



Dr Bill Rogers was the keynote speaker at the ABN/SSEN conference 'Positive Ethos, Positive Discipline, Effective Learning' held in Edinburgh in March 2004. The copyright is held by Bill Rogers.

## A typical example covering letter

### *To all our parents in grade ...*

This behaviour agreement (plan) is for all the children, and their teacher, in Room ...

We have, with your children, discussed the issue of behaviour and learning – together – in the first week of term.

We discussed *what it means* :-

- ~ *To have a class where everyone can learn well*, to the best of their ability, in a way that supports each other here. We discussed issues such as :- seating groups, reasonable noise levels, how to get teacher assistance in learning time.
  
- ~ *To have a class where everyone feels safe* :- We discussed physical safety but we also discussed *feeling* safe here at school; how we speak to one another; what 'put-downs' are; how people feel when they are spoken to in unkind or hurtful ways. We also had a positive discussion on manners.

You will see how these issues are reflected in our positive rules and responsibilities in our behaviour agreement.

~ *To have a class where we treat one another with thoughtfulness, kindness and respect.* As well as discussing the issue of manners we also discussed what respect means and how to show it to others.

### ***The rules***

All the rules in **our classroom behaviour plan** are there to emphasise how we protect the right to learn, the right to feel safe and the right to respect and fair treatment. Our discussion on 'rights' focused on behaviours we agree are fair, right, proper, thoughtful, considerate, responsible ... We discussed the reason and purpose for our rules and the difference fair rules make. Rules protect rights and encourage, and highlight, responsibility. This is true of all decent and fair rules (whether on the road, at home, at school, even in board games!)

We have tried to make the rules as positive as possible with an emphasis on personal responsibility, thoughtfulness and co-operation. These rules are also published in our classroom and are the basis of any appropriate discipline.

### ***Encouragement***

We encourage our children in many ways regarding their effort, their contributions, their participation in their life and learning here. We

believe that encouragement is crucial to acknowledge, affirm and support a child's self-esteem and growth as a person.

### ***Consequences (for inappropriate and wrong behaviours).***

The emphasis with consequences – at our school – is not punishment but accountability and responsibility for one's behaviour. Our whole-school policy is to help our children to see a consequence as an opportunity to learn something constructive about their behaviour.

All of our students have an opportunity to have their say concerning their behaviour; where it is appropriate children are encouraged to work out behaviour consequences with their teacher.

We seek to make the consequences fair and related (to the disruptive, inappropriate or wrong behaviour). We also seek, at all times, to keep the respect for the individual intact.

### ***Support***

We make every effort to encourage and support your children to learn to the best of their ability while with us. Included in their learning are the choices they make about their behaviour. We will work with individuals, and the whole class group, to encourage and support responsible choices about behaviour and learning while they are with us. We also know that students get tired, frustrated, and

angry; we know that there will be days when students distract, disturb or disrupt others' learning; we know that students will – sometimes – hurt others unintentionally or on purpose. We need clear, fair consequences for such behaviours.

Teachers will always support students beyond any necessary consequences for wrong behaviour.

There will always be opportunities for students to have a personal 'right of reply' concerning issues of behaviour and learning :-

- to discuss their concerns with their teacher;
- to participate in class meetings where discussions about common concerns are raised, discussed, explored and often resolved by peer consultation.
- mediation, restitution and individual behaviour plans are also ways that can help and enable students who may need extra support with their behaviour choices.

We would appreciate it if you would take time to read through this behaviour plan with your child. It reflects our school's commitment to positive learning and behaviour.

We look forward to your support this year.

Yours sincerely,

Debbie Smith

February, 2004.