

Why Rules Are Necessary

Rules are most effective when there are consequences to enforce them and reward them.

School must be a safe and protected environment, where a student can come to learn without fear.

Rules are used to set limits. Setting limits helps students behave better.

Limits tell students how far they can go. Limits are important in school because different kinds of behavior are expected or tolerated by different teachers. For example, wandering around the room may be permitted by some teachers but not others.

Effective teachers use rules as a way of setting limits. Teachers who set limits are not ogres; rather, they give students a sense of security as to how far they can go. This is like a parent who builds a railing around a patio deck.

Students need to feel that someone is in control and responsible for their environment and not only sets limits but maintains them. School must be a safe and protected environment where students can come to learn without fear.

Discipline Plans Have Consequences

When dealing with students, rules must have consequences. Some students know that they can break certain rules because the aftermath is consistent and predictable: Nothing will happen to the violator. The responsible adult may find this hard to accept, but many people—children and adults—believe that nothing is wrong until they are caught.

The Two Kinds of Consequences

- Positive consequences with REWARDS
- Negative consequences with PENALTIES

Imagine this typical classroom setting. A teacher is speaking at the front of the room. The students are in their seats facing the teacher. The teacher is explaining a diagram on the chalkboard.

Student A, without permission, goes to the pencil sharpener.

Student B walks over to another student to ask to borrow a pencil.

Student C abruptly speaks up to ask the teacher a question not relevant to the topic.

Student D leans over to say something to student E.

Students F through Z look on.

Students are aware of a teacher's enforcement or nonenforcement of the rules.

- ✓ Students will test the rules to find the limits of their behavior and to determine whether a rule will be enforced or not.
- ✓ Students will swiftly violate a rule that others are violating if the rule is not enforced.
- ✓ Students often observe that teachers do not mean what they say.

All discipline plans have consequences. **POST YOUR CONSEQUENCES.**

Consequences Can Be Positive or Negative

Consequences are **what result when a person abides by or breaks the rules.** Some people philosophically believe that students should be involved in the making of rules, which is fine. However, it may be better if less time is spent discussing rules and more time is spent discussing consequences **because a person's life, at any given point, is the result of that person's actions.**

Continue to do what you are doing, and you will continue to get what you are getting.

Many teachers, especially at the elementary level, prefer to use the simpler word *penalty* on their posted discipline plan. Whether you call them consequences or penalties, they are the result of choices that people make. Through discussion the students understand that their actions or choices result in consequences and that they will responsibly accept these consequences throughout life. So it is advisable to spend more time discussing consequences than discussing rules.

Positive consequences:

REWARDS that result when people abide by the rules are positive consequences.

Negative consequences:

PENALTIES that result when people break the rules are negative consequences.

★ **Secondary school classroom:**

Erase names once a week if students meet one period a day. This is why Thursday was used in the example.

Elementary school classroom:

Erase names at the end of each day if the teacher has the same students all day.

IF YOU CHOOSE TO BREAK A RULE

FIRST TIME: Name on board. Warning.

SECOND TIME: One check*. 15 minutes after school on Thursday.

THIRD TIME: Two checks. 30 minutes after school on Thursday.

FOURTH TIME: Three checks. 45 minutes after school on Thursday. Parents called.

FIFTH TIME: Four checks. 60 minutes after school on Thursday, referral written and student sent to the office.

SEVERE DISRUPTION: Student sent immediately to office.

Names and checks erased each Thursday afternoon

A typical set of negative consequences posted by a teacher.

Example of Negative Consequences

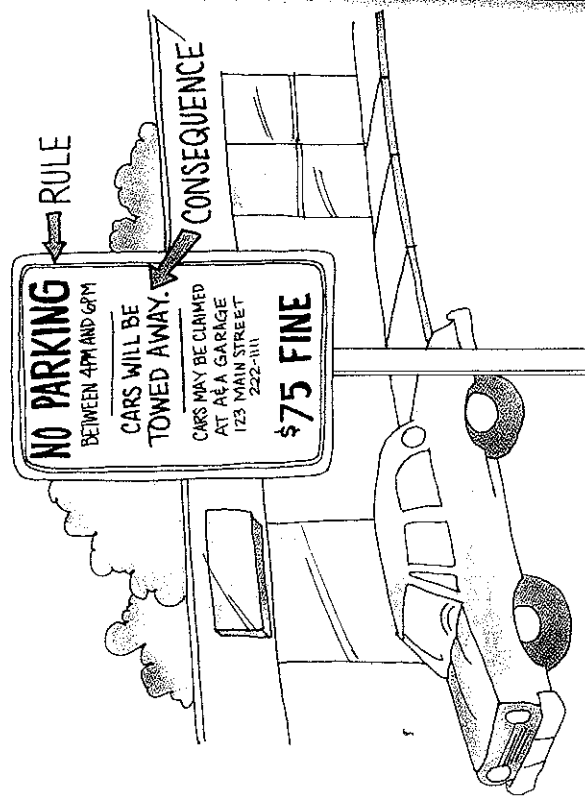
Classroom Rules

1. Follow rules the first time they are given.
2. Raise your hand for permission to speak.
3. Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat.
4. Do not touch anyone else with your hands, your feet, or any object.
5. No cursing or profanity.

Consequences or Penalties

Dana	Your name on the board =
Dana ✓	10 minutes detention at lunch hour
	One check mark =
Dana ✓✓	20 minutes detention at lunch hour
	Two check marks =
Dana ✓✓✓	30 minutes detention at lunch hour
	and your home will be called
	Three check marks =
	Entire lunch hour detention,
	your home will be called,
	and you will be sent to the office

The consequences shown here are examples only. They are not to be used universally. Lunch hour detention may be illegal in your district, as board policy may state that you cannot deprive anyone of lunch. Lunch hour detention is also not recommended for students in the primary grades. Having lunch in the room with the teacher may be considered a reward rather than a penalty by many children.



Rules must have consequences.

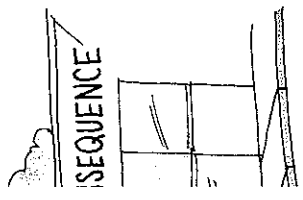
Reasonable and Logical Consequences

The best consequences are reasonable and logical. Students will rebel only when the consequences do not make sense.

- ✓ A reasonable consequence is one that follows logically from the behavior rather than one that is arbitrarily imposed.
- ✓ The best logical consequences teach the students to choose between acceptable and unacceptable actions.

Logical and Illogical Consequences

<u>Student Behavior</u>	<u>Logical Consequence</u>	<u>Illogical Consequence</u>
Chews gum	Disposes of gum; writes paragraph on how to prevent infraction from occurring again	Teacher sends student to office
Turns in sloppy paper	Redoes the paper	Teacher refuses the paper
Walks in noisily	Walks in again	Teacher ignores behavior
Passes paper in incorrectly	Passes paper in properly 10 times	Teacher deducts 10 points
Arrives late	Misses instruction and suffers consequences	Teacher ignores behavior
Does not bring textbook	Does without it for the period	Teacher supplies textbook
Does not bring pencil or pen	Teacher has a box full (why fight it?) and has student borrow and sign for the pencil or pen	Student sits without one



- ✓ Avoid consequences that are related to the academic grade, such as deducting a grade or points for that day. (This may not always be possible, however.)
- ✓ Most students will accept reasonable consequences because they recognize the need for teachers to maintain an orderly classroom to help them learn.
- ✓ A consequence is reasonable when the student sees that it is reasonable and logical and in the student's best interest.
- ✓ When students see the logical connection between what they do and what happens to them, it helps them learn to choose what is appropriate and what is inappropriate behavior.

- ✓ Students will cooperate more readily when they understand how consequences follow logically from their behavior.

- ✓ Explain consequences ahead of time, when the rules they accompany are presented. The subsequent use of the penalty will be more acceptable to the students.

- ✓ The consequence should be suitable and proportional to the violation; in other words, the penalty should fit the crime.

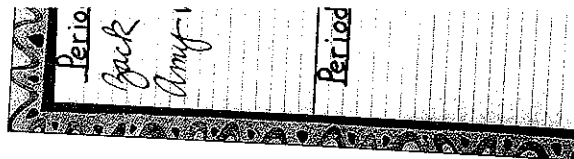
- ✓ Choose consequences that are uncomfortable for the student.

- ✓ Tell the student that the consequence was the result of his or her choice. (See "What Are You Picking on Me For?" on page 158.)

- ✓ When delivering the consequence, encourage the student to use appropriate behavior in the future.

Reasonable and Logical Consequences

Time out
Demerit or fine
Detention
Assignment to write six ways to correct the problem
Being the last to leave
Deprivation of some reward
Exclusion from class participation



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Do Not Stop the Lesson

If you stop a lesson to penalize a student, you disrupt the lesson, interrupt an important point you are making, or disturb people while they are working. **DO NOT STOP THE LESSON.**



Cardinal Principle

Do not stop instruction when giving out the consequence.

When you see a violation of one of the rules, immediately give out the penalty.

Give out the penalty quietly as you continue with the lesson or classwork.

Here are some suggested ways for giving out penalties.

1. **Chalkboard.** Do not stop the lecture, discussion, or movie. Just go to the designated area on the chalkboard and write the student's name or place a check mark after the student's name.

You may need to take a few seconds at the end of the period or day to remind those students of their penalty.

Failure to work off the penalty automatically moves the student up to the next level of the consequences or doubles the penalty.

2. **Transparency.** This is similar to the chalkboard method except an overhead projector is used. This method is especially useful for floating teachers, who must move from room to room. You can take the transparency with you and have a record for each of your classes.

Period 1	Period 4
Jack	Don
Amy	Kelly
	DJ
Period 5	Period 6
	Janet

If a student chooses to break a rule, put the student's name or a check mark on the board or in a special location without interrupting the lesson.

3. **Ticket.** This is the same concept as receiving a traffic ticket. Develop a method for giving the student a ticket. There is no need for a fancy form. A piece of paper with the **student's name** and the **number of the rule broken** is all that is needed.

This method is ideal for circumstances where you do not have a chalkboard or transparency projector, such as physical education classes, an assembly, or a field trip.

You will need to keep a record of who has been given a ticket. This can be done in your grade record book, with a carbon, or with carbonless forms.

4. **Pattern.** Have students make patterns or cutouts to represent themselves for the bulletin board. When you see a rule violation, go to this board and "flag" the student's pattern. A flag could be the addition of a self-adhesive note, removing the pattern, or turning the pattern over. If the pattern has been laminated, a felt pen mark may suffice.

5. **Heart.** Have the students make a pattern with their name on it. Place all the patterns inside a heart—your heart—on the bulletin board. If there is a violation of a rule, kindly remove the pattern and place it outside your heart. Encourage the student to return to your heart.

What Are You Picking on Me For?

What do you say to the following three major questions asked by students worldwide?

What are you picking on me for?

What did I do?

Everyone else is doing it.

Why me?

Stand in front of a mirror and practice the following 100 times until you can say it calmly and automatically every time one of these questions is asked:

Because you CHOSE to break the rule.

Because you CHOSE to break rule number x.

Do not argue. Do not ask the student if he or she is questioning your authority. Do not yell, scream, or raise your voice. Just calmly say every time:

Because you CHOSE to break the rule.

After a few days, no one will ever ask, "Why are you picking on me?" because everyone will know exactly what you will say.

The key word in the phrase is **CHOSE**. Chose means that one is responsible and accountable for one's actions. You are teaching your students responsibility and accountability.

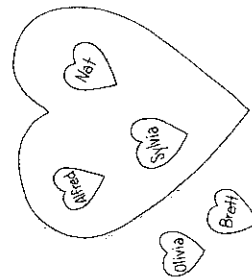
The teacher is not picking on you.

There are five rules in the classroom.

The rules were discussed, agreed on, and signed. So when you CHOOSE to break one of the rules, you must accept the consequence.

After a few weeks or months, if someone should ask you, "Why are you picking on me?" all you have to do is stand and smile at the student. The entire class will respond for you:

Because you CHOSE to break the rule!



Getting Administrative Support

You will be fortunate indeed if you are hired as a new teacher and find yourself at a school with a schoolwide discipline plan. That is like getting hired to work at Nordstrom (page 88). Successful businesses and schools have an established culture. You can fit into the culture and devote more time to student achievement.

Have high expectations that the administration wants to help. They want to help and cooperate with you, as they want a disciplined situation as much as you do, maybe even more so. You need to approach them in the same way you would approach your students, in a nonconfrontational, friendly, cooperative manner.

- ✓ If there is no schoolwide discipline plan, go to your administrator with your plan. It is imperative that you have thought out your plan. You need to know what you want to accomplish.
- ✓ Present your plan, in writing, with your rules, consequences, and rewards. Most administrators know this system, so it will not be a surprise to any of them.
- ✓ Check that your plan does not violate any board policy and can be supported by the administration.
- ✓ Show the administrator what YOU plan to do if the students violate the rules.
- ✓ Show the administrator that you plan to refer the student to the office after a certain number of violations.
- ✓ Ask the administrators what they plan to do when you refer students to the office. It is only consistent and fair that the office knows what you plan to do, that you know what the office will do, and that both the students and their parents know what you and the office will do.

Getting Parental Support

Your objective is to acquire parental support to work cooperatively with you in correcting a student's misbehavior. Your purpose should not be to humiliate the student, "get the student into trouble," aggravate the parents, or have the parents "do something to the kid."

To assist in acquiring parental support, give the parents a copy of the discipline plan to use as a basis for home-school cooperation.

Parents need to see your discipline plan, discuss it with the child, and sign it. You will, of course, want the students to sign it also as an indication that they understand and accept the plan as discussed in class and at home.

The form should be simple and easy to understand. Don't forget to give the parents and the student an extra copy to keep on hand. The form can be as simple as the one shown here.

How to Call the Home

Effective teachers communicate and work cooperatively with students' homes. However, calling the home is not something most teachers like to do. This is because most teachers do not know how to call the home. They are as scared to call the home as the people at home are to hear from the school. Such a call usually brings bad news. But it need not be that way, even if it is the third violation and you need to call the home to have a misbehavior corrected.

Here is a wonderful system that not only works but also teaches the student at the same time **problem solving, responsibility, and self-discipline.**

Note on your discipline plan that you will be calling the home during one of the consequences. At this consequence, have the student complete the form shown on the following page, "My Action Plan."

Discipline Plan for Room 16 Classroom Rules

1. Have all appropriate materials and supplies at your table and be seated when the bell rings.
2. Respect the people, equipment, and furnishings of Room 16.
3. Adjust your voice level to suit the activity.
4. Follow directions the first time they are given.
5. Observe all rules in the student handbook.

If You Choose to Break a Rule

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| First Time: | Name on board. Warning. |
| Second Time: | One check. 15 minutes after school on Thursday. |
| Third Time: | Two checks. 30 minutes after school on Thursday. |
| Fourth Time: | Three checks. 45 minutes after school on Thursday and parents called. |
| Fifth Time: | Four checks. 60 minutes after school on Thursday. referral written, and student sent to the office. |
- Severe disruptions: Student sent immediately to the office.
Names and checks erased each Thursday afternoon.

Rewards

- Praise (daily)
- Positive notes home (random)
- Whole-class radio time or free time (weekly)
- "Raise a Grade" certificate (monthly)
- Movie and popcorn party for class (every 9 weeks)
- Various other positive perks (throughout the school year)
- The joy of learning (each day of the school year)

STUDENTS: I have read this classroom discipline plan and understand it. I will honor it while in Room 16.

Signature _____ Date _____

PARENTS: My child has discussed the classroom discipline plan with me. I understand it and will support it.

Signature _____ Date _____

TEACHER: I will be fair and consistent in administering the discipline plan for Room 16.

Signature _____
 *****IMPORTANT*****
 PLEASE KEEP THIS SHEET IN YOUR BINDER AT ALL TIMES.
 Thank you

Step 1. Give the student a copy of "My Action Plan" and be prepared to work with the student on answering the three questions:

- What's the problem?
- What's causing the problem?
- What plan will you use to solve the problem?

What's the problem? Indicate the rule or rules the student has violated.

What's causing the problem? The student is to list all the factors that are causing the problem to occur.

Work with the student in a **PROBLEM-SOLVING** mode here. Share with the student that the only way a person can solve a problem is first to isolate and identify it. You are not interested in degrading or scolding the student. You want to teach the student how to solve a problem, a technique that the student can use in future life.

What plan will you use to solve the problem? The student is to write the action plan needed to solve the problem.

Have the student look at the factors causing the problem. Show the student that the way to solve a problem is to change, eliminate, or correct the factors causing the problem. Help the student see the logic of this.

Have the student write a plan based on the causative factors listed under the second question. The student now takes **RESPONSIBILITY** for the plan. You did not tell the student what to do. The student, through problem solving, devised his or her own plan to correct the problem. You are teaching responsibility.

Now, for the student to carry through with his or her responsibility, encouragement is needed from the home and the school to get the student to achieve **SELF-DISCIPLINE**.

My Action Plan

1. What's the problem?
I have too many books.
2. What's causing the problem? (Please list the factors.)
I can't walk, it takes me 7 minutes from PE. It's too far away. I have to leave. I have to run down the road. I have to get a drink. I have to go to the locker. I have to go to my locker. The lock is hard to open. I have to run down my locker lock. I have to see my girlfriend. I have to see the teacher. I have to check out all if I have made the team.
3. What plan will you use to solve the problem?
I will share. I will return the book. I will see my girlfriend quickly. I will go to my locker. I will get a new lock for my locker. I will move faster.

Student's Signature: *Will Watson*
Date: _____

Step 2. Have the student indicate responsibility by signing the action plan.

If the problem is not corrected, go back and modify the third part of the action plan. It is much better to teach problem solving, responsibility, and self-discipline than to yell, scream, and flunk. Yelling, screaming, and flunking benefit no one. Learning to be responsible and self-disciplined benefits all of society. Through persistence, have the student work on the action plan over and over until the problem is corrected.

Commend the student when that occurs.

Step 3. Tell the student to show the action plan to a parent. Inform the student that when you call tonight, you will not call to cause trouble. **You will be calling to discuss the action plan and the behavior, not the person.**



**Always deal with the behavior, not the person.
You leave a person's dignity intact when
you deal only with the behavior or the issue.**

Step 4. Call the home in a pleasant, friendly, but businesslike manner. Explain that you are happy to have the student in your class and that the purpose of tonight's call is to discuss the action plan.

The beauty of the action plan system is that there is no argument, confrontation, or aggravation with the parents. Neither party wants that. You did not call to degrade the child, because no parent likes to hear, "You have a no good, rotten kid who can't come to class on time." Tell parents this and they will say, "The schools are doing a terrible job." No one wins, and the child is not helped, defeating the purpose of your call.

Step 5. Explain to the parent that the child has come up with a plan. Impress the parent by explaining that this is something the student has done as a result of problem solving and the use of higher-order thinking skills.



**Note the three key concepts
in the value of using
"My Action Plan":**

- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ Self-discipline

Step 6. The reason you are calling is simple:

Mrs. Watson, I am calling to see if I can enlist the cooperation of the adults at home, working together with the school, to see if we can encourage Will to follow through with what he said he would be RESPONSIBLE for doing.

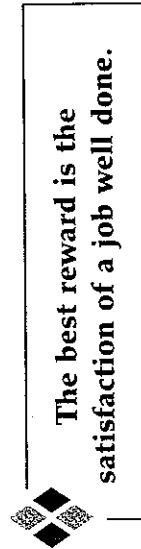
If the parent refuses, go on with your life. You tried. But most parents will not say no because the one thing that both parents and teachers want is to instill RESPONSIBILITY. They can't say no to that.

The parents will think the world of you. So will the student. This was all possible because you operated in a responsible, problem-solving, self-disciplined way yourself.

Rewards or Positive Consequences

Everyone likes and expects special recognition, rewards, or incentives when good work is done. Perks, rewards, honors, prizes, and awards are commonplace.

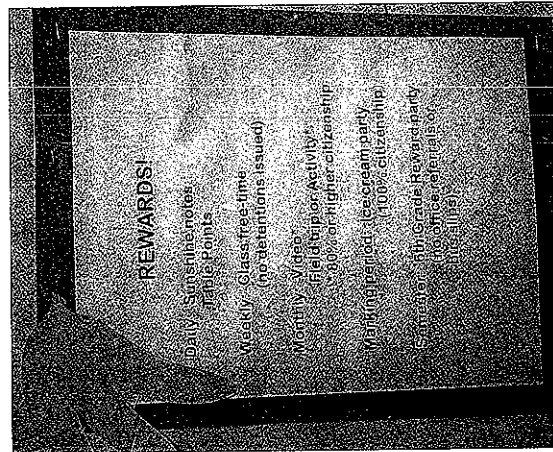
Although rewards are a fact of life, the time has come in education when the wholesale bribery system of giving out endless supplies of stickers, candies, and other tangibles has got to come to a halt. Let's stop the "what's in it for me?" welfare and bribery system.



The best reward is the satisfaction of a job well done.

That is self-discipline—and self-discipline is what discipline is all about. You can't teach self-discipline if the students are always looking for more "goodies."

One of us has operated very successfully during our years of teaching with only one reward: **30 minutes of free time on Friday**. This was also a classwide reward. Everyone had to work together cooperatively the entire week for the reward.



A typical set of rewards posted by a teacher.

The 30 minutes of free time on Friday was effective because it was not a thing. The time was used, mostly, for schoolwork. There were no popcorn parties, pizza parties, or movies to plan for and clean up after, just free time to work!

- ✓ Like rules and consequences, post your rewards.
- ✓ Indicate the time factor associated with the reward. Will the reward be given daily, weekly, when?
- ✓ Explain the system by which the reward is to be earned. That is, you do not *give* rewards; the students *earn* rewards.
- ✓ The most common way of earning rewards, on a class basis, is to put a tally mark somewhere when you catch someone following directions or doing good. When the class has earned a predetermined number of tally marks, it can have the reward.
- ✓ If you don't like tally marks, use marbles in a jar, raffle tickets, or red indicators on a drawing of a thermometer.

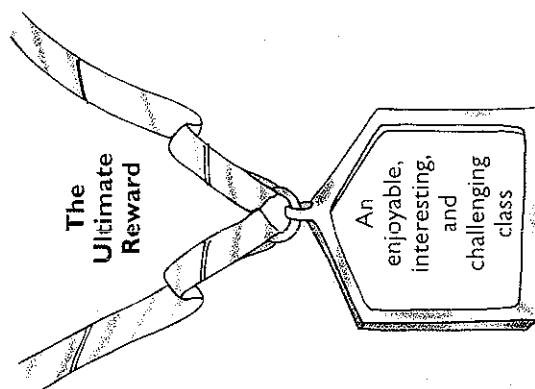
Suggestions for Rewards

The Logical Reward

- Earned good grades
- Made the honor roll
- Was tapped for honor society
- Received a scholarship
- Got extra credit
- Had good work posted
- Was first to be dismissed for lunch, recess, etc.
- Participated in a special event
- Was chosen as student of day, week, month, etc.
- Was awarded a VIP certificate

The Simplest yet Best Reward

- A smile
- A high five
- A pat or handshake
- A word of encouragement
- Praise for the deed, encouragement for the person (see page 183)
- A note or "Warm Fuzzy"
- A note home
- A phone call home



Discipline with Your Body, Not Your Mouth

Calm is strength; upset is weakness. The effective teacher knows what to do to get a student calmly back on task. Practice these steps in front of a mirror.

1. **EXCUSE** yourself from what you are doing.
2. **RELAX.** Take a slow relaxing breath and **CALMLY** approach the student with a meaningful business look.
3. **FACE** the student directly and **CALMLY** wait for a response.
4. If there is no response, **WHISPER** the student's first name and follow with what you want the student to do, ending with "please." Relax and wait.
5. If the student does not get to work, **RELAX** and **WAIT.** Repeat Step 4, if necessary.
6. If backtalk occurs, relax, wait, and **KEEP QUIET.** If the student wants to talk back, keep the first principle of dealing with backtalk in mind:

**IT TAKES ONE FOOL TO TALK BACK.
IT TAKES TWO FOOLS
TO MAKE A CONVERSATION OUT OF IT.**

7. When the student responds with the appropriate behavior say, "Thank you," and leave with an affirmative **SMILE.** If a student goes so far as to earn an office referral, you can deliver it just as well relaxed. After all, **ruining your composure and peace of mind does not enhance classroom management.**

— Adapted from Fred Jones, *Positive Classroom Discipline and Positive Classroom Instruction.*

- ✓ May have
- ✓ Communicate suddenly
- ✓ Conveys in a manner.
- ✓ Winces, motion catches
- ✓ Conveys because me to do
- ✓ Implies that world life discipline
- ✓ Tells the student want to let problem.
- ✓ Berates student phrases to appropriate
- ✓ "Don't you or "How do you tell you?"

Effective Communication of Your Discipline Plan

Now that you have thought out, constructed, and posted your discipline plan, all that is left is to communicate this plan to your students on the first day of school. How you communicate your plan will determine its success or failure.

The Ineffective Teacher

- ✓ May have no clearly defined rules.
- ✓ Communicates rules sporadically and as they are suddenly needed to stifle a situation.
- ✓ Conveys rules in a gruff, angry, and condescending manner.
- ✓ Winces, shrugs, or conveys with facial or body motion disbelief in what is being said.
- ✓ Conveys that "I'm only doing this because the administration wants me to do it."
- ✓ Implies that "I was hired to teach world literature, not to maintain discipline."
- ✓ Tells the students, "If you don't want to learn, that's not my problem."
- ✓ Berates students with meaningless phrases to convey expectations of appropriate behavior, such as "Don't you know any better?" or "How many times do I have to tell you?"

The Effective Teacher

- ✓ Has a discipline plan that does not degrade students.
- ✓ Communicates the plan at the start of school in a firm but controlled and friendly manner.
- ✓ Does not wince or convey disbelief in what is being said.
- ✓ Makes eye contact with each student while presenting the plan.
- ✓ Provides an understandable reason for the plan.

- ✓ Provides a copy of the plan for each student.

- ✓ Sends home a copy of the plan.

- ✓ Enforces the rules consistently.

- ✓ Tells the students that the administration supports the plan.

- ✓ Reviews the plan with new students.

- ✓ Has learned how to discipline with the body, not with the mouth.

- ✓ Has positive expectations that all of the students will abide by the rules.

- ✓ Are confident in themselves and their capabilities.

- ✓ Teaches students the concept of consequences and responsibility.

Activate Your Discipline Plan

Now that you have a discipline plan, **work your plan**. Put your plan into practice daily, and make your behavior predictable and consistent. This is the attribute of an effective teacher.

To be an effective teacher:

1. Post your rules.
2. Post your consequences and rewards.
3. Immediately enact the consequence when a rule is broken.
4. Give positive feedback to individuals as well as to the class.
5. Make your behavior predictable and consistent.

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The Effective Teacher

1. Thinks through a discipline plan before school begins and conveys the plan to the students when school begins.
2. Discusses the plan so that students understand the logic of it and consider it reasonable.
3. Involves the administration to help guarantee and enforce the plan.
4. Has high expectations and confidence in his or her capacity to teach young people self-discipline.