

Effective School Discipline and Classroom Management

Workshop by Ronald Morrish

School Discipline: Building Respectful Student Behaviour

1. Take charge with authority (not power) – be firm and confident. Follow through on directions and assignments – this give you a reputation for meaning what you say.
2. Always model the behaviour you will be expecting from the students. Speak respectfully, even when frustrated. Listen and acknowledge differing points of view. Be on time for class. Dress appropriately for school. Be prepared and organized.
3. Communicate clear expectations. Create signage so that you don't have to use verbal reminders for everything. Even theatres have signs regarding cell phone usage, etc.
4. Start by making sure that small actions are done properly (courtesy, entry, coats, etc.). It is on the small actions that you build the foundation for bigger actions. The concept of, "Don't sweat the small stuff" applies to infractions and the application of consequences.
5. For various non-learning actions (entry, exit, asking questions, submitting work, accessing the washroom, etc.), implement a procedure and be consistent. This creates what is called a "routine" which will run smoothly without argument.
6. Use the first two weeks of school as a "training camp". During summer vacation, the life of students is very different. By the end of two weeks, however, you want them fully back in their workplace mentality. Implement whatever lessons students need in order to be speaking appropriately (school language, not street language), dressing appropriately, working appropriately, playing appropriately, and solving problems effectively. Note that the concept of "training camp" doesn't mean that you aren't doing academic lessons. The training overlaps with academic lessons and consumes some chunks of time but not the entire day.
7. Employ active supervision for entry, hallways, breaks, and work periods.
8. Be at the doorway when students enter. Transition them from the socializing of the hallway to the learning of the classroom. Use your greeting and interaction with students to establish expectations for courtesy and respect in the learning environment.
9. Stress preventions. Eighty to ninety percent of discipline is done before there is a problem, not when there is a problem. Anticipate how students will respond in various situations. Design the work space and the lessons accordingly. Know which students work well together. Know which students can work in groups and which ones need more personal space. Make decisions based on insights, not incidents.
10. Respond to incidents productively, not punitively. Correct rather than consequence. Focus on having students "make it right" (restitution, reconciliation, and restorative justice) and learn how to

do it better. Delay discussions when necessary to take the emotionality out of situations. Use administration to get students back on track, not to get them suspended. Decide what changes need to be made to prevent a problem from recurring.

11. Have "supports" in place for giving students the help that they need for success – study hall (not detention room), counselling, etc.
12. Be a "school teacher", not just a classroom teacher. Staff members must make a commitment to teamwork, particularly regarding the enforcement of school rules and expectations.
13. Make character education and values education meaningful by working them into your minute to minute expectations, not just into school assemblies.
 - For motivation, a class could earn a mosquito net to save a child's life in Africa, instead of simply earning play time or a special sticker. If a group earned a pizza lunch, they could be required to each invite a new student to join in and feel welcome.
 - Employ random acts of kindness.
 - When people of character do things wrong, they look for opportunities to make it right – restitution, reconciliation, and restorative justice. It's better to solve problems than to simply take the consequences for them.
 - Employ high levels of leadership and responsibility.
 - Increase expectations as students get older (maturity).
 - Students who finish first should help others be successful, instead of simply finding something to play with. (Unless they want to extend their own learning, which is also fine.)
 - Expect students to "pitch in" around the school, which means that they learn to help out "from the heart", not "from a deal". Too many students won't even bend over and pick up a piece of garbage dropped by someone else. Then again, some teachers won't do it either – and role modelling is important.
 - At the end of each day, students should be able to answer the questions, "Who did you help today?" and "How did you make our school a better place?" Perhaps you should have them write their answers in their agenda books.
 - Expect quality behaviour without excuses. For instance: Be polite to people you don't like, not just to those you do like.
 - Did you fill someone's bucket today?
 - Create a "Circle of Friends" for students with special needs.

Classroom Management

Effective classroom management is designed to maximize learning. Ensure that the design of classroom rules and procedures complements school expectations.

A. Engineer the classroom environment:

- Make the environment invitational.
- Account for different learning styles (quiet places to work, ADD issues, etc.).
- Consider traffic patterns, etc.
- Plan to work from more structure to less structure.

- Design a structure of rules and procedures to support expectations, ensuring that these rules and procedures are consistent with those of the school.
- Establish routines for getting materials, submitting work, sharpening pencils, etc., without disruption.

B. Design lessons which are engaging (active learning):

- Use meaningful applications whenever possible.
- Design the lessons to challenge students, requiring them to problem-solve, relate, use critical analysis skills, etc.
- Avoid "make work" lessons like copying notes, extended pencil and paper activities, etc.
- Build lessons around student interests whenever possible.

C. Run the classroom smoothly and efficiently:

- Take charge with authority, not power.
- Communicate expectations.
- Train procedures and compliance so that they will become routine.
- Run a two-week "training camp" (if possible) to start the new school year.
- Have extra equipment available (pens, pencils, paper, etc.).
- Provide "sponge" activities (designed to "soak up" idle time) for students who finish early.
- Employ active supervision: on entry, in hallways, etc. Be at the doorway as students enter.
- Use the entry and greeting to establish expectations.
- Change the entry process into a transition.
- Run quick, smooth, efficient transitions, making them into routines.

D. Employ techniques which keep the focus on learning:

- Maintain the integrity of the lesson.
- Use non-verbal cues and prompts:
 - **Voice on the lesson; non-verbal for behaviour**
- Remove seductive objects in advance.
- Pace lessons to keep interest high.
- Ensure that directions are well understood.
- Sow personal interest in lessons.
- Use motivators (challenges and incentives).
- Use humour where appropriate.
- Employ active supervision throughout lessons to keep students on task.
- Be passionate about your lessons (remember that no student gets excited about learning something if the teacher is not excited about teaching it).
- Develop rapport (it helps students interpret teacher actions as being productive and supportive).
- Provide "sponge" activities.
- Use proximity.
- Use questioning techniques which maintain engagement.

E. Respond to incidents productively, making use of:

- Correction;
- Compensation;
- Delayed discussions;
- Time-outs which reject the behaviour but not the student;
- Practice and follow-through;
- A student developed plan for the next day's behaviour which applies learning methodology;
- Changes in structure and supervision in order to prevent repetitious misconduct.

F. Develop individual intervention plans for difficult students:

- Involve administrators and parents as partners in the process;
- Stress prevention as much as possible;
- Change methodology instead of lowering expectations.

Contact:

Ronald Morrish

P.O. Box 1093, Fonthill, ON L0S 1E0

905-892-2715 (phone)

905-892-8936 (fax)

ronaldmorrish@bell.net

www.realdiscipline.com

www.woodstreampublishing.com

To receive the discipline "*Tip of the Week*",



Like **Ronald Morrish** on Facebook



Follow **@RonaldMorrish** on Twitter