



Checkpoints for schools

Towards a non-violent society

Improving behaviour to enhance learning
by George Varnava

NSPCC TM
Cruelty to children must stop. **FULL STOP.**

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About the author

George Varnava is London Consultant for the Anti-Bullying Alliance, a founder member of the UK Observatory for the Promotion of Non-violence and Trustee of two charitable bodies: The Suzy Lamplugh Trust and Rainer. He is author of *Checkpoints* and *How to Stop Bullying* (David Fulton Publishers) and former Chairman of the BBC Secondary Programmes Committee.

George Varnava's work in the field of children and violence follows a teaching career in London comprehensive schools including Holland Park and Pimlico. He was head teacher of Norwood School in Lambeth from 1981 to 1994 before being appointed advisory head teacher to coincide with his presidency of the National Association of Headteachers. He was subsequently invited by Croydon local education authority to take over a school under special measures and threat of closure. Bullying was identified by OfSTED as being of particular concern.

After headship, George was commissioned to write *Checkpoints for schools*, which was followed by *Checkpoints for young people*. These publications have been in circulation since 2000, reprinted twice, evaluated in a research project conducted in Birmingham schools and revised in the light of experience and research findings. Collaboration with voluntary sector organisations and sharing in the setting up of the UK Observatory for the Promotion of Non-Violence have served to widen significantly the scope of *Checkpoints* across the UK and internationally.

"We don't need to sit here talking about it, chatting about it. We need to get action now! And if we don't, this is going to carry on and if it carries on this world is not going to be a nice place."

(Seven year-old Joanne speaking in circle time about bullying)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1999) gives children *the right to express the views you have and for your views to be listened to in anything that affects you.*

Introduction

Checkpoints for schools and its companion *Checkpoints for young people* have been revised in the light of feedback from their widespread use and a researched evaluation conducted by Roehampton University for Birmingham local education authority. Together, they constitute a framework for a whole-school approach to behaviour and its relationship to learning.

Checkpoints for young people is designed to ensure the involvement of school students and provide a channel of communication to the home. *Checkpoints* have been used successfully to improve behaviour in schools, increasing the effectiveness of students' learning. They are also included in the training of teachers and teaching assistants. Adaptations have been made by a number of organisations including the NSPCC, Sport England, the prison service, the BBC and Child Protection for International Non-Governmental Organisations.

Checkpoints for schools was selected as one of three UK projects submitted to the European Commission's Education and Culture Initiative research programme (DG XX 11/10/99) entitled 'CONNECT' on violence in schools. Translations of *Checkpoints*, to date, have been made into Welsh, Japanese and Norwegian.

Checkpoints are a practical resource devised as a response to need in a society where anger, aggression, conflict and violence have become commonplace and tolerated. *Checkpoints* can be used at primary or secondary level and are particularly applicable to the transfer stage – for Year 6 preparing for secondary school or Year 7 as part of an induction programme.

Checkpoints have four main aims: to raise awareness, to facilitate institutional self-audit, to offer guidance and provide a model adaptable to each institution's particular circumstances.

For the purposes of *Checkpoints*, violence is defined as:

behaviour which causes physical or psychological harm.

This definition is widely used by organisations in the voluntary sector; an alternative is used by other researchers in France:

violence is what the victim believes it to be.

The term "violence" encompasses all forms of behaviour that in a variety of ways hurt the individual, as described by one child victim of bullying: "it hurts you inside".

A school is a community within a community and the school cannot be the only guardian of the standards of behaviour among young people. Although schools are well-equipped to address such issues of wider social concern, they also require the involvement and support of parents and the local community committed, in partnership, to a common cause: **a culture of non-violence.**

Why children become violent

Violence is a learned behaviour. Its roots lie in childhood. The most reliable predictor of violence in adulthood is exposure to violence in childhood. It is not inevitable, however, that any particular child will grow up to be violent: even high-risk children, given support, can be diverted from violence.

Surveys of violence in society show:

- a highly disturbing increase in the prevalence of violence and other anti-social behaviour in most industrialised societies (Olweus)
- in the UK, at least 16 children per year commit suicide because they are being bullied at school (School Bully On-line)
- the largest proportion of calls to ChildLine - 18 per cent - are about bullying
- all polls agree that most children are smacked; one in five has been hit with an implement (NSPCC)
- the Metropolitan Police Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers follow a definition of domestic violence that only relates to adults, in spite of the fact that, in 90 per cent of cases, children are in the same or next room.

What schools can do

Children have a right to be educated in a safe environment and feel safe. Every member of the school community is equally entitled to that right. Schools are well-placed to promote non-violence and encourage everyone to deal with conflict peaceably, demonstrating that better behaviour makes better learning. Strong relationships between school, home, governors and others prevent the school from becoming isolated in its aims and its efforts. All members of the school community can benefit from such partnerships.

Violence-prevention can be a central feature of a school's ethos; it can permeate the whole curriculum and serve as a basis for the promotion of self-esteem and personal development. For some children, only the school represents security in an uncertain, rapidly changing and often hostile world. There is an undeniable need for sustained action to counteract anti-social behaviour. Although children are subject to powerful influences in the wider world, a school conscious of the dangers of aggression and the risks of threatening behaviour can equip its students with the skills to avoid violence and face conflict with confidence and restraint.

How Checkpoints can help

Checkpoints for schools, in conjunction with *Checkpoints for young people*, is a process, raising awareness, providing an auditing tool and encouraging a whole-school commitment to violence-prevention. In determining what is unacceptable behaviour, the school raises its expectations of students in their conduct and their work, complementing the curriculum and reinforcing whole-school strategies. For example:

- **National Healthy Schools Standard** – involving the school community in promoting healthy, non-violent attitudes and behaviour by promoting home-school and community links, values, ethos and the environment.
- **PSHE** – adopting strategies for conflict resolution, building self-esteem, understanding relationships and preparing for parenthood.

- **Anti-bullying policy** – providing a framework for the development and operation of whole-school policies, involving parents, governors and others associated with the school.
- **Citizenship** – ensuring that young people develop as informed, responsible and active members of their community and the wider world.
- **Social inclusion** – by creating a conflict-free environment, sustaining the involvement of all members of the school community in resisting prejudice and discrimination.
- **Inter-agency collaboration** – particularly in respect of child protection, personal safety, anti-crime measures and general security.

Using Checkpoints

The Roehampton University/Birmingham local education authority study *Evaluation of Checkpoints for schools*, (Shaughnessy and Jennifer, 2004) identified institutional ‘readiness’ as a significant factor in the school’s capacity to introduce and sustain a non-violence intervention strategy. Since every school is at a different stage in its development, it is for the school itself to determine its ‘readiness’ and to undertake the measures that will ensure the strategy’s effectiveness.

The Checkpoints, each consisting of ten statements, represent the different aspects of school life, illustrated in the form of a web.

For Checkpoints 1 to 6: tick either **in place**, **proposed** or **not in place** and transfer the results to the first web on page 19 to create a visual record. Use Checkpoint 7 to add any actions not included in Checkpoints 1 to 6.

The two webs: Web B (before) and Web A (after) are completed to measure progress in behaviour management over a given period of time and related to the criteria adopted by the school.

The following action plan is suggested:

1. A strategy and timetable for using *Checkpoints* are prepared.
2. A whole-school statement of intent is made, for example: “We intend to eliminate all violence at our school”. Staff, students, parents and governors subscribe to this.
3. The commitment is publicised and links are formed with outside agencies.
4. Checkpoints are integrated with other school policies and practices.
5. Statements shown as “not in place” are systematically addressed.
6. Checkpoints are established as an ongoing process with built-in monitoring.
7. Specific criteria are formulated by the school for evaluating progress in behaviour management.

The Checkpoints, a framework representing the main aspects of school life are:

- Home/school/community
- Values
- Organisation
- Environment
- Curriculum
- Training.



Checkpoint 1

Home, school and community

Like every person within it, a school deserves to be protected, supported and nurtured. Whatever safeguards there are, the school cannot be isolated from the outside world. Parents and the local community play an essential part in the formulation of a positive school ethos. Policies promoting non-violence are more effective if parents and the local community are involved in their formulation and development and, just as children’s home circumstances influence their behaviour at school, so the school can influence their behaviour outside school. The school has the capacity to support children who are experiencing emotional or other personal difficulties.

A in place **B proposed** **C not in place**

| | A | B | C |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The school works closely with parents, providing information and opportunities for discussion, encouraging involvement in the formulation of non-violence and anti-bullying policies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The contract or agreement between home and school includes a specific commitment to non-violence and gives guidance on how parents can help implement the policies at home and at school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Links are made with local community groups and external agencies in respect of violence prevention. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The school publicises its commitment through its newsletter and by other means. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Agreed standards of behaviour apply to all members of the school and to visitors. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The school makes it clear that non-violent behaviour is also expected outside school and at home. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Examples of conflict avoidance strategies are presented through the curriculum and supported by other school policies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. The school is clear and consistent in dealing with incidents, particularly those that may amount to a criminal offence. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. The school takes careful note of any circumstances in the local community that might put any of its students at risk. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. The local press supports the school in helping to build its reputation as a safe place. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoint 1. Home, school and community

Explanatory notes

1. A structured plan, with the involvement of governors, is made to ensure that regular communication takes place between school and home. Formal meetings, educational and social events form a home/school programme that strengthens liaison for the benefit of individual students and the school as a community. Non-violence is included in the agenda of meetings with new parents, general meetings and parents' meetings with teachers.
2. A home/school agreement or contract, drafted jointly by parents and teachers with the involvement of students and governors, provides an effective reference point if problems arise. The status of the agreement – as part of school policy, local education authority regulation or current legislation – is made clear from the outset.
3. Links are made with bodies working in the area of child welfare including, for example, local community safety team, child protection committee, health authority, social services, neighbourhood watch, young offenders' unit, police and youth service.
4. The school publicises itself as a happy, orderly, caring, collaborative place, reporting regularly through newsletters, notice boards and student diaries.
5. Standards are agreed by all teaching and support staff, regularly reviewed, disseminated widely and made visible to students, staff and visitors. Mutual respect and tolerance are promoted.
6. Consistent emphasis is placed on self-control, personal responsibility and self-esteem. In order to help the development of these qualities, all forms of physical and humiliating punishment are prohibited. Positive discipline is consistently promoted.
7. Students study a variety of contemporary conflict situations, in both personal and social contexts, with action taken to resolve them. Students are shown everyday examples of conflict resolution. Circle-time and student council play a central part in this learning process.
8. A clear statement is made to all about what the school deals with and what it does not. The school calls on relevant agencies as necessary. The whole school community is made aware of the circumstances in which serious incidents – involving either criminal or potentially dangerous activity – will involve the police.
9. Community liaison and information channels are established, for example, through youth clubs, church groups and local residents' associations.
10. The school is proactive towards the press, particularly local, providing news, pictures and reports on successes and developments. Working relationships with local education journalists are cultivated.



Checkpoint 2 Values

Every school determines its own values. Values apply to self, relationships, community and the environment. Values support the general principles of equality. It is made clear that disrespect based, for example, on gender, origin, belief, culture, or disability is unacceptable and will be challenged. Formulating values is important to the personal development of each individual and to the health of the school as a community.

A in place **B proposed** **C not in place**

| | A | B | C |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Creating a secure, friendly atmosphere is accepted by all as an important aim. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. All members of the school participate in the development of a Code of Conduct, which specifies non-violence and is made prominent throughout the school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. It is understood that the school's values apply both inside and outside school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The school ensures that its rules do not contradict external regulations or laws relating to violence-prevention. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Good relationships are consistently fostered and all adults exemplify the standards of behaviour expected of students – without intimidation, threat or aggression. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Mutual respect is consistently promoted and expected of everyone. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. The school helps everyone to adopt a sense of responsibility for one another and for the school. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Violent language, the violent use of language and name-calling are systematically discouraged. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. All disciplinary measures are appropriate to the individual and his or her stage of development. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Conciliatory behaviour is noted and commended and assembly is used to promote the values of the school to the whole school community. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoint 2. Values

Explanatory notes

1. What most parents want from a school is a place to which they can entrust their children. For many this is as important, if not more important, than the prospect of good academic results.
2. Students, teachers and support staff are all subject to the requirements of the school's Code of Conduct. Their involvement in its construction adds to its effectiveness and facilitates its consistent application.
3. Good citizenship is underpinned by the understanding that violence is unacceptable in all circumstances. Students cannot learn too early that conforming to a high standard of behaviour in school is inadequate training if their behaviour outside falls below that standard.
4. In the case of exclusion, for example, additional local education authority guidelines may be in place. The school's policy on when to apply statutory regulations needs to be precise and understood by all.
5. Staff training in the use of conflict resolution techniques is essential. Examples set by adults are a powerful lesson to children and serve to reinforce policy and good practice.
6. Disrespect shown by any member of the school or visitor is equally unacceptable and not overlooked or condoned.
7. Many schools have successfully involved students as buddies, peace-makers or peer supporters as part of a strategy encouraging mutual support and promoting a sense of corporate ownership of and pride in the school.
8. Many words and phrases we commonly use bring violence into our language. Their use can condition our thinking and imply an acceptance that violence is normal. An opposing team, for example, is not "the enemy"; dots are not "bullet points"; an attempt is not "having a stab at it"; competition need not be "cut-throat".
9. It is useful for staff to have information on the development of individual students in order for them to match their expectations to physical and emotional maturity. Disciplinary measures avoid physical or psychological harm or humiliation. Exclusion is seen as rejection and is, therefore, only a last resort.
10. Examples of respect, empathy and other pro-social behaviour are acknowledged and recorded. Masculinity and toughness are not presented or accepted as synonymous; femininity is not associated with weakness.



Checkpoint 3 Organisation

To demonstrate that violence can have no place in a healthy school, it is important for existing policies and procedures to be reviewed and reference made to the essential link between behaviour and learning. Behaviour policy and procedures are made integral to school organisation, firmly based on a whole-school consensus.

A in place **B proposed** **C not in place**

| | A | B | C |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. There is a budget for the implementation of non-violence policies. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The induction of new students, teachers, support staff and governors includes the presentation of violence-prevention policies and procedures. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The timetable and daily routines are scrutinised to ensure they do not increase the chances of conflict occurring. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The school ensures that its rules, for example on uniform or releasing students from the classroom, do not become a cause of conflict. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Students regularly discuss violence prevention at circle time or in a school council, preferably supported with their own budget. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. There are student and staff mediators and all members of the school are encouraged to seek help and advice if needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Potential victims and aggressors are identified early and support given to pre-empt difficulty. Students themselves and, as appropriate, parents are involved. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. A record is kept of incidents and a regular survey is carried out to inform, complement and reinforce policy. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. All members of the school are familiar with emergency procedures, including those relating to visitors or intruders. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. All staff know who is the designated person for child protection matters and are familiar with procedures on disclosure and DfES guidance on child protection. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoint 3. Organisation

Explanatory notes

1. Policies and practices that benefit from a dedicated budget are more likely to stimulate action, regular review and updating.
2. All new students and staff are briefed on anti-bullying policies and procedures. Note is taken of the scale of both student and staff turnover to ensure that non-violence maintains a consistently high priority throughout the school.
3. The structure of the school day, like the environment or the architecture, has an effect on student behaviour. For example, close attention to the juxtaposition of activities, length of breaks, time allowed for movement between lessons, accessibility to equipment and belongings can help greatly to eliminate “pressure points”.
4. Careful scrutiny of policies and rules is an effective means of eliminating anomalies that, in themselves, can lead to disputes or conditions that invite indiscipline. A rule on the precise length of tie or skirt, for example, is bound to be tested and cause disagreement; firstly, because peer influence is usually stronger than school rules and, secondly, because a rule that aims to promote consistency may be inconsistently applied.
5. Where circle time, school council or peer support are built into the routine, students are more likely to commit to the principles of empathy and respect. The positive and negative effects of peer pressure can be explored and emphasis placed on the need to establish norms of behaviour by excluding violence.
6. Mediation between staff-student and student-student serves as a framework for developing skills in anger-management and resisting adverse peer pressure.
7. Warnings of potential difficulty for particular students are acted upon, with the early involvement of parents. Support is provided for students with specific difficulties and those with a need for personal skills training. All staff are kept informed.
8. All staff note and report incidents of verbal or physical abuse. Records of different types of incident illustrate trends and help to guide action to be taken.
9. Regular checks are made to ensure that emergency procedures are in place, well understood and practised routinely. Security measures, CCTV for example, are only effective with proper monitoring.
10. All staff are required to be alert to signs of abuse and know to whom they report any concerns or suspicions. A designated, trained member of staff is responsible for coordinating action within the institution and liaison with other agencies, including the Area Child Protection Committee.



Checkpoint 4 Environment

The quality, visual appearance and security of the school premises greatly influence the way people work, play and relate to one another. Effective teaching and learning need an environment that matches the school's aims and ethos. Everyone benefits from being comfortable, safe and unhindered.

A in place **B proposed** **C not in place**

| | A | B | C |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Students share in the management of the school environment to reduce the risk of aggressive or violent behaviour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The premises are kept visually attractive with high quality displays that are relevant, well-positioned and regularly updated. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. People movement is free-flowing; overcrowding is avoided. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Suitable furniture and carpeted areas are provided to allow for cooperative play and social interaction. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Buildings, facilities and equipment are treated with respect; litter and vandalism are dealt with promptly to prevent escalation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Temperature, lighting and ventilation are of a suitable standard and regularly checked, creating an environment conducive to positive attitudes and enjoyable learning. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Outdoor spaces have designated social areas, shelter and secure places for cars and bikes. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. A health and safety risk assessment is carried out, with maintenance completed regularly. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Expert advice on security is sought and security measures are in operation. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. There is safe-keeping for students' belongings and arrangements for retrieving lost property. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoint 4. Environment

Explanatory notes

1. Students can be involved effectively at all stages: in consultation, monitoring and reporting problems and as members of a 'safe-school committee'.
2. The general working environment: colour, light, cleanliness, space, décor and many other factors can affect mood. A pleasing environment encourages positive behaviour which, in turn, enhances learning.
3. Overcrowding can be alleviated by staggered breaks or student guides at strategic points of the premises. Routes through the school are signposted.
4. Noise reduction is an important objective. Carpeting, furnishing and plants enhance the working environment. Furniture appropriate to the age of students is essential. Round dining tables create a more sociable atmosphere than rectangular.
5. Any maintenance work is carried out efficiently. Schoolkeeping staff are centrally involved in shaping policy and procedures that relate to the premises. Sufficient litter-bins are provided and students take a positive interest in maintaining high standards.
6. Personal comfort has an important bearing on behaviour, reducing the risk of irritability, protest or aggression.
7. Safe places for children to meet and play, with a variety of resources, are provided. Outdoor spaces have clearly designated areas for sport and physical activities. Car and bike shelters, entrances and exits are well-lit.
8. The site is kept clear of potentially dangerous items that might be misused, for example, builders' rubble, metal objects, glass or tools. Health and safety considerations include basic human needs: clean toilets, showers, drinking water and nutritious food.
9. Security devices act as a partial deterrent to violence. Patrols and regular observation can help to give members of the school community confidence in their safety.
10. An efficient system of safe-keeping removes temptation and the source of friction and anxiety. Students are strongly advised not to bring valuable or unnecessary possessions into school.



Checkpoint 5 Curriculum

Since violence in society is seen to be common, violence-prevention must be a high priority in the school curriculum. The curriculum – particularly in respect of PSHE, citizenship and parenting education – provides opportunities for students to gain self-confidence and self-esteem, building relationships and learning to respect, value and care for others without prejudice or discrimination. All teaching and support staff can individually develop their own work to include and promote non-violence. Violence-prevention programmes are most effective when developed in collaboration with students, parents, governors and the wider community.

A in place **B proposed** **C not in place**

| | A | B | C |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Non-acceptance of violence is prominent in the planning and delivery of the curriculum and the school's development plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Students are taught about violence, its types and consequences and non-violent alternatives. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Non-violence is presented in interactive ways and students with different needs and interests are equally involved. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Alternatives to violent reactions are demonstrated, for example in physical education and games, where emphasis is placed on cooperation and accepting arbitration. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. A Personal Development Programme focuses on the whole person and the importance of appropriate social behaviour. It emphasises the relationship between rights and responsibilities. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Relationships, sex education and parenting skills are together an integral part of the curriculum. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Extra activities which encourage cooperation are provided to engage students at unsupervised times. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Media treatment of violence is studied and critical viewing skills are developed. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Representatives of outside agencies promoting pro-social behaviour contribute to the curriculum and provide information on services and helplines. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Specific advice is given on personal safety. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoint 5. Curriculum

Explanatory notes

1. Non-violence appears in the curriculum in its own right. Class teachers and subject specialists investigate how non-violence can be promoted in their area of the curriculum taking into account the contexts in which violence occurs.
2. Students are helped to understand what is meant by violence – physical and psychological. They learn about different forms of violence, including bullying, domestic violence, racial hatred, sexual abuse, violence in the media and war. They discuss “play-fighting”.
3. Students learn about violence, not only from information but also through role-play, drama and debate. Interactive teaching methods are far more engaging than a lecture. Programmes which rely solely on printed information are less effective because they cannot demonstrate the skills required to deal with violence.
4. Opportunities arise across the curriculum for studying the consequences of violence, for example in history or literature. From these examples, students can formulate alternative, non-violent outcomes.
5. A Personal Development Programme which focuses on each student as an individual and which has a prominent place in the curriculum provides the context in which to foster non-violence in respect of values, attitudes and behaviour.
6. In parenting programmes, students learn about the alternatives to smacking and subsequent benefits for family life.
7. Playground games, physical activities and sports are usually competitive and may involve aggression. Where this is so, control is essential. Losing without anger or resentment is as important as winning without boasting. Key skills, such as problem-solving can be developed equally well in football as in chess.
8. All students learn to distinguish between factual and fictional violence, including choreographed violence, realistic fiction, comic violence and real-life violence. Learning activities in the home – other than watching television – are strongly encouraged.
9. Visiting speakers from organisations which have telephone helplines explain their services and ensure that students are aware of the assistance available to them.
10. The school considers the need for personal safety training for both staff and students.



Checkpoint 6

Training

Regular training for all teaching and support staff is provided to reinforce pro-social behaviour through the curriculum, in policies and in setting good examples. Discussion on violence is arranged between staff, students, parents and governors, exploring its causes and effects and why improving behaviour is an objective for the school. Induction and in-service training in specific aspects of violence are provided for staff with a designated person responsible. Links are formed with other schools and agencies. The following is a list of some of the areas an anti-violence training programme might include.

A in place **B proposed** **C not in place**

| | A | B | C |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The different types of violence – physical and non-physical, their causes and consequences. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Anatomy of an incident: danger signals, involvement, witnessing, the aftermath. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Bullying as a through-life phenomenon and the possible link between bullying and parental smacking. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. The relationship between violence and power, feelings and behaviour, and the value of positive discipline. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. How changes in children’s personal lives can result in changed behaviour. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Changing the culture of acceptance of bullying – at school and elsewhere. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Intervention to break the progression from minor to major incident: from disagreement to anger, to aggression, to a push, to violence and to revenge. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Problem-solving techniques used to prevent conflict. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Being a good listener and a reliable witness. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Violence, the law and human rights. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoint 6. Training

Explanatory notes

1. Staff are made aware of the various manifestations of physical and non-physical violence. They accept that the roots of violent behaviour lie in childhood and recognise the risk factors associated with children developing violent attitudes.
2. Anatomy of a violent incident: analysis of the constituent parts of an incident provides a good lesson in how to act effectively. A simple formula – **A**nticipation, **B**ehaviour, **C**onsequence is a useful guide to the process.
3. Bullying in the workplace is an acknowledged problem. It takes the form of unwanted, offensive, humiliating, undermining behaviour towards an individual or groups. Such attacks are typically unpredictable, irrational and discriminatory. They can cause chronic stress and anxiety leading to ill-health and mental distress.
4. Analysis of the causes of conflict often reveals a close relationship between power or the desire for it and the use of violence. Separating these two factors helps promote understanding and can guide preventative action.
5. There is a need for information, understanding and sensitivity when dealing with aggressive or violent incidents. It is necessary to know what action can be taken to support the individual child and change behaviour.
6. Staff acknowledge that violence is a learnt behaviour, that “low-level” violence invites more serious violence, and that the cycle of adverse influence of generation upon generation has to be broken. A community that aspires to non-violence is prepared to challenge and intervene.
7. It is frequently the case that violence occurs as a result of an escalation from resolvable conflict. Role-play is a useful training method for demonstrating this and suggesting how acceptable alternatives to violence can be found.
8. Staff training can be doubly effective when closely related to students’ own deliberations. A staff/student common agenda is a powerful tool. In-service training is a valuable opportunity for staff to consider their values, attitudes and expectations and identify ways in which students can be encouraged to confront and resolve difficult matters.
9. Accurate reporting of incidents is a pre-requisite of all follow-up action, particularly where official reports or records are required. Being a witness and required to describe an unknown person, for example, demands particular observational skills.
10. Changes in the law and regulations that apply to teachers and the complex nature of their work require them to review, update and add to their knowledge. Regulations on the restraint of children are particularly important in the context of the school’s aim to eliminate violence.



Checkpoint 7 Other initiatives

Every school is unique. Its particular, local circumstances will shape the way it operates. Student conduct and its relevance to the school's ethos and performance will have been addressed in various ways. This concluding Checkpoint invites schools to add any initiatives or practice not covered elsewhere. These are some of the examples collected from a number of schools:

- The creation of a “quiet place” helped to lower tension and avoid dispute.
- Differences between boys and girls – as bullies or victims – were debated.
- Poetry writing was stimulated by discussion on bullying.
- *Checkpoints* was used as the basis for a new School Development Plan.
- Students published their own ‘Charter for Non-Violence’.
- *Checkpoints* provided a context for reviewing child protection policy.
- Trainees on teaching practice became involved in the process and a record of their experience was included in their academic course of study.
- The school advised parents on the time to be spent on homework and a limit on television viewing.
- The school devoted a term to the theme of “The human value of non-violence”.
- The school initiated inter-agency collaboration on anti-bullying, involving the police, social services and local businesses.

A in place **B proposed**

| | A | B |
|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Checkpoints for schools: towards a non-violent society

A in place B proposed

| | A | B |
|-----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

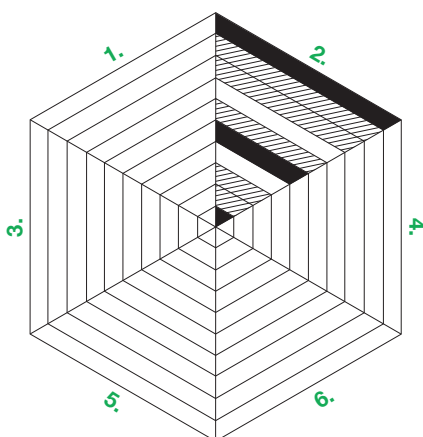
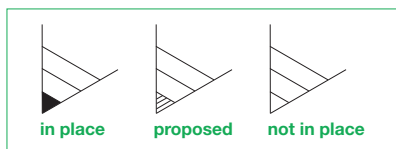
The Checkpoints web

The web illustrates six aspects or Checkpoints of the school:

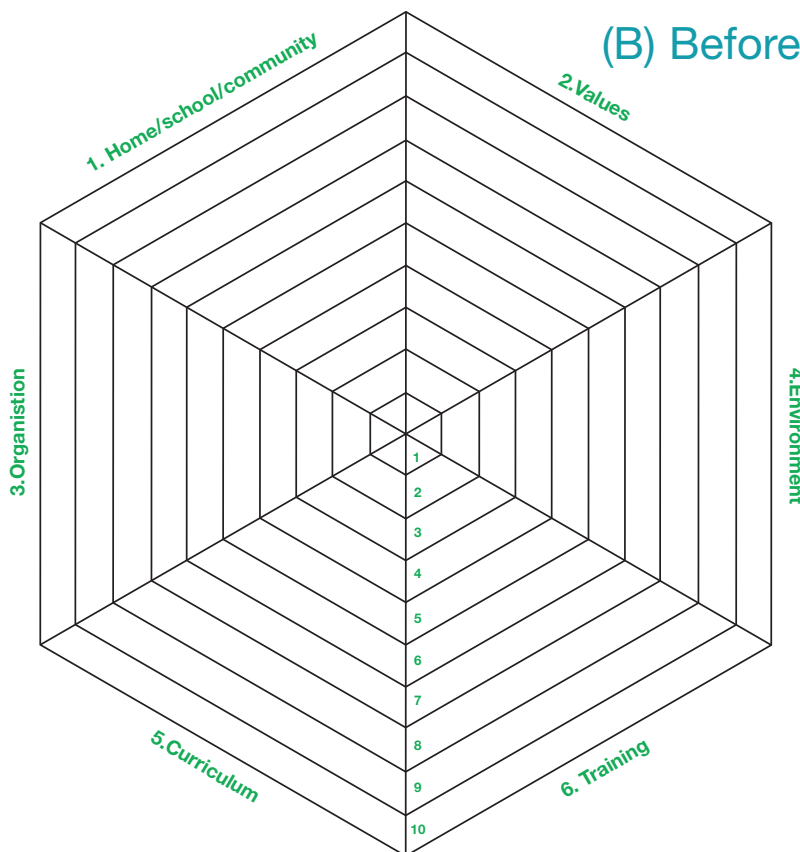
1. Home/school/community
2. Values
3. Organisation
4. Environment
5. Curriculum
6. Training.

Once the statements have been read and ticked for either: **in place**, **proposed** or **not in place**, transfer the results to the web starting from the middle using the shading key below. The web illustrates visually the stage reached by the school in addressing violence, and highlights where further action needs to be taken.

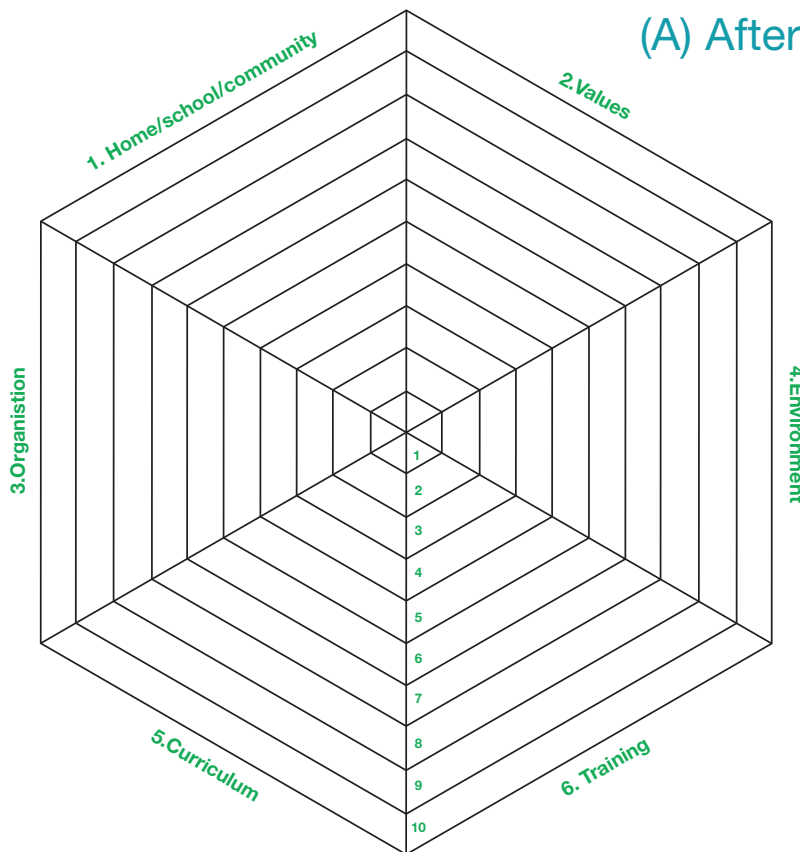
Shading key



(B) Before



(A) After



In-service training

A sample programme to assist the launch of the Checkpoints process (timings to suit the schools' own circumstances).

Starting from the school's own best practice in behaviour management, a corporate commitment to improvement is formulated.

Introduction (course leader)

Outline objectives in relation to the school's present circumstances.

1. First activity

In pairs (as far as possible pairing support staff with teachers) identify the school's best practice in violence prevention.

2. Items listed and displayed. Course leader summarises.

3. Open discussion

What are the consequences for the school of Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child?

4. Second activity

In groups of four or five. Each group is given one of the Checkpoints and the explanatory notes.

5. Tasks

- a. Agree which practices are in place or not in place.
- b. Compare results with the school list from the first activity
- c. Discuss items not in place and propose appropriate measures.

6. Third activity: Plenary session. Formulate action plan, agreeing, for example:

- a. What needs to be done?
- b. Who does what?
- c. When will it be done?
- d. What will it cost?

7. Conclusion

Decisions are confirmed and recorded. Staff are invited to make a personal pledge for action. These are displayed.

8. Follow up

- a. Complete Checkpoint 7.
- b. Topics from Checkpoint 6 are taken for future training.

Where next?

The effectiveness of **Checkpoints** is increased if the process is adopted as ongoing, integral to the life of the school and its curriculum, a standing agenda item for staff and students. The objective is a climate of positive behaviour that enhances learning in a secure, happy environment.

Organisations associated with Checkpoints

Anti-Bullying Alliance

e-mail: aba@ncb.org.uk

The Anti-Bullying Alliance was founded by the National Children's Bureau and NSPCC in 2002 and now has more than 40 member organisations who work together to reduce bullying and create safer environments for learning, playing and being cared for. The organisations in the Alliance represent policy, practice and research interests.

National Children's Bureau

8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE www.ncb.org.uk

The NCB is the nationally recognised authority on policy, research and best practice relating to children and young people in England and Northern Ireland. NCB promotes the voices, interests and well-being of all children and young people across every aspect of their lives.

NSPCC

Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London EC2A 3NH www.nspcc.org.uk

The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children is the UK's leading charity specialising in child protection and the prevention of cruelty to children. The NSPCC also produces a range of leaflets with information and advice on positive parenting.

Suzy Lamplugh Trust

PO Box 17818, London, SW14 8WW email: info@suzylamplugh.org

The Suzy Lamplugh Trust is the leading authority on personal safety. The Trust works to reduce violence and aggression in society and helps everyone – men, women and children – to gain the knowledge and confidence they need to live safer lives.

Rainer – believing in young people

Rectory Lodge, High Street, Brasted, Westerham, Kent TN16 1JF www.raineronline.org

Rainer is a provider of, and gateway to, a comprehensive range of tailored services for under-supported young people. We work to enable them to lead emotionally and physically secure and fulfilled lives. We communicate their hopes, needs and goals through campaigning and advocacy.

UK Observatory for the Promotion of Non-Violence

European Institute of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Surrey www.ukobservatory.com

The UK Observatory for the Promotion of Non-Violence is a new national initiative offering a unique combination of expertise in research, practice and training from a range of disciplines all committed to addressing the key issues of aggression, bullying, anti-social behaviour and violence amongst children and young people.

WAVE Trust (World wide Alternatives to Violence) www.wave.org

WAVE's vision is to create a world where every child is loved and cared for and where every person is treated with respect. The focus of our work is to eliminate child abuse and violence. Our strategy involves identifying the root causes of child abuse and violence, finding the most effective methods known, worldwide, to address these and promoting the adoption of these proven methods.

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**The NSPCC's purpose is to end cruelty to children.
Our vision is of a society where all children are loved, valued
and able to fulfil their potential.**

**We seek to achieve cultural, social and political change
– influencing legislation, policy, practice, attitudes and behaviours and
delivering services for the benefit of children and young people.**

NSPCC
Weston House
42 Curtain Road
London
EC2A 3NH
www.nspcc.org.uk

Designed by Steve Chambers, NSPCC
Written and edited by George Varnava
Photography by Jon Challicom, posed by models
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