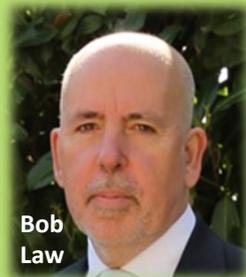


I was delighted and honoured to be elected the new 'Chair of SEBDA' and hope to continue the fantastic work achieved by David Colley during the last three years.



Bob Law

There is much to be done in this very challenging political climate. I see the role of the SEBDA chair as that of a strategic team leader, someone who first and foremost ensures a high standard of service to members and beyond. This will include a wider circulation of the EBD journal, raising awareness and expanding the Oxford Brookes University/SEBDA Distance Learning Course, increasing publications and developing the National Conference to reach a wider audience. The association has the capacity to inform national policy. It will be relentlessly seeking additional ways in which to support professionals working with children and young people with social, emotional and mental health difficulties.

I have worked for SEBDA in excess of thirty years and I am passionate about the charity as a unique, resilient 'Association'; it has at times been the only voice supporting the staff working with CYP with SEMH difficulties. My background is predominantly in education although in that capacity I have valued the relationships shared by networking with colleagues in the health service, social services, psychology services, therapy services, and residential settings. I have extensive experience in working with pupil referral units, outreach services and special schools. In 2017 I was appointed a National Leader in Education (NLE) for the work carried out within my SEMH special school (19 years as Headteacher) and working with other special schools in Kent to develop our Teaching School status.

SEBDA now has a comprehensive business plan which will be guiding us for the next three years. For help guidance and support don't hesitate to get in contact. [Bob.law@sebda.org](mailto:Bob.law@sebda.org)

## SEBDA's Annual Conference



### 'Their future is not over'

Keynote speakers include:

**Professor Barry Carpenter**

**Dr Rob Long**

**Professor Carl Parsons**

Friday 27th March 2020

Friends House, Euston, London

To book your place:

[www.sebda.org](http://www.sebda.org)

## Continuing Professional Development

SEBDA has a range of experienced and qualified trainers in many aspects of SEMH. Together they are able to provide a range of training opportunities - which can be designed to meet individual or organisational needs. [admin@sebda.org](mailto:admin@sebda.org)

## Joining SEBDA?

### What's in it for me?

- News and reports
- Analysis and comments
- EBD Journal - 4 per year
- Sharing good practices
- Networking
- Campaigning

Isn't it time you had a  
**NATIONAL VOICE?**

## Why 1IN10 ?

One in ten schoolchildren have a diagnosable mental health condition. 50% of adult mental health problems exist before the age of 14. Some 70% of these will not receive the support needed. This is a growing crisis that calls for action. SEBDA is working to change this through supporting all those working with children and young people.

In partnership with Oxford Brookes University SEBDA offers two postgraduate courses for those professionals working with children and young people who have social, emotional and mental health difficulties. Both courses are delivered by distance learning with extensive online support via a Virtual Learning Environment. [pgeducation@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:pgeducation@brookes.ac.uk)

# BEHAVIOUR POLICIES

misunderstood and unfair

More schools are questioning their reliance on traditional reward and sanction type behaviour policies. Such policies aim to promote orderly learning environments through controlling students' behaviour. Such approaches follow government guidelines, stressing that headteachers should draw up policies that effectively promote good behaviour using rewards for good behaviours and sanctions for misbehaviours.

There are serious weaknesses with this approach. It reflects a poor understanding of rewards and sanctions and the unforeseen consequences associated with them. Most would agree that such behaviour policies are unsuccessful in teaching repeat 'offenders' how to behave appropriately. In addition they are unfair when applied as a 'one size fits all', resulting in children and young people (CYP) who have social, emotional and mental health disabilities having a higher chance of being excluded. This article will briefly explore some of the issues.

Behaviour policies that rely on rewards and sanctions are misunderstood and unfair:

## Misunderstood

They reflect a poor understanding of rewards and sanctions and the unforeseen consequences associated with them. Briefly:

- They are an inappropriate method for teaching repeat 'offenders' how to behave appropriately.
- When an adult reacts to a learner's behaviour, it is the learner who is in control.
- Many children, because of adverse circumstances, prefer the sanction to the reward. So adults can unwittingly be positively reinforcing the very behaviour they wish to remove.

## Unfair

*"Behaviour policies work for those who don't need them and .....  
are unfair for those who do."*

- Children and young people (CYP) who have social, emotional and mental health disabilities are more likely to have behavioural problems. This may be for many reasons; they may lack the necessary skills, be expressing negative feelings or have attachment difficulties with adults.
- There is evidence that shows that learners with SEMH difficulties are more likely to be excluded. This is the unforeseen consequence if behaviour policies are applied indiscriminately.
- It must be wrong to treat learners with SEMH issues the same as those who do not.

## Behaviour Policies and the Equality Act

While schools are aware of the Equality Act 2010 it is worth considering some key points which will strengthen the argument against a 'one size fits all'. Discrimination has different implications when applied to disability issues, such as:

- Under the Equality Act 2010 disability includes a mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect.  
**Implication:** Many CYP who display persistent misbehaviours may well have an underlying mental health problem. The government's green paper on mental health provision for children and young people (2017) provides the following alarming data: "There are some 850,000 children and young people with a diagnosable mental health disorder in the UK today."
- Schools are allowed to treat disabled pupils more favourably than non-disabled pupils.  
**Implication:** Holding rigidly to a 'consistency' policy on behaviour may discriminate against CYP with SEND or other disabilities.
- A school must not do something which applies to all pupils but which is more likely to have an adverse effect on disabled pupils only.  
**Implication:** Giving rewards or sanctions for CYP who do/or do not display 'readiness to learn skills' such as attentiveness, calmness, conformity will adversely affect SEND learners, who either do not have the necessary skills or have them in a weaker form than their peers.

From an article by Dr Rob Long