

Classroom Discipline Checklist

The following are interventions that most teachers use routinely to establish a positive classroom climate. There is no miracle formula; however careful thought and advance planning helps to set establish a positive environment for everyone. This list is a reminder of some questions to ask of yourself.

1. Are classroom rules established, clear and posted?
2. Seating charts can provide a significant role in sustaining a supportive and positive climate. Do you have a seating chart which strategically places students with special physical and behavioral needs? Do you consider detrimental effects of paring specific students or groups of students.
3. Do you maintain routines and hand out a weekly schedule tells students what materials to bring to school?
4. Have you taken all reasonable steps to minimize or eliminate out-of-the-room passes? Do you have policy for bathroom, water, telephone, counselor, or nurse visits.
5. Are students aware of their progress or lack of progress? Are they reasonably able to determine the grade they are earning?
6. Do you provide prompt and positive feedback more frequently than negative feedback? Is critical feedback provided privately and with corrective instructions?
7. Do you take students' self-concept into consideration with comments you make or when engaging in routine activities such as calling on students to respond, the order in which papers are handed out or in which students are selected for activities?
8. Do you consider the potentially harmful effects of public praise that may lead to unintentional competition or ridicule?
9. Do you follow the 3 second rule when you must correct or "discipline" a student? It should not take more than three seconds to identify the infraction and state the consequence. If your rules are clear and the consequences can be anticipated, there is no need for arguing or sympathy. Extensive correction disrupts the flow of instruction and is a disservice to those who are following the rules.
10. Are you open to and honest about opportunities to negotiate? Negotiation is an important skill for students to learn. There is a difference between negotiating and bribing. Negotiating takes place around specific issues or concerns and does not need to become an expected privilege. It does provide teachers with control of a situation, but also allows students to have selectively limited choices and a sense of personal "power" in their participation in required activities.
11. Have you taken reasonable steps to remove or minimize reinforcers for unwanted behavior? This includes direct responses and inadvertent attention to inappropriate attention seeking behaviors.

12. Do you use behavioral interventions in a graduated and clear sequence from the least to more intrusive options? For example, eye contact, effective pause, planned ignoring, proximity control, slight touch (hand on student's paper, pencil or desk), direct verbal address (restate expectations and redirection), statement of consequences, removal to separate area, removal from the classroom.
13. Do you use eye contact and gestures more than words? Speaking is very intrusive to classroom routine when use for correcting misbehavior. When necessary, speak softly so that everyone will have to be absolutely quiet in order to hear what you have to say.
14. Do you use words that relate to students' values? Most students do want to be trustworthy, reliable, conscientious, mature, sincere, etc.; as opposed to being immature, babyish, fake, flaky or need of extra attention. Careful consideration of how you respond to students sets a tone of respect, or disrespect and can have powerful consequences.
15. Do you provide opportunity at dismissal time of class or school day (2-5 minutes) for students to comply with routine expectations such as clean-up, and put materials away?
16. Do you consider the possible domino effects on yourself or other staff when you make disciplinary decisions? For example, holding a student at the end of the hour will require someone adjust their schedule.
17. Do you know, teach and consistently follow established school-wide behavioral policies and procedures?

Key words: predetermined, fair, consistent, and logical.

Barbara Braaten, 1986, revised 2009