ACTION PLAN

This ACTION PLAN has been created so that there is a clear and set procedure in place to be followed in the event of a serious incident of aggression or violence in the school.

- The aim of any action plan must be to provide urgent assistance to the school staff member who requires it.

- A school staff member should be in possession of a coloured card (usually red), with the back-up of a particular word(s) that will alert two ‘trusted children’ (those that the teacher deems to be extremely reliable and who should be placed sitting near to the classroom’s door) to go to a set location (usually the secretary/Principal’s office) to request immediate help on behalf of a particular teacher.

- The Action Plan is deemed to be activated at this point.

- The children should report the teacher’s name, his/her location, hand over the red card and state that urgent assistance is required.

- The Principal/Deputy should be notified with immediate effect.

- If the Principal is unavailable, the Secretary is shown the card. The Secretary calls for Principal/Deputy/A Post Holder over the intercom.

- Two or more staff members should then attend at the location immediately.

- If order is restored, the pupil should be invited to the Principal’s office.

- If pupils who are involved in the incident refuse to leave the class, the other children not involved in the incident should be removed from the class/location where possible.

- Once activated, the plan must be carried through. All relevant policies will take effect.

- Parents will be contacted with immediate effect to attend at the school.

- Any possible sanctions/suspensions/expulsions will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour and also the NEWB guidelines for developing a Code of Behaviour for schools.

- The Chairperson of the Board of Management should be subsequently notified of the incident.

- The creation of any ACTION PLAN must be sanctioned by the Board of Management, who will have to deal with the 'hard questions' of where the manpower will come from to provide the support and how the plan will occur in practice.

EXAMPLE

SCENARIO A
A child becomes violent in a class throwing items indiscriminately. The teacher, who is alone and anxious, doesn't have a plan. He approaches the child and physically intervenes when the child doesn't stop after a few minutes. In the course of physically intervening, the child inadvertently gets injured. It doesn't occur to the teacher, because he is suffering from 'red mist', that all the other 25 pupils are witnessing this conduct. They have also witnessed his physical intervention. It is later put to the teacher that 'the other children were educated in aggression and violence by witnessing the conduct'. Until now, he didn't see witnessing aggression as 'educating' children in that aspect of life. Approximately half of the children in the class are now saying that the teacher 'got really mad and aggressive'. Whatever the outcome, this investigation places the school in one big mess.

SCENARION B
Exact same scenario as 'SCENARIO A' above, except that the teacher immediately activates the school's ACTION PLAN. He uses the back-up word to his two 'trusted students' sitting at the door who immediately leave the classroom to go to the secretary's office. The teacher is not very anxious because he knows that he just has to 'firefight' the incident for approximately 30 seconds. Two staff members enter the classroom. One immediately directs the other children to leave and takes them to another location. Two staff members are left with the aggressive student giving them greater options. The chances of a positive outcome are vastly greater than that of Scenario A above.

No plan will be perfect. There will always be flaws and we encourage teachers to actively look for those flaws so that they can improve our ACTION PLAN.