Teacher Resources

Tips on Building Classroom Procedures and Routines:

How to have a well-managed classroom

Note: The following references and excerpts taken from three sources:
1. How to be an effective teacher, The First Days of School, by Harry and Rosemary Wong
2. Discipline in the School, by Hartwig and Ruesch
3. Experienced middle school teachers
What is classroom management?

Classroom management refers to all of the things that a teacher does to organize students, space, time, and materials so that instruction in content and student learning can take place. It is not about presenting lessons of lectures, worksheets, videos, and discussions and then when problems arise it’s time to discipline. Class management includes all of the things that a teacher must do toward two ends:

1. To foster student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities.
2. To establish a productive working environment.

To foster student involvement and cooperation in all classroom activities, the effective teacher plans a variety of activities that are appropriate for learning. These activities may include reading, taking notes, participating in group work, discussions, and producing materials. An effective teacher knows that the goal is to have every student involved and cooperating in all of the activities and for the duration.

To establish a productive working environment, the effective teacher plans ahead. Students must pay attention, be cooperative and respectful of each other, exhibit self-discipline, and remain on task. In addition, the room must have a positive climate, all materials must be ready and organized, and the furniture must be arranged for productive work.

Effective classrooms are characterized by order, appropriate reinforcement of rules, and purposeful activity. Successful classroom management is characterized by the teacher’s productive use of instructional time and by transition from one activity to the next with minimal disruption and wasted time. Creating an atmosphere of participation where students are willing to work and are inherently interested in working can be self-reinforcing and productive.

These characteristics of effective classrooms can be summarized into four points:

1. Students are involved in their work.
2. Students know what is expected of them and are generally successful.
3. There is relatively little wasted time, confusion, or disruption.
4. The climate of the classroom is work-oriented and pleasant.
What are classroom procedures?

Procedures are simply a set of steps, methods, or processes for how things are done in the classroom. They are not rules. From the first day of school the learning, practicing, and reinforcement of procedures are essential for a smooth running classroom. When your students know how the class is run, they will be more willing to do whatever you want them to do.

When you teach, practice, and reinforce the learning of procedures at the beginning of the year or as needed throughout the year your class will begin to run on “automatic pilot”. The following are examples of classroom procedures that students can learn.

| Entering the classroom and sitting down       | Handing in papers               |
| Getting to work immediately                  | Returning student work          |
| When you are tardy                          | Exchanging papers              |
| End-of-period class dismissal                | Getting materials without disturbing others |
| Listening to and responding to questions    | Moving about the room           |
| Participating in classroom discussion        | Going to the library            |
| When you need a pen or pencil               | Headsings on papers            |
| Keeping your desk, table, or chair orderly  | When you finish early          |
| Checking out classroom reference materials  | Returning to a task after an interruption |
| Getting classroom attention                 | Asking a question or requesting help |
| When you are absent                         | When intercom announcements are made |
| Working cooperatively                        | Walking in the hallway when moving as a class |
| Changing groups                             | Responding to a fire drill     |
| Keeping your notebook/trapper               | When visitors are in the classroom |
| Going to the office                         | If the teacher is out of the classroom |
| When you want to know your class grade      | If you are suddenly ill        |
| Finding directions for each assignment      | Saying “Thank you”              |

Remember, it is the procedures that set the class up for success to take place. When the students are taught them well enough the procedures will become a routine. Your students will operate automatically without prompting or supervision.
How do I teach procedures?

Effective teachers manage with procedures. Every time the teacher wants something done, there must be a procedure or a set of procedures.

The Three Steps to Teaching Classroom Procedures
1. Explain: State, explain, model, and demonstrate the procedure.

   Explain:
   - Define the procedure in concrete terms
   - Demonstrate the procedure, don’t just tell.
   - Demonstrate a complex procedure step by step.

2. Rehearse: Rehearse and practice the procedure under your supervision.

   Rehearse:
   - 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 the students repeat the procedure until it becomes a routine. The students should be able to perform the procedure automatically without teacher supervision.

3. Reinforce: Reteach, rehearse, practice, and reinforce the classroom procedure until it becomes a student habit or routine.

   Reinforce:
   - 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 corrective feedback.
   - Praise the students when the rehearsal is acceptable.
How do I set up my classroom rules and consequences?

The function of a rule is to prevent or encourage behavior by clearly stating student expectations. They set limits to how students behave. The following example is an acceptable set of rules to consider starting with.

**Classroom Rules**

1. Follow directions the first time they are given.
2. Raise your hand and wait for permission to speak.
3. Stay in your seat unless you have permission to do otherwise.
4. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.
5. No cursing or teasing.

You do not want to have more than 5 rules. Most of us operate from unwritten rules of proper behavior when interacting with people. It would be literally impossible to record a set of rules that would cover everything a student is capable of doing. Therefore it is necessary to limit the number of rules that are most essential to your level of tolerance.

The next step is to apply a set of consequences to the breaking or adhering to the classroom rules. The following example is an acceptable set of consequences to consider starting with.

**If You Choose to Break A Rule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Time: Name on board = Warning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Time: 1 check mark = 15 min detention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Time: 2 check marks = 30 min detention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Time: 3 check marks = 45 min detention and parents called.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Time: 4 check marks = 60 min detention, written referral, sent to office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe Disruption: Student sent immediately to office.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other reasonable and logical consequences to consider are “time out,” give an assignment for student to write ways to correct the problem, being last to leave the room, deprivation of some reward, or exclusion from class participation.

Finally, recognition should be given to the students who adhere to the classroom rules. We are not advocating for a wholesale bribery system, but we do recognize that even though the best reward is the satisfaction of a job well done, we are dealing with teenagers. The following are examples of acceptable rewards to consider starting with.

**Rewards**

- Fox Paw certificates
- Bonus Bucks
- Computer time
- Free reading time
- Free time
- Assignment Coupons
How do I discipline the student?

Don’t take it personally but you will have students who choose to break the rules. That’s right. People break rules because they choose to do so. When a student breaks a rule immediately give out the penalty in a quiet manner. Do not stop the lesson to penalize the student and disrupt the others who are working. Just move to the designated area on the chalkboard and write the student’s name or place the check mark after the name. If you have to remove the student from the class go over to the student and request in a quiet voice that they go to the office.

Remember there is no need to yell, argue, or become defensive with a student. If you are requesting a conference with the student wait until the end of the class before you tell them you want to talk about the incident. The whole class does not need to be involved in the discipline process when an individual chooses to break a rule.

See our middle school discipline plan for further guidance.
How do I create an effective classroom management system?

1. Make the Room Ready:
   - Post daily lesson objective(s) – Classrooms that have posted lesson objective(s) provide a plan for the students to follow. Students know what is expected of them and what needs to be done next during the class period.
   - Organize your room - A cluttered or barren room sends a negative message to your students. A well-organized, attractive room gives an “in-control” image that students will respect. Plan for how the students will move around the room. Plan for areas where students put their belongings. Plan for where the students will sit.
   - The Forgetful Student – Every year there is at least one student who is unable to keep track of his or her school things. Create a box or an area for the student to retrieve their materials within the classroom. After awhile when you begin to build responsibility have the student store one item in their locker and to bring that item to class daily. As the student improves bringing the item to class regularly have them be responsible for more items.
   - Gum Chewing – Students are not allowed to chew gum in school, but they still try to get away with it. Try fastening a small bag near the classroom door “Last Chance Gum Bag”. Give student the option of putting gum in bag or receive a detention.
   - Bringing the Classroom to attention: The following are examples of signals to getting the classroom’s attention; raising your hand, tapping a bell, whistling “Jeopardy” tune, etc. Regardless of the signal the students need to respond by stopping what they are doing, turning to face the teacher, and waiting for some instruction.
   - Post Classroom Rules and Consequences – Enough said.
   - Create a Supply System – Students may need pens, pencils, loose-leaf paper, scissors, tape, string, etc. from time to time. Consider how you want students to have access to these items.
2. Have the Work Ready:

- **Absent Basket** – When daily assignments are handed out and a student is absent, have your assigned student helper put the absent student’s name on the assignment and put it into the “Absent Basket”. When the absent student returns they retrieve their assignment.

- **Extra Copies** – You are bound to have students who forget or lose their handouts. One method that works is to staple extra copies together and store them in a designated area. As a student needs a copy they simply tear it off the staple. The rest of the copies remain together and organized. Students report to the teacher if they have the last of the copies.

- Have desks, books, papers, assignments, and materials ready in advanced. Plan ahead for students who finish early and what you want them to be doing on a regular basis.

- Keeping students on-task with a digital timer: Explain to your students on Monday morning that they automatically have 30 minutes of free time (as you define) on Friday. Put the 30 minutes on the timer and the students are challenged to keep that time throughout the week. If they are talking, off task, or not organized when they need to be, the teacher starts the timer, which deducts from the 30 minutes. By Friday they get the free time, as defined by you, that is left on the timer.

3. Get Yourself Prepared:

- Have emergency materials handy, such as tissues, rags, paper towels, soap, first-aid kit, etc.

- Make sure you have accurate class rosters available for tornado and fire drills or emergencies. Accurate lists will assist you when attendance during an emergency is critical.

- Setting up complete emergency substitute plans

- Set up a toolbox (pliers, screwdrivers, hammer) for hands-on projects or for simple maintenance around the classroom.

- Assign student helpers: There are numerous tasks in any given classroom that can be assigned to student helpers. For example, handing out and collecting papers, passing out and collecting correction pens, cleaning transparencies, etc.

- Establish a lesson plan system whether it is on a calendar, computer, or in an agenda for the planning of units, concepts, activities, field trips, assemblies, etc.