



GOOD \longleftrightarrow BAD

Most schools recognise the need to celebrate good behaviour as well as record the bad. The trouble is, there's seldom enough time to do both with any regularity. "We used to have a system of news notes for behaviour, but teachers wrote more bad than good because people tend to be more motivated when they feel 'bilious'," says Jon Ford, assistant head at Chesterton Community College, an 11-16 school in Cambridge with around 1,000 students.

The old system also created a tower of paperwork for managers. "We were meant to use the notes to build up behaviour profiles, but some people just used to throw them away because it was impossible to deal with them all," explains Jon, who is also a science teacher at Chesterton.

Eighteen months ago, the school introduced i-Behave, a software package for behaviour management developed by the school and a local software firm. Staff can log incidents electronically, using a code to describe and grade good or bad behaviour as it happens, share this information across the school and spot behaviour trends.

SAVING PAPERWORK

A form lists all the Chesterton teachers, Jon explains. "At the end of the lesson, I bring up the form, select my name and the classes I teach, then one class, then the particular pupil. Clicking on 'Good' or 'Bad' brings up a drop-down menu of incidents graded in line with the school's behaviour policy – following the corridor code is level 1 'good', smoking is level 3 'bad', for example – and I record what's happened. It takes me seconds to log an incident but before, the fastest I could write a note would be three-and-a-half minutes!"

Staff can also opt to notify other staff of an incident by email or record an event for a group of students simultaneously. Students 'score' points for each incident – three points for a level 3 good news or minus three for bad news – and the total scores are constantly updated by the system. Besides saving time and

paperwork, the system, with its user-friendly code for describing different types of behaviour, has standardised the approach to discipline across the school. Jon says: "The fact is we now have a consistent language across the team in which to talk about behaviour. We all know, for example, what level 1 means."

i-Behave can distil information across classes or year groups in graph form and has been instrumental in helping the school to pinpoint trends. When assistant Key Stage 3 co-ordinator Andy Cornick spotted 15 Year 9 students repeatedly being marked down for bad behaviour, he brought them together in a separate tutor group and put them under notice to improve. "With i-Behave,

you can pull the data into a spreadsheet to show the students their accumulated scores," he says. "All the students in the group had negative scores that they had collected during the first term of the year, so we set them targets – raise your score by five points this week, for example.

"It's very motivational. Boys respond to it, in particular, as it's a league system – they need extra points to move up."

Code of conduct

New software, designed by a school to help teachers tackle bad behaviour and praise the good, is having a positive effect on pupil discipline

By **Julie Nightingale** Illustration **Valero Doval**

A DIALOGUE WITH PARENTS

Since i-Behave was introduced in 2006, the number of bad news reports has gradually fallen. Between September 2006 and May 2007, for example, there were six weeks in which 75 or more bad incidents were logged, and 18 weeks in which the bad total was 50 or more.

For the same period in 2007 to 2008, the bad incident tally has never exceeded 75, and the number of weeks in which 50 incidents were recorded has dropped to 10. The current average is 30 bad incidents a week.

The capacity to share information with parents at the touch of a button is also strengthening school-home links. In the last year, the school sent 20,000 'good news' emails to parents, and around 4,000 bad. "It equates to a couple of times a week that a parent gets an email," says Chesterton ICT manager Richard Kirkby. "But we now get emails back, so it really opens up a dialogue."

ALL ABOUT i-BEHAVE

i-Behave costs £1,500 for a secondary school system, including service and upgrades. Behaviour categories can be tailored to suit a school's behaviour management policy. For more information on the i-Behave system, visit: www.improvebehaviour.co.uk