

# Classroom Management

- Rules and guidelines are essential to keep your classroom functioning smoothly and to provide security for the students and structure for the class.
- Establish early on with your students why rules are important. Discuss the rules so the students know what they are and what they mean. Give examples and scenarios to help in explaining the rules.

## Rules Vs. Expectations

- Differentiate between rules and expectations.
  - **Rules** are general and overarching. You will want to have around 3-6 stated classroom rules—they are the essentials of how you will expect your students to behave. They may include things like “Listen when others are talking,” “Be respectful,” or “Obey the teacher.”
    - Rules are intentionally general to encompass a wide range of behaviors.
    - State rules in the positive. For example, “Speak only with permission,” not “No talking without raising your hand.”
    - When rules are broken, there should be consequences of some sort.
  - **Expectations** are more specific and granular than rules—they are simply the normal way in which you do things in your classroom. A smoothly functioning classroom will have dozens of expectations in place, such as, “This is how we pass out papers,” “This is what we do if we need to go to the bathroom,” or “This is what we do if we have a question.”
    - As a teacher, you should determine your expectations before school starts so that you can communicate them clearly to the students. This takes time and effort but will pay off in the long run.
    - Model expectations to students, or ask them to show you the right way to do something (after the expectation has been clearly established). Students should see, feel, and understand what is expected of them.
    - If a student breaks an expectation, it is generally better to have them practice doing the behavior the right way instead of enforcing a punishment.

## Implementing Rules Consistently

- Rules and expectations are only as good as the teacher who implements them. What one teacher finds works for them may not fit with another teacher’s personality or preferences.
- For repeated rule-breaking, consequences should be cumulative. The first offense may mean a warning. The next offense merits *abc*, and the third offence *xyz*, with each consequence level being stiffer. (The consequence sequence can start over at various intervals depending on the age of the student. It may be daily for younger students or weekly or quarterly for older students).

- Be clear. Know in your own mind what the rules means. Know what you want your classroom to be. Think about the types of behavior you don't want to see and decide how you will deal with them when they arise.
- Be consistent. Students will tend to push against boundaries to discover whether the boundaries hold or not. If you as the teacher uphold rules infrequently, it will lead to more bad behavior. If you hold a line consistently, students will cooperate. Children crave security, and a consistent teacher sends the message that they are dependable and students can trust them.

### **The Goals of Good Classroom Management**

- Your goal in creating rules is to create an environment where learning is the reason for doing school. If there is disorder and distraction, students cannot learn.
- Your aim is for the student to take responsibility for their own actions.
- Pursue the child's heart, not just right actions. Chronic behavioral issues do not come without a reason—unstable home environments, struggling academically, attention-seeking, impulsivity, peer pressure, lack of sleep, poor nutrition, etc. Look diligently to find underlying causes.
- Keep the “why” of discipline in front of you. The goal of classroom management is not to create a herd of robots who perfectly do what they're told without a moment's hesitation. The goal is to be part of forming people with soft hearts that are turned towards the Father.

### **Developing Procedures**

- Some areas to consider in building classroom procedures:
  - Student desks—how will you arrange the desks? Traditional rows? All facing forward?
  - Specific arrangement of desk contents—How will students learn to organize desk contents? How often will they be asked to tidy their desks?
  - Morning routines—what 3-5 things do you want students to do every morning when they arrive?
  - Restroom plan—When will students use the restroom? May they go during class time? What behavior do you expect in the restrooms?
  - Moving around the classroom—Are students allowed to get up and move around the classroom whenever they want? How will they know when are/aren't appropriate times?
  - Moving around the building—Do you expect students to walk in the building? Are they allowed to talk while in the hallways?
  - Water-drinking plan—When will students get drinks? May they get up for a drink during class time? Are water bottles allowed by their desks?
  - Leaving and entering the room—Will they line up before exiting/entering the classroom? What is your recess equipment plan?
  - Lining up—How will they line up? Who goes first? Who holds the door?
  - Hand/finger signals—Will students be required to raise hands to speak? Will you have signals for asking permission to leave their desk, sharpen a pencil, get a tissue, go to the restroom, etc.?

- Handing in books and papers—Where will students hand in their work? When? How? Plan and label locations.
- Lunch time—Where will they eat? What is your hand-washing plan? What about microwave usage?
- Pencils—When will the sharpener be used and by whom? How will you make sure there are enough sharp pencils on hand?
- Free time—What will faster students do when they finish their work? What if they rush through work to have free time?

## Sources

- Expectations and Order by Arlen Birt [Expectations and Order - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Setting the Tone: Clarity, Consistency, Composure by Carolyn Martin [Setting the Tone: Clarity, Consistency, Composure - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Help for Beginners and the Experienced by Betty Yoder [Help for Beginners and the Experienced - The Dock for Learning](#)
- Some Advice on Classroom Management by Meghan Brubaker [Some Advice on Classroom Management - The Dock for Learning](#)