

Protocols and
action plans
for students
with Autism
Spectrum
Disorder



CRAIGHOUSE
SCHOOL

Protocols and action plans for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

- I. Protocol for responding to and addressing situations of emotional and behavioural dysregulation in students on the autism spectrum
 - i. Emotional dysregulation log
 - ii. Removal of the student under the ASD Act
- II. Behavioural and emotional support plan (PAEC)
 - i. Agreement on response to situations of emotional and behavioural dysregulation.
- III. Application of disciplinary measures
- IV. Training for teachers and staff
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I. Protocol for responding to situations of emotional and behavioural disruption among students (DEC)

The following protocol has been adapted from the document published by the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) "*Guidelines for the development of a protocol for action in cases of behavioural and emotional dysregulation in students in the school environment*" (2022).

1. INTRODUCTION

This document contextualises our educational establishment with the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education in August 2022 for the incorporation of a prevention and intervention protocol for situations of emotional and behavioural dysregulation, reproducing, paraphrasing, organising, complementing and operationalising strategies for its management. It is based on the principles of dignified treatment, progressive autonomy, gender perspective, intersectorality, participation and social dialogue, early detection and continuous monitoring, and neurodiversity, as established by ministerial provisions.

The purpose of this document is to provide a resource that serves as a guide when intervening with students with emotional and behavioural dysregulation, who sometimes use challenging behaviours as a coping strategy, serving as a support resource for professionals by providing a set of proactive strategies for emotional regulation. Challenging behaviours are understood to be behaviours of such intensity, frequency or duration that the physical safety of the student or others is likely to be endangered. In addition, they limit or restrict the person's opportunities for inclusion and social participation (Emerson, 1995).

2. DEFINITIONS

Emotional and behavioural dysregulation

“The motor and emotional reaction to one or more triggers or situations, where the student, due to the intensity of the reaction, does not understand their emotional state or is unable to express their emotions or feelings in an adaptive manner, presenting difficulties beyond what is expected for their age or stage of developmental evolution in self-regulating and returning to a state of calm and/or that do not disappear after one or more attempts at teacher intervention, used successfully in other cases, being perceived externally by more than one observer as a situation of "lack of control". Emotional dysregulation may respond to the interaction of various elements, which may be physiological, behavioural and/or environmental”(Collective construction regional autism table, May 2019, as cited in Chilean Ministry of Education [MINEDUC], 2022).

Emotional dysregulation can be reflected in a wide range of behaviours, depending on the stage of the

life cycle, ranging from intense crying that is difficult to contain to aggressive behaviour towards oneself and/or others, as it is often difficult for them to explain what is happening to them and they may communicate it through inappropriate or self-harming behaviours (Merino, 2022).

3. PREVENTION

It is always advisable to devote more time and resources from the team and adults in charge to actions aimed at preventing episodes of emotional and behavioural dysregulation. To this end, the following is suggested:

- **Get to know the students:**

It is essential to get to know the students in our school, as this will allow us to identify those who, due to their characteristics and/or personal circumstances and context, may be more vulnerable to episodes of DEC. To this end, if necessary, an Emotional and Behavioural Support Plan (PAEC) will be drawn up.

In cases where a student exhibits repeated emotional dysregulation, or if the student's parents or guardians indicate a particular condition that requires reasonable accommodation to prevent emotional dysregulation, the head teacher, Section Director, or professionals from the Educational Area will ask the guardians to sign the PAEC, in which the guardian:

- Authorises, in the event of an emotional outburst, intervention with the aim of providing assistance to the student, reducing the risk to themselves and others, and connecting them with support resources.
- Consents to the use of the information provided for these purposes.
- Acknowledges that interventions will be carried out gradually and proportionally, depending on the stage of emotional disturbance being experienced, and may include physical restraint in case of risk.
- You agree to participate in an interview with school professionals when summoned regarding emotional dysregulation, and to determine the need for referral to specialised care.
- Recognises the person(s) at the school who are preferred for restraint.
- Identifies a family member or significant other to turn to if additional support is needed.
- Identifies the external professionals with whom they authorise contact and coordination.
- The head teacher and professional from the Educational Area who accompanies the level will include strategies for emotional, cognitive and behavioural self-regulation in the annual work plan.

- **Recognising Early Warning Signs:**

Parents or guardians must promptly inform the school of any conditions or treatments that could represent a higher probability of emotional and behavioural dysregulation, as well as triggering events and common early warning signs in the student. These conditions include autism spectrum disorder and anxiety or depressive disorders, among others.

Educators will be mindful of the "emotional indicators" that precede possible dysregulation:

- Increased restlessness, irritability, anxiety, or inattention.
- Isolation or withdrawal.
- Previously reported personal factors and/or triggers. (Change in family routine, grief, conflicts in general, etc.)

If signs preceding dysregulation are observed, the educator present will take into consideration or request the information contained in the PAEC and the student's DEC response form in order to implement prevention strategies.

- **Recognise elements of the environment:**

- A. Guardians shall report any personal or family factors that may predispose the child to dysregulation, such as:
 - Sleep disturbances.
 - Illnesses affecting the student or people close to them.
 - Significant changes in family structure and/or routine.
 - Deregulation before arriving at school.
- B. Educators will consider in their planning the stimuli that could trigger emotional dysregulation, in order to anticipate or make reasonable adjustments, based on the information available to them regarding:
 - Intense and/or sustained stimuli.
 - Significant changes in routine.
 - Level of demand.

4. INTERVENTION ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF INTENSITY

The strategies used to address Emotional and Behavioural Dysregulation (EBD) or challenging behaviours need to be implemented gradually and at different times or stages.

For the effective design and implementation of an intervention plan, it is best to start by describing, in each case, the observable behaviours of emotional and behavioural dysregulation, avoiding making assumptions or categorising in advance about their causes or about the student, adding observations

and descriptions of what people who were nearby did before and after the onset of EBD, as well as identifying external or internal stimuli that could trigger, increase or decrease it.

In the event that a student presents level 2 or 3 dysregulation, which will be described later, a specific communication channel will be created with the following parties involved, in order to be able to respond in a timely manner to these situations:

- Special needs teacher/educational psychologist.
- Psychologist.
- Inspector.
- Deputy.
- Teachers who teach the student.

To monitor these cases, a meeting will be held with all the teachers who teach him, the deputy, inspectors, and those in charge of the educational area. Regularity will be determined according to the stage of development of the student.

General considerations for a DEC

1. Objectives of crisis intervention:

- Provide assistance.
- Reduce risk.
- Connect with support resources.

2. General strategies for managing a DEC:

- Remain calm.
- Use a calm voice.
- Use clear, precise, concise language that is appropriate for the listener.
- Use body language to convey calmness.
- Do not attribute bad intentions.
- Give the student space to explain what is happening.
- Accept and acknowledge feelings.
- Ask the student direct questions about what is bothering them or what they need, understanding dysregulation as a "form of communication".
- Allow moments of solitude or rest if needed, while continuing to supervise.
- Redirect attention to an activity that may be motivating.
- Positively reinforce, based on their interests, the use of socially positive ways of expressing needs.

3. Behaviours to avoid when dealing with a DEC:

- Raising your voice.
- Rejecting the emotion expressed by the student, or seeking to change it immediately.
- Exposing the student's behaviour to others as misbehaviour.
- Attempting to give lengthy explanations.

- Interpreting the dysregulation solely as misbehaviour.

4. Basic strategies according to stages:

A. Initial stage (Level 1)

We refer to the initial stage of DEC when general management has previously been attempted without positive results and there is no apparent risk to the student or others.

At this stage, it is possible to offer more than one alternative, such as the following, so that the student can choose:

- Change the activity, the form or the materials through which the activity is being carried out.
- Use play areas with toys where they can stay and receive attention and monitoring from an adult until they return to their original state.
- Use knowledge about their interests, favourite things, hobbies, or objects of attachment.
- Allow them to leave for a short, predetermined time to an agreed-upon place that will help them manage their anxiety and regulate their emotions, and where they can be supervised. This place should be agreed upon in advance, for example, the library or the training area, and the person in charge of each of these spaces should be taken into account.
- Try to mediate verbally in a calm tone, letting the student know that you are there to help them and that they can, if they wish, talk about what is happening to them, draw, remain silent or do some exercise.
- Try to have a comfort object at school, when appropriate for the age or known diagnosis.
- Guide relaxation and/or conscious breathing exercises.
- Allow the manipulation of objects that do not cause harm or perform monotonous activities that help regulate anxiety.

Required characteristics of staff in charge in stages 2 and 3 of DEC

Ideally, there will be three adults in charge of the DEC situation:

- a. Person in charge: Person from the educational area in charge of the situation, with the role of mediator and direct companion throughout the process. It is desirable that they have a prior relationship of trust with the student and some degree of preparation.
- b. Internal support person: An adult who will remain inside the premises with the student and the person in charge, but at a greater distance, without intervening directly in the situation. The person in charge of this will be the section inspector.
- c. External companion: Adult who will remain outside the room or area where the restraint situation is occurring; must coordinate information and notify other staff or family members as appropriate and follow up. The person in charge of this will be the director or deputy director of the section.

B. Escalation and possible risk stage (Level 2)

At this stage, there is an increase in emotional and behavioural dysregulation, with an absence of cognitive inhibitory self-control and a risk to oneself or others. The student does not respond to verbal communication, eye contact or interventions by others, while motor agitation increases without being able to connect with their environment in an appropriate manner.

It is suggested to:

- "Accompany" without interfering in their process in an invasive manner, with actions such as offering solutions or asking them to do an exercise, as during this stage of dysregulation the student is not able to connect with their environment in the expected manner.
- Notify the team in charge to ensure the availability of a preferred adult to contain that particular student and an external companion who remains at a distance but can coordinate information.
- Offer alternatives such as the following:
 - Accompany them to a place that offers calm or sensory regulation. Ensure that the environment to which the student is moved is safe, quiet, without crowds, and without intense stimuli or similar to those that triggered the DEC.
 - Express what is happening or how they feel, in a different space from where they are, through conversation, drawings, or another activity that is comfortable for them.
 - Allow for a rest period once the dysregulation has subsided.

C. Stage of lack of control and possible risk (Level 3)

When the lack of control and the risks to themselves or others mean that the student needs to be physically restrained.

The aim of this restraint is to immobilise the student to prevent harm to themselves or others, so it is recommended that it only be used in cases of extreme risk to a student or other members of the educational community. Given the situation of imminent risk, physical restraint may be carried out by the adult closest to the student at that moment. In order to carry out this type of restraint, written authorisation from the family must be obtained.

An external companion will contact the student's family, requesting that a trusted adult come to the school, and the student will be taken to the educational office to await their arrival.

If the disruption continues upon the arrival of the trusted adult, they will continue the intervention alongside the internal restraint officer.

The psychologist who accompanies the level and/or the school nurse will assess the need for referral

to a health centre, following procedures similar to those established in the First Aid Care Protocol.

5. INTERVENTION IN THE REPARATION, FOLLOWING AN INCIDENT OF LOSS OF CONTROL AND POSSIBLE RISK

This stage must be carried out by trained specialist professionals.

1. The school psychologist will meet with the student at least once, with the aim of:
 - Let the student know that everything is calm and that it is important to understand the situation in order to resolve it and prevent it from happening again.
 - Build agreements to prevent situations that could trigger a DEC, including basic alternative strategies in the conversation.
 - Remind the student of the rules of coexistence in the educational community, pointing out behaviours that violate them and explaining the measures that have been decided upon.
 - Agree on remedial and/or restorative actions in case the behaviours have caused damage to property or people.
2. The classroom teacher, with the support of the educational department, will assess the impact of the DEC on other students, for which purpose they will:
 - Planning and implementing a support and reparation session with the group of students who have been affected.
 - The parents of students who have been particularly affected will be offered the possibility of an interview with the persons in charge of each section.
 - In the case of students who are suffering from recurrent DEC, the head teacher and/or psychologist for the level will ask the parents for proof of external support, which will allow the school to confirm that the student is receiving the care they need and that their rights are being guaranteed.
3. The classroom teacher and/or psychologist accompanying the level may offer interviews or communicate directly with external professionals to coordinate relevant actions and support.
4. Both the head teacher and the section director will report, if applicable, the measures corresponding to the School Coexistence Regulations that are applicable to the behaviour, considering the aggravating and mitigating factors observed.
5. The psychologist accompanying the level, together with the head teacher, will complete the relevant aspects of the "Emotional and Behavioural Dysregulation Log (DEC)" which will be incorporated into the student's file, with the aim of keeping a record of the evolution of behaviour over time in accordance with the planned intervention.

II. Emotional and Behavioural Support Plan (PAEC)

1. Identification

Name : ID number:

Date of birth : Age :

Year : Date of preparation :

2. Emergency contact persons:

Preferred representative:

First name and surname:	
Relationship to student:	
National ID number:	
Contact telephone number:	
Email address:	

Alternative guardian:

First and last name:	
Relationship to student:	
Tax ID number:	
Contact telephone number:	
Email address:	

3. Medical diagnosis

Primary diagnosis:
Associated Diagnoses:
Pharmacological Treatment: YES/NO Indicate:
Medical indications:

4. Team of internal professionals in charge and their roles (Deputy, Tutor, Educational Psychologist, Inspector)

First and last name	
Speciality/Profession	
Responsibility	
School telephone number	+56227560200
Email	

First and last name	
Speciality/Profession	
Responsibility	
Work telephone	+56227560200
Email	

First and last name	
Speciality/Profession	
Responsibility	
Work telephone	+56227560200
Email	

First and last name	
Speciality/Profession	
Responsibility	
Work telephone	+56227560200
Email	

5. External Support Team of Professionals

First and last name	
Occupation	
Contact telephone number	
Email	
Frequency of support	

First and last name	
Occupation	
Contact telephone number	
Email	
First and last name	
Occupation	
Contact telephone number	
Email	
Frequency of support	

First and last name	
Occupation	
Contact telephone number	
Email	
Frequency of support	

6. Student characteristics

a. Strengths/skills:

b. Challenges and support needs

Challenges	Support needs

c. Interests

Interests	
Enjoyable experiences	

7. Deregulation

<p>a) Triggers</p> <p><i>Specific situations or stimuli that trigger an intense emotional response</i></p>	
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<p>b) Stressors</p> <p><i>Sensory or environmental elements that interfere with your well-being, causing tension or stress</i></p>	

<p>c) Manifestations of DEC (e.g., starts pacing around the room, throws chairs, etc.)</p>

d. Suggested response (personalised strategies for dealing with DEC situations).

<p>Key words, gestures, pictograms, or attitudes to address their challenging situation:</p>

<p>Objects, pictograms, or activities of interest that are useful for shifting their focus of attention:</p>

i. AGREEMENT ON RESPONSE TO EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DYSFUNCTION (EBD)

We,, mother and father of the student, authorise that, in the event of emotional and behavioural dysregulation, intervention be carried out with the aim of providing help and reducing the risk to themselves and others.

We are aware that these interventions will be carried out gradually and proportionally, depending on the stage of dysregulation being experienced, and may include physical restraint in the event of risk to themselves or others.

We also agree to participate in interviews with school professionals when summoned regarding emotional instability, and to determine the need for care or monitoring by external specialists.

Signature of mother and father	Head Teacher	Head of Formative Area	Head of Section
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i. EMOTIONAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DYSFUNCTION LOG (DEC)

To be used in stages 2 and 3 of the document guidelines for developing a protocol for action in cases of behavioural and emotional dysregulation in students.

1. Immediate Context

Date: ____ / ____ / ____ Duration: Start time _____ / End time _____

Where was the student when the EBD occurred? _____

The activity the student was engaged in was:

Known Unknown Scheduled Improvised

The atmosphere was:

Quiet Noisy Approximate number of people present: _____

2. Identification of the child, adolescent or young person:

Name:		
Age:	Year group:	Head teacher:

3. Identification of the professionals and technicians at the establishment designated for intervention:

Name	Role in the intervention
1.	Manager
2.	Internal Accompanist
3.	External Accompanist

4. Identification of representative and contact details:

Name:	
Mobile:	Other telephone number:
Method used to inform representatives in a timely manner (in accordance with prior agreements and/or internal regulations):	

5. Type of dysregulation incident observed (mark with an X the one(s) that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Self-harm	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression towards other students	<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression towards teachers
<input type="checkbox"/> Aggression towards teaching assistants	<input type="checkbox"/> Destruction of objects/clothing	
<input type="checkbox"/> Shouting/verbal aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> Running away	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

6. Observed intensity level:

Stage 2 of DEC increase, with absence of cognitive inhibitory self-control and risk to self or others.

Stage 3 when lack of control and risks to self or others necessitate physical restraint.

7. Description of triggering situations:

a) Description of sequences of events preceding the DEC event:

b) Identification of triggers in the facility (if any):

c) Description of triggering events prior to admission to the establishment (if any):

Illness? Which one? _____

Pain: where? _____

Insomnia Hunger Other _____

8. Probable DEC functionality:

<input type="checkbox"/> Demand for attention	<input type="checkbox"/> As a system for communicating discomfort or desire		
<input type="checkbox"/> Demand for objects	<input type="checkbox"/> Frustration	<input type="checkbox"/> Resistance to change	<input type="checkbox"/> Intolerance of waiting
<input type="checkbox"/> Misunderstanding of the situation	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:		

9. If there is a previous clinical diagnosis, identification of professionals outside the establishment who are involved:

Name	Occupation	Telephone number of the care centre where they can be located

Indicate whether:

You have contacted any of them. Purpose:

A copy of the log is sent to them with the prior agreement of their representative. Which professionals is it sent to?

10. Intervention actions taken and the reasons why they were decided upon:

11. Evaluation of the intervention actions taken, specifying if there is anything that can be improved and/or anything that was very effective:

12. Repair strategy developed and reasons for the decision (only if required):

13. Evaluation of the preventive strategies developed, specifying if there is anything that can be improved to prevent future DEC events:

ii. WITHDRAWAL OF THE STUDENT UNDER THE TEA LAW

Craighouse School, located at Av. Paseo Pie Andino 8.837, Lo Barnechea, certifies that the parent/guardian _____ (*write name and ID number of adult*) contacted the school regarding a situation of emotional and/or behavioural disruption by the student _____ in class _____ on the day _____ at _____ hours.

The attendance of the parent/guardian involved: (*Mark with an X*)

	Emotional support that helped the student resume their school day.
	Emotional support and removal of the student from the premises.
	Other (specify):

Signature of parent/guardian

School stamp
Name, position and signature of member of the management team

IMPORTANT: Art. 66 quinquies: "Employees governed by the Labour Code, those governed by Law No. 18,834 on Administrative Statutes, the consolidated, coordinated and systematised text of which was established by Decree with the force of law No. 29 of 2004, of the Ministry of Finance and by Law No. 18,883, which approves the Administrative Statute for Municipal Officials, who **are fathers, mothers or legal guardians of minors duly diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, shall be entitled to attend to emergencies regarding their integrity in the educational establishments in which they attend nursery, primary or secondary school.**

The time these workers spend attending to these emergencies shall be considered as worked for all legal purposes. The employer may not, under any circumstances, classify this absence as untimely and unjustified in order to establish the grounds for abandonment of work set forth in letter a) of number 4 of Article 160, or as grounds for a summary investigation or administrative proceedings, as the case may be.

The worker must notify the Labour Inspectorate of the respective territory of the circumstance of having a son, daughter or minor under their legal guardianship who has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.

III. Application of disciplinary measures

The school may not take disciplinary measures based, directly or indirectly, on the fact of having a disability or special educational needs; however, all students must comply with the regulations established in the School Life Guide, considering the importance of maintaining good relations within the school community. In this way, students with ASD are not excluded and may be subject to educational, pedagogical and even disciplinary measures for non-compliance, provided that these measures are not associated with their condition.

"Educational establishments should prefer the adoption of educational measures given their relevance to the emotional health and personal situation of students. This does not imply condoning or justifying maladaptive behaviour by attributing it to a characteristic of the student's autistic condition, but rather, based on the factors associated with their diagnosis and treatment, it allows for the use of alternative strategies adapted to their particular circumstances."

(Circular 0586, which provides instructions on promoting inclusion, comprehensive care and the protection of the rights of preschoolers and students with autism spectrum disorder, December 2023).

IV. Training for teachers and school staff

i. Training for teachers

Workshops will be held with teachers and staff from the three sections, with external professionals specialising in inclusion, neurodiversity and autism spectrum disorder, aimed at developing tools to be implemented in teaching practice with children with permanent SEN.

ii. Half-yearly meetings with teachers from each section

Two meetings per year will be held with teachers to share best practices, review cases and identify any needs that may arise in relation to working with children with permanent SEN.

iii.

The educational psychologists and psychologists from the Training Department, together with the previous year's tutor, will provide information on the characteristics, strengths and effective learning and socio-emotional management strategies for all children with SEN and those in inclusive education to the teachers who will be teaching them the following year.

iv. Mini teacher tips

Brief meetings will be held with the teachers of students with permanent SEN, according to the needs observed.

V. Awareness-raising among parents and the community

i. Awareness campaign

Prior to the campaign, parents of children with ASD will be invited to share ideas to promote awareness of the issue in the school community.

ii. Promotion through the school's social media and posters

Promotion will be carried out through the school's social media (IG) and also through posters with relevant information about neurodiversity and autism spectrum disorder.

REFERENCES

Emerson, E. (1995). *Challenging behaviour*. Cambridge University Press.

Chilean Ministry of Education [MINEDUC]. (2022). *Guidelines for the development of an action protocol in cases of behavioural and emotional dysregulation of students in the school environment*. Document adapted and enriched for the general population from the guidelines for specific care for students on the autism spectrum developed by the team of autism specialists from the School Integration Programme of the Municipal Corporation of Valparaíso (June 2018).

Merino, M. (2022). *Guidelines for teachers of adolescents with autism*. Burgos Autism Association. Document distributed by the Autism and Neurodiversity Union Foundation (FUAN).

Superintendence of Education, *Circular 0586, (December 2023) providing instructions on promoting inclusion, comprehensive care and protection of the rights of pre-schoolers and students with autism spectrum disorder*.

<https://saludresponde.minsal.cl/ley-tea>

Written on December 2026