

MAKING THE MOST OF MENTOR CONVERSATIONS

By: Julie Andrews

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Other plans at school

As you successfully move toward the end of this year, you may hear teachers around you referring to a variety of plans. These are usually about a student and how their learning and behaviour is to be managed. These plans are the outcome of a Student Support Group meeting (SSG) conducted by a member of the student management team, advocacy teams, wellbeing teams or for the Program for Students with a Disability (PSD). Your mentor is an excellent person to speak to about these plans and how they impact on your teaching.

Individual Education Plans (IEP) are used to record and plan learning goals for a student who is experiencing difficulty within the classroom. A range of information is collected from participants attending the SSG including the student, parents/carers, external professionals and teacher feedback, to frame appropriate learning goals that will support an improved engagement by the student in their learning. Reviews of ILPs may be scheduled within a few weeks or on a term-by-term basis at future SSGs. Outcomes of the review may indicate the need to investigate educational assessments, closer work with specialists like occupational therapists, psychologists, or to concentrate on a new plan about behaviour management. Each of these plans will have strategies for teachers to support the student with their learning. A behaviour management plan (BMP) is created to modify unwanted behaviours by replacing them with goals around appropriate behaviours. Support services are linked to the BMP.

Knowing where your school stores IEPs, or minutes/notes from SSGs, is part of your responsibility. As the student's teacher, you are expected to enact the plan. If you have not seen an IEP this year, work with your mentor to locate a plan and unpack the details in a mentoring conversation. Discuss how you would incorporate the strategies into your teaching plan, how you would monitor the expected changes in learning behaviour and what action you need to take if there is little change. Each plan is different,

even if they are on the same template, as the details and strategies are very dependent on the individual. Templates can be different across schools, but the process is the same.

For some students their life outside of the school environment is affected by circumstances beyond their control often created by the significant adults around them. In these cases, sometimes directed by Court Orders, the school generates a Safety plan. Safety plans are a term used to describe any plan that supports the safety of the student or of other students from perceived harm. It is usually about promoting physical safety and not harming themselves or others. They can also include bullying/cyber bullying, collection of the student by particular family members, or managing the requirements of an Intervention Order. The school's leadership manages the safety plans as they are often about escalated situations. Relevant information is communicated to staff.

Actioning student plans, that describe arrangements to protect the safety of a student, form part of the teacher's duty of care. A teacher is required to be vigilant at all times, in the classroom, the yard and on excursions, in order to contribute to a safe environment. Concerning behaviour and incidents are reported to student managers or wellbeing staff for follow up. It is important that all staff are trained in mandatory reporting and Child Safety requirements.