
Advice Sheet 12

CLASS BEHAVIOUR AGREEMENT

During the establishment phase of the year, it is important to set up a basic class behaviour agreement which will indicate the rights and responsibilities of everyone in the class, and the rules and routines which are to be followed. Of course, any class behaviour agreement should reflect the values and aims of the whole-school behaviour policy / plan.

Depending on the ages and abilities of the class, it is advisable to involve the pupils as much as possible in creating the Class Behaviour Agreement – then they will have ownership of the rules and routines and understand why these are necessary. In this sense, the process of formulating the agreement is as important as the product – it is a ‘democratic classroom’ in action, where the voices of the pupils are encouraged and listened to, not just by staff, but by their peers. Time needs to be set aside for a Class Meeting(s) dedicated to this task at the beginning of the year – this will be time well spent as it will set the tone for the type of learning environment you want to create for the rest of the year.

Try to write the agreement as simply and clearly as possible. Using images and pictures may be helpful. Where possible, rules should be phrased positively, and core consequences for rule infringement easily identified. It should also include a support framework to assist pupils who are struggling with their behaviour.

When the Class Behaviour Agreement has been finalised, it’s important to publish it (maybe in booklet form) and circulate to all pupils in the class, their parents, and any staff who will be working with the class. It’s also a good idea to get pupils, parents and staff to sign it – this makes it a contract for everyone.

On the following three pages an outline of a **sample** Class Behaviour Agreement is **suggested**. Please do not take this as either a template or formula but devise an agreement that is suitable for your class, your belief system and your individual situation. The format and content of each Class Behaviour Agreement should differ from year to year, from class to class, from teacher to teacher and from school to school. The agreement can be written in the ‘I’ voice or in the ‘We’ voice – the ‘I’ puts the onus on each individual to abide by the agreement, whereas the ‘we’ emphasises collective ownership of the agreement. Either way, pupils need to be taught that each person owns his/her own behaviour and must take responsibility for it.

The most important step once the Class Behaviour Agreement is formulated and signed is to follow through on its implementation. Otherwise the process will have been pointless. If you find that something in the agreement is not implementable or doesn’t work, then it’s time to call another Class Meeting to discuss this and to problem-solve for the future.

OUR CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR AGREEMENT

CLASS 5

ST. JOHN'S SCHOOL, DUBLIN

These are the pupils in our class.

James Rice 	Amanda Pratt 				

These are the staff members who work with our class every week.

Ms. Jones (Teacher) 	Ms. O'Connor (Teacher) 	Mr. Hayes (Teacher) 	Mr. Delaney (SNA) 
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"I agree to follow this Class Behaviour Agreement which I have developed with my class colleagues".

SIGNED BY:

_____ (Pupil)

_____ (Parent / Guardian)

_____ (Parent / Guardian)

_____ (Ms. Jones)

_____ (Ms. O'Connor)

_____ (Mr. Hayes)

_____ (Mr. Delaney)

DATE: _____

OUR AGREEMENT

In our class, we have agreed to abide by the following four basic rules, which we have decided on after discussing our rights and responsibilities.

<p><u>OUR CLASS SAFETY RULE</u></p> <p>In our class, we all have a right to feel safe.</p> <p>We all have a responsibility to ensure that everyone else also feels safe.</p>	<p><u>OUR CLASS LEARNING RULE</u></p> <p>In our class, we all have a right to learn.</p> <p>We all have a responsibility to allow others to learn.</p>
<p><u>OUR CLASS COMMUNICATION RULE</u></p> <p>In our class, we all have a right to communicate.</p> <p>We all have a responsibility to allow others to communicate also.</p>	<p><u>OUR CLASS RESPECT RULE</u></p> <p>In our class we have a right to be treated with respect.</p> <p>We all have a responsibility to treat others with respect.</p>

CLASS ROUTINES:

To ensure that these rules are kept, these are class routines that we have agreed.

1. We walk quietly into class on time for each lesson and sit quietly until teacher starts the lesson.
2. We listen to others respectfully.
3. We raise our hand and wait for permission if we want to speak during class teaching time.
4. When we are working in groups, we use partner voices to communicate with our partners.
5. We ask for permission if we need to leave our seat.
6. We don't make any comments or gestures that might offend or show lack of respect to another person.
7. ...

CONSEQUENCES:

When we choose *to abide* by the class behaviour agreement, the consequences are:

1. We will have a happy, safe, respectful class where everyone can learn and everyone can communicate.
2. We will earn credits for individual reward and for whole-class reward. The rewards may be:
 - a. Lots of praise and support from the school staff
 - b. Treats (fruit, scones, drinks, sweets, lollipops, cakes)
 - c. Golden Time where we can select a favoured activity for our once-a-week class Golden Time
 - d. Individual Golden Time outside the weekly class Golden Time

- e. Trips out of class (e.g. visits to town for lunch / shopping; educational trips; visits to the cinema / park / shopping centre etc.)
- f. Other rewards suggested by the staff and/or the pupils and agreed by everyone

When I/we choose *not to abide* by the class behaviour agreement, the consequences are:

1. I will be asked to identify or I will be reminded of what class rule or routine I am breaking
2. I will be asked respectfully to abide by the class behaviour agreement.
3. If I choose not to do so, I understand that the next steps are:
 - My behaviour will be noted in the Class File
 - I will be asked to work away from others on my own
 - I will have to stay back after class to speak to the teacher and explain my behaviour
 - I will lose privileges to which I am entitled including loss of Golden Time (5 minutes each time)
 - My behaviour will be reported to the Principal / Deputy Principal
 - I will be asked to go to the time-out area
 - My parent(s) will be notified of my behaviour
 - I will be asked to attend a parent/teacher/pupil meeting to explain my behaviour
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I understand that I can prevent these steps from happening by abiding by the rule / routine as asked.

SUPPORT:

We can all support each other in this class. By following the Class Behaviour Agreement we support each other. We support each other when we share and co-operate, when we say nice things, when we encourage and praise each other, when we listen, when we play a positive role in building a good spirit in the class.

Sometimes we may not feel like abiding by the Class Behaviour Agreement. When this happens, we need to let others know why we feel the way we do (e.g. I feel angry because ..., I feel that this is unfair because ..., I feel tired because ...). It is ok to have these feelings but we need to talk about them and not to 'act out' because of the way we feel.

There are ways of sorting things out when things go wrong. These include:

- Listening to others and thinking about our actions
- Putting things right (e.g. paying for something we damaged / stole, apologising to the other person)
- Discussing our feelings and actions with others (other pupils, members of staff, parents)
- Developing a plan for myself to manage my own behaviour
- ...