

We will acknowledge those players who meet the expectations through:

1. Verbal Recognition
2. The Team Chant
3. Caught Being Good Tickets
4. Team Player of the Month Award
5. End of Season Awards