

# NATURAL AND LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES AND RELATIONSHIP REPAIR

## FOR EDUCATION STAFF

This resource has been created utilising ideas, principles and concepts developed by Hughes (2009); Golding and Hughes (2012); Golding (2013); Siegel and Bryson (2015).

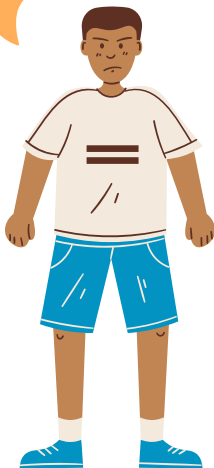
Consequences help show children and young people that they have an impact on the world and can help to establish secure boundaries. It is important that consequences are natural or logical in order to show cause and effect e.g. the consequences need to be clearly linked to the behaviour. Children/young people who experienced difficulties in early childhood can often have beliefs that they must be inherently 'bad', rather than recognising that it is the behaviour that is causing the problem. Traditional behaviour management strategies, (isolation from peers through detentions or exclusions, punishments for 'negative' behaviour and rewards for 'positive' behaviour) aim to address behaviour, but can fail to link cause and effect - often leading to feelings of shame (see 'Understanding Shame' resource for more on this).

'I have no impact on the world.  
I am invisible.'

'I'm a bad person.'  
'I'm not good enough'



'What is the behaviour trying to say?'



Children/young people who have difficulties in their childhood are often sensitive to anything that they perceive as unfair (because life has been so unfair to them). They need approaches that help heal what they have experienced, not correct the way they manage their emotions. Behaviour is a form of communication (explained in more detail in our 'understanding behaviour' resource). Children act in ways that may seem inappropriate because they have not found a way to express their feelings and needs more effectively. We must look behind the behaviour to what they are trying to tell us, not just focus on the behaviour itself.

All consequences should be clearly connected and linked to the behaviour. The consequence is then explained as being a result of a choice the child/young person made, rather than being experienced as a punishment. This will help them to begin to realise they have an impact on the world. During these times it is helpful for the adult to remain empathic with them whilst they experience the consequence; allowing the relationship to remain unharmed. Consequences can also be part of building and strengthening the relationship, if done collaboratively. Below are examples of the 3 types of consequences; Natural, Logical, and Illogical.

## NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Natural consequences occur without you having to do anything e.g. when a pupil doesn't complete homework, they have to admit to the teacher that they haven't done it, if they refuse to eat lunch they will be hungry, if they refuse to wear a coat outside and it rains they will get wet, or if they turn up late to class, they miss the instructions and won't understand the work. This helps pupils to learn cause and effect. It is also a time for education staff to provide nurture. This will help the pupil to learn that they can trust you to help them, and that when they make a mistake they will still be valued by adults who care about them.

Although natural consequences can help children and young people, **there are times where natural consequences are not suitable:**

1. When they could be at risk e.g. putting themselves or others in danger
2. When natural consequences have negative impacts on others e.g. damaging others property / hurting other people
3. When the natural consequences don't seem negative to the young person but the natural consequences could impact their health and wellbeing e.g. consumption of energy drinks may lead to a ban in school and confiscation

How to **provide nurture** during natural consequences:

1. Avoid lectures e.g. "I told you so."
2. Show empathy and validate their feelings.
3. Provide comfort.



## EXAMPLES OF NATURAL CONSEQUENCES IN EDUCATION SETTINGS

- Fighting with another pupil, might result in them **hurting their hand**.
- If a pupil doesn't do their homework, they have to **explain to the teacher the next day**.
- If a pupil stays up late and is late for school, they will **feel tired** and have to explain why they are late.
- If a pupil is unkind to someone on the playground or yard, they **may not want to be their friend anymore**.

# LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

If natural consequences are not possible or safe you should use Logical Consequences. These are consequences that are enforced by adult in charge (education staff) and should be directly linked to the behaviour.

**For example**, if a pupil is playing with a football in class, after being told to stop and it hits somebody.

- The **Natural Consequence** is that they have hurt someone and they feel bad. This behaviour is unsafe, so a logical consequence is likely needed.
- The **Logical Consequence** is that the pupil's football is removed for the rest of the day and they work with an adult to apologise for hurting the other pupil.

The child should then start learning cause and effect e.g. **If** I don't listen when I am doing something unsafe, **then** I will not be able to play responsibility and have to repair the damage to someone else.

When thinking of Logical consequences remember the 3Rs of consequences:

- **Related** – Must be related to the behaviour.
- **Respectful** – Ensure not to blame or shame the child/young person.
- **Reasonable** – The child/young person and the adult must see the consequence as reasonable. Also guarantee you can carry out the consequence. If you can't then they will not believe future consequences.

**IMPORTANTLY REMEMBER** to carry out this consequence with empathy and ensure the child/young person is not hurt by the consequence (do not shame).



## EXAMPLES OF LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES IN EDUCATION SETTINGS

- If the pupil is tripping up their peers in the lunch queue, they will have to queue **with an adult**.
- If the pupil arrives late to lesson without a valid reason, they will stay in for 10 minutes to complete the work missed, **alongside the class teacher**.
- If a pupil breaks something out of anger. They have **'time-in'** with a key adult to emotionally regulate. Once calm they help the caretaker **fix what is broken**.
- If a pupil says something horrible to a teacher. They should be **supported to repair the relationship**. The adult must also be genuinely willing to repair the relationship too.
- A pupil waves scissors around. The **scissors are removed** for the remainder of the art lesson.

# ILLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Illogical Consequences provide no learning experience for the child because the consequence does not directly link to the behaviour e.g. child/young person refuses to do the work in class and the teacher confiscates their mobile phone for the day. When the child/young person finds it difficult to understand the link between the punishment and incident it can leave them with feelings of shame, which can lead to the situation escalating as the child becomes angry in attempt to reduce the shame.

## EXAMPLE OF ILLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES IN EDUCATION SETTINGS



- The pupil talks back to a teacher in class, they **sit in isolation for break time**.
- They break another child's equipment, so they receive after school **detention in silence**.
- They are disruptive in their Tuesday maths lesson, and they are **not allowed to go on the history field trip** on Friday.

## REMOVING BREAK TIMES

A loss of break time or lunch time (unless the behaviour occurring during this time is unsafe), is generally more of an illogical consequence. However, if schools behaviour policies include this, the time would be best spent having conversations with the pupil about what the problem was and finding solutions together. Consequences are usually most beneficial if the pupil is part of and involved in the process. For more information, see resources on our website.



Many children/young people who have difficulties understanding cause and effect, also have difficulties regulating their nervous system, which often leads to challenging behaviours (See 'Regulation ideas for your and your class' resource on our website for more information). Break and lunch times are often opportunities for pupils to engage in exercise and other regulating activities, so if this is removed, you may actually be increasing the likelihood of seeing dysregulated and 'challenging' behaviours when back in class.



It's worth remembering that for some young people, the unstructured break and lunch times are when there are the most difficulties. For these young people, it may be helpful to create an alternative space where there is a little more structure and supervision, but they still retain the opportunity to engage in a regulating break time.



# RELATIONSHIP REPAIR

Some children may not have experienced relationship repair from caregivers, so it is important to do this in order to model to the child/young person. You will help them to learn that although relationships may experience a rupture (e.g. you implemented a logical consequence), there is always the possibility of repair, and that your relationship is stronger than the incident.

'I just wanted to apologise about this morning'

When repairing your relationship try to remember the following:

- **It is ok to admit you may not have reacted how you would have liked in the moment.** Sometimes we can be dysregulated in the moment and need time to reflect on our actions. You may want to think about how the incident affected you and why it may have caused you to 'flip your lid'.
- **Take the time to regulate** before speaking with the child/young person.
- **Invite them to speak with you in a quiet space where you won't be disturbed.** Use a gentle tone and you may say something like *"Hey, I made a mistake earlier, could we talk about it?"* or *"Earlier was difficult, I'd like to check in with you and see if you're ok."*
- **If you realise you did something wrong then apologise.** This is an important skill to model for children/young people.
- **Sandwiching consequences or discipline between attunement and relationship repair** is known as 'Connection before Correction' or the 'The Two Hands'. See our website for a resource on this.
- **Hold a PACE-ful stance:** Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy (Hughes, 2009), when having the repair conversation. Being curious about why the child/young person carried out the behaviour will give you an insight into their feelings that triggered the event. You can then accept and empathise with their feelings, and help them put meaning to their behaviour.
- This repair conversation can help them understand the consequences you've put in place in a way that is non-shaming, as **they are still feeling the warmth and care of your relationship.**

Visit [www.cavyoungwellbeing.wales](http://www.cavyoungwellbeing.wales) for Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health information and resources for children, young people, parents and professionals.

Originally created by the Resilience Project team (2021) and adapted by School In-Reach Service (2024).  
This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg