

Minimising Exclusions

Andy's bad day

1. Miss Wilkinson's bad day

It was Monday morning and Miss Wilkinson was already exhausted. She had a great deal of work to do over the weekend and they were expecting an OFSTED visit any time soon. To make matters worse, her car had failed its MOT and she was not sure if she could afford to pay for it. Her mind was elsewhere.

When she saw Andy saunter into her class she felt a pit in her stomach. She always tried to reach out to him, but he just seemed so angry all the time. She was not in the best mood for his behaviour today and it was frustrating to learn he had not done his homework for the fifth time. She tried to get on with the business of teaching the class, but he was once again not paying any attention. She reminded Andy that he was there to learn and he told her to eff off. That was just about enough, she didn't come to work to be verbally abused and equally, this was having a negative effect on the other children's learning. Andy smiled at her then put his head on the desk and closed his eyes, disinterested in the class.

Miss Wilkinson approached Andy to get his attention. She knocked on his desk and raised her voice to get his attention. He leapt up from his seat with a start and began shouting and swearing at her. He started to kick his desk which was very frightening for Miss Wilkinson. She shouted out for help as Andy charged towards her. Miss Wilkinson put her hands out in front of her to protect herself and Andy barged into her, knocking her to the floor. Miss Wilkinson shouted out in pain as Andy looked down at her as he casually walked past.

Two of Miss Wilkinson's colleagues arrived and immediately escorted Andy away using physical force. Andy's shouts and yells became quieter as her colleagues forced him into the reflection area, Miss Wilkinson was aware that she was sat on the floor, being stared at by her class, very shaken with a lesson still to teach.

2. Andy's bad day

It was Monday morning and Andy was exhausted. He played on his Xbox one through the night over the weekend and this was a particularly exciting time because he had maxed out his character on Destiny 2 and thrashed almost everyone online. He had overslept, skipping breakfast, way too tired to notice he was hungry and arrived late to school. He was reprimanded by his form tutor for both the lateness and his appearance and he rolled his eyes as he was lectured.

His head was banging and in his first lesson he told his teacher to fuck off when she began asking him to pay better attention. This seemed to wind her up- something he regularly enjoyed doing- and she shouted something about manners or language or something. Andy smiled at this and pretended to take a nap on his desk. He probably would have fallen asleep if the teacher hadn't shouted at him and banged on his desk. This startled him and he leapt up, swearing loudly and kicking his desk. His teacher was also startled by this and called out for help. Andy began to stride out of the class as his teacher tried to stop him, getting way too close to him. He bumped into her, knocking her to the floor by accident. He shocked himself by this but didn't know how to apologise for it or to stop himself now, he

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was way too upset.

Two other teachers came in and escorted him out of the class physically. He was put into a separate room on his own and spent over an hour banging on the door to get out with his fists. His knuckles were sore by the end of all this. He was frightened, confused and not entirely sure how he got here.

3. Andy

Andy is 15 years old and lives in a really tough neighbourhood. Every day he walks home from school frightened about getting jumped again. Last time it happened his mum cried (she is always crying) and his dad punched him for not being strong enough and upsetting his mother. His back was sore for a week after that thrashing. Since then, he doesn't talk about getting beaten up, but he is always expecting it. This has toughened him up emotionally (even though physically he is still pretty slight) and has created confidence in him that his dad has complimented him on. It was a night when dad was in a good mood, work wasn't so stressful and he wasn't taking it out on either him or his mum.

He doesn't feel too safe in relationships, generally speaking. He feels small and weak, unloved and alone. His mood is often low but he compensates for this by appearing tough. He hangs out with a crowd of older kids, drinks, smokes and stays up very late in unsafe areas of town. Either he is out with his mates or he is sitting up all night on his Xbox one. Playing video games is the only thing he believes that he is any good at and it provides an escape from his unhappy life. He has been having very difficult thoughts lately, thoughts that tell him that school is a complete waste of time and he is too stupid to succeed anyway, so why bother.

He pays less and less attention in school (this is his third and apparently last) and is getting into increasing amounts of trouble with his teachers. This is fine, because his mum and dad don't care about his education and he won't get a beating for poor achievement. He feels strong and powerful in school; the teachers can't handle him and he likes the support he gets from his peers for winding the staff up. He often laughs when he upsets his teacher, hurling abuse and jeering as they try to control him. Secretly, this upsets him and he feels rotten for what he is doing. He doesn't sleep at night anymore and is getting into fights at random.