

Behaviour lessons for teenagers

Secondary schools are to teach lessons in "emotional intelligence" - in an attempt to improve classroom behaviour.

From the autumn, the "social and emotional aspects of learning" (Seal) project will be available to secondary schools in England.

It teaches skills such as resolving conflicts, managing anger, respecting others and playing fairly.

The Department for Education and Skills says pilot schemes have had very positive results in primary schools.

A DFES spokesperson said that support would be available for secondary schools wanting to use this approach to improving how children behave.

Confrontation

Teachers' union conferences at Easter heard a series of warnings about the levels of violence and abuse faced by teachers from badly-behaved pupils.

And this "Seal" project is designed to teach pupils about the need to show respect to others and to give them the skills to avoid aggression and confrontation.

The DFES says that primary schools have reported a decrease in problems such as bullying and fighting where the emotional intelligence lessons have been taught.

The type of subject areas covered would include developing empathy - such as showing how someone else might feel or another point of view; managing strong feelings such as anger and recognising the rights of others.

Among the primary schools to have taken part in a pilot was Vicarage Park in Kendal, Cumbria - with the head teacher Anne Hallam saying that the scheme had a "significant impact" on helping boys to articulate their emotions.

And more contented pupils are more likely "to be able to focus on their learning," she says.

Pelham Primary School in Wimbledon also introduced the emotional intelligence lessons and reported that it helped to defuse the everyday arguments that could otherwise escalate.

"What we're doing in class seems to spill out into the playground. Problems continue to happen, but now the kids are more articulate and better at seeing things from the other person's point of view," said teacher Justine Green.



Anger management and conflict resolution will be taught