

Establishing Classroom Rules and Consequences

Adapted from Martha Rader's NBEA presentation

Collaborative rule-making promotes mutual respect, cooperation, self-discipline and personal responsibility while also providing the structure and security students need.

---David Schimmel, *Collaborative Rule-Making and Citizenship Education*

Democratically develop a set of rules and consequences.

Teachers and students must create discipline plans including rules with clear and effective consequences. The rules should be agreed upon and understood by everyone in the class. It should be understood that when rules are broken, consequences will be applied fairly and consistently.

1. **Jointly develop class rules based on expectations and needs.** The teacher solicits help to develop a set of classroom rules and responsibilities. The ideal list would be short (no more than five) and reflect the concepts of mutual respect and personal responsibility.
2. **Discuss logical consequences.** Logical consequences are results which consistently follow certain behavior. They are explained in advance and agreed to by the students. Consequences should be related to the misbehavior so that students can see the connection.
3. **Display the rules and consequences prominently.** Once the class has developed its list of rules, they should be displayed as a reminder of those who may wish to break them. This gives the teacher something to point at when requesting certain behaviors to stop.

Adapted from: Canter, Lee. (2001). Assertive discipline: positive behavior management for today's classroom. Canter & Associates, vi, 234.

Sample Rules for a Computer Lab

Establish Positive Rules	Avoid Negative Rules
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep workstations clean/neat• Use polite, appropriate language• Arrive prepared and on time• Respect others by working quietly• Raise your hand for assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't leave a messy workstation• Don't curse or use foul language• Don't be late or unprepared• Don't disrupt the class by being loud• Don't interrupt without permission

Practical and Impractical Discipline Strategies

Strategies for Teaching Responsible Behavior:

- Develop and model skills in planning and organizing
- Focus on students' strengths and positive qualities
- Establish consequences that teach better behavior
- Speak politely and calmly
- Provide practice at making choices
- Address student privately (letting him or her save face in front of peers)

Strategies to Avoid:

- Corporal punishment
- Threats
- Intimidation, including yelling
- Humiliation, sarcasm
- Detention, suspension
- Sending to the office

The Three-Step Approach to Teaching Classroom Procedures

The number one problem in the classroom is not discipline; it is the lack of procedures and routines.

Harry Wong, The First Days of School, Chapter 20

Step 1: Explain Classroom Procedures Clearly

- ✓ Define the procedure in concrete terms.
- ✓ Demonstrate the procedure; don't just tell.
- ✓ Demonstrate a complex procedure step by step.

Step 2: Rehearse Classroom Procedures Until They Become Routines

- ✓ Have students practice the procedure, step by step, under your supervision. After each step, make sure that the students have performed the step correctly.
- ✓ Have students repeat the procedure until it becomes routine. The students should be able to perform the procedure automatically without teacher supervision.

Step 3: Reinforce a Correct Procedure and Reteach an Incorrect One

- ✓ Determine whether students have learned the procedure or whether they need further explanation, demonstration, or practice.
- ✓ Reteach the correct procedure if rehearsal is unacceptable, and give correct feedback.
 - ✓ Praise the students when the rehearsal is acceptable.

Procedures to Rehearse with Students

- ❖ Entering the classroom
- ❖ Getting to work immediately
- ❖ Arriving late/being tardy
- ❖ Ending the class period/dismissal
- ❖ Listening to/responding to questions
- ❖ Participating in class discussions
- ❖ Needing a pencil or paper
- ❖ Keeping your desk orderly
- ❖ Checking out classroom materials
- ❖ Indicating whether you understand
- ❖ Coming to attention
- ❖ Returning after an absence
- ❖ Working cooperatively
- ❖ Changing groups
- ❖ Keeping your notebook
- ❖ Going to the office
- ❖ Requesting help or information
- ❖ Knowing the schedule for the day/class
- ❖ Keeping a progress report
- ❖ Finding directions for each assignment
- ❖ Passing in papers
- ❖ Returning student work
- ❖ Getting materials without disturbing others
- ❖ Handing out materials
- ❖ Moving about the room
- ❖ Going to the library/Career Center
- ❖ Formatting papers/appropriate heading
- ❖ Finishing a test or assignment early
- ❖ Returning to task after interruption
- ❖ Asking a question
- ❖ Listening to an announcement over the intercom or TV
- ❖ Using passes to be out of the classroom during class time
- ❖ Responding to a fire drill
- ❖ Responding to a severe weather alert
- ❖ Receiving visitors in the classroom
- ❖ Behaving when the teacher is out of the classroom or when a substitute teacher is present
- ❖ Becoming suddenly ill
- ❖ Saying, "Please" and "Thank you"

50 Tips on Motivating Students

1. Know your students and use their names as often as possible.
2. Plan for every class; never try to wing it.
3. Pay attention to the strengths and limitations of each of your students. Reward the strengths and strengthen the weak spots.
4. Set your room in a U-shape to encourage interaction among the students.
5. Send lots of positive messages with posters, bulletin boards, and pictures.
6. Be sure that your classroom is comfortable; check the air circulation, temperature, lighting, and humidity.
7. Periodically change assigned seating arrangement.
8. Vary your instructional strategies; use illustrated lectures, demonstrations, discussion, computers, tutoring, coaching, and more.
9. Review the class objective each day. Be sure the students see how the entire program moves along.
10. Make your instruction relevant. Be sure your students see how the content relates to them and the world of work.
11. Open each presentation with an introduction that captures the interest of your students.
12. Move around the room as you teach; walk energetically and purposefully.
13. Be expressive with your face—SMILE!
14. Put some excitement into you speech; vary your pitch, volume and rate.
15. Use demonstrative movements of the head, arms and hands; keep your hands out of your pockets.
16. Use words that are highly descriptive; give lots of examples.
17. Accept students' ideas and comments, even if they are wrong; correct in a positive manner.
18. Maintain eye contact and move toward your students as you interact with them; be sure to nod your head to show that you are hearing what they say.
19. Give lots of positive feedback when students respond, offer their ideas, perform a task correctly, come to class on time, and bring their materials to class.
20. Foster an active career student organization.
21. Use appropriate humor in your teaching and in tests, to relieve anxiety.
22. Post program-related cartoons, and use them on overheads and in handouts.
23. Provide opportunities for the students to speak to the class.
24. Be available before class starts, during break, and after class to visit with students who wish to see you.
25. Return assignments and tests to students ASAP. Be sure to make positive comments and suggestions.
26. Teach by asking lots of questions during introductions, presentations, demonstrations, and lab work.
27. Plan lab activities so that all the necessary software, information, and materials are available when the students need to use them.

28. Give the students an opportunity to participate in organizing and managing the computer lab.
29. Be aware of those students requiring assistance, and then see that they get it.
30. Maximize the use of time so that the students keep busy with productive, relevant activities.
31. Be a model of the work ethic in your dress, language, support of the school, and respect for the profession.
32. Be consistent in your treatment of students.
33. Make sure that your tests are current, valid, and reliable. They must be based on your curriculum objectives.
34. Organize a “student of the month” award in your classroom or career student organization (CSO).
35. Invite parents, advisory committee members, and school administrators/counselors to visit your program for special activities.
36. Plan relevant study trips out of the school.
37. Bring dynamic subject matter experts into your program.
38. Recognize appropriate behavior and reward it on a continuing basis.
39. Use a surprise—an interesting video, special break, or similar activity—to reward the class for good behavior.
40. Use games, project-based learning, and simulations to spark interest, provide a break in the routine, and to supplement a unit in your curriculum.
41. Praise students in front of the class; reprimand them in private.
42. Explain why rules are used, why activities are important, and why some requests must be denied.
43. Involve all of your students in your teaching.
44. Provide clear directions for program activities and assignments.
45. Plan around 15-30 minute cycles—students have difficulty maintaining attention after a longer period of time.
46. Provide opportunities for the students to read alone and in a group.
47. Send “happy-grams” or emails home to parents periodically.
48. Use task and job sheets to help students remember the steps to perform skills.
49. Be enthusiastic about yourself, your students, and your profession.
50. Network with other professionals: attend ESU workshops, conferences, and network electronically with other professionals and associations.

When a Student has an Emotional or Behavioral Disorder

Ask Special Education Teachers for Assistance

	What You Might See	What You Might Be Tempted to Do	Alternate Responses	Ways to Include Peers in the Process
Behavior	The student refuses to follow directions and uses inappropriate language.	Respond in anger to send him/her out of the classroom. Place him/her in "time-out" for extended periods of time.	Building on his/her strengths and interests, try an approach based on catching him/her being good. Also try contingency contracting.	Use peer mediation as well as group contingencies.
Social Interactions	He/she fights with other students and is always on the defensive.	Separate him/her from other students to prevent fights.	Offer time to calm down. Then teach appropriate social skills using modeling and special education resources at your school.	Pair him/her with different students who can model and help him/her practice social skills and responses.
Educational Performance	He/she is rarely on task and appears to have an inability to learn.	Give poor grades and require him/her to remain until all work is done.	Adapt the curriculum based on student interests and a motivational reward system for completed tasks.	Use peer tutoring and also assign a buddy willing to be a friend and helpful tutor.
Classroom Attitudes	He/she is depressed and sad all the time and does not speak or interact with others.	Discipline him for nonparticipation, and instruct him/her to cheer up.	Recognize the warning signs. Refer him/her for help. Collaborate with the school counselor.	Have different students daily write something positive about him/her, and then verbally present it to him/her.

Adapted from: Turnbull, R.; Turnbull, A.; Shank, M.; & Smith, S.J. (2004) Exceptional lives: special education in today's schools (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 148.