

# Positive classroom management practices

## Establishing classroom rules

Effective classroom management is essential to successful learning. Most teachers spend the first few days and weeks establishing community with their students. Part of that community building involves the establishment of classroom rules and norms. We know that classroom rules must be intentional and clearly written and that every member of the classroom community should be able to understand the meaning of the rules.

We also know that involving students is recognised as best practice for both developments of classroom rules as well as the consequences for breaking them. Involving students ensures age appropriateness and relevance as well as helps students rationalise the concept of rules.

## Consequences

Consequences can be both positive and negative. Student involvement in determining consequences is extremely valuable regardless of the setting. They not only need to be appropriate and fitting for the age level, but they must be fair. Consequences are most effective with an immediate response and then sustained reinforcement. This means is that you would have an appropriate consequence at the moment for some type of behaviour. It is important to remember that negative consequences should be extended with additional reflective and restorative practices.

An important thing to remember for learning is that a lot can happen in a students' learning environment. Students need to feel safe that they will not face negative consequences when distractions in their environment are out of their control.

Establish clear expectations for the classroom environment. Create consequences, set incentives, and generate ideas for rewards together with students.

## Procedures

Procedures should not be confused with rules. Procedures are fundamentally different from rules because they define specific actions as opposed to expectations for behaviour. The consistency and predictability in procedures allow students to move smoothly through their day. Having consistent procedures allows you to manage the classroom more efficiently. Remember to model and practice procedures with students

so that they are aware of how things need to run. Practice the important procedures so that students can flow seamlessly when they need to be applied.

## **Withitness**

Withitness is defined as the disposition of a teacher to quickly and accurately identify problematic behaviour, or even better, potential problematic behaviour and intervene immediately. It is more about how aware the teacher is of what is really happening in the classroom.

It is important that teachers are realistic and know that some students are going to engage in off-task behaviour, so it is necessary to send clear messages that they are paying attention.

Below are a few tips on how to stay engaged with your students:

- Be aware of body language and facial expressions.
- Use inflection and expression when speaking.
- Use questions to keep students engaged.
- Say student names when speaking in general.
- Participate with students in groups/breakouts.
- Be honest, be real, and model enthusiasm.

## **Engagement**

According to The Glossary of Education Reform, student engagement refers to “the degree of attention, curiosity, interest and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught. Students need to be engaged in content in order to learn, and we know choice is a motivator. When students are motivated, engagement is high. And when engagement is high, classroom management tends to fall into place and rules are followed more clearly.

For interest and curiosity to be peaked, content has to be relevant. So how educators approach delivering the content is vital to engagement. Teachers can still do many of the same things; however, it takes some creativity and planning to constantly delivering content in a different way.

Create a space, like breakout rooms, where students have the opportunity to collaborate in both learning and play activities. Both are equally important in development. Keep students moving! Find ways for them to move around just as in the classroom.

No matter what types of creative ways are used to keep students engaged in learning, let students know ahead of time what the criteria is. If needed allow students to practice the procedures so that behavior is ideal and engagement is high.