

Fifth Grade Classroom Management
Philosophy and Plan

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The classroom should be managed in a way that encourages the construction of positive personal values, disciplinary thinking, and a high sense of contact and accountability. Effective classroom management has three corresponding, practical components: simple rules, explicit procedures, and a congruent physical design.

The simplicity of rules is important. Its necessity is not defined by conventions of classroom management, but rather validity as a life skill. People live by self-defined values. Complicated systems of rules and procedures often must be operated within, such as the legal system, but rules and procedures themselves are typically derived from fairly simple values. The true worth is in the overarching value, not its limited expression. In fact, when laws are derived inaccurately, they can be formally challenged in court. Therefore, choices should grow from a more thorough and basic understanding. Classroom rules have been created to mirror the purpose of important and simply stated values, not lengthy laws. The hope and purpose behind classroom rules is that students will continue to model their simplicity and purposefulness throughout their lives.

Procedures are much closer in purpose to laws. They are explanations about how rules are to be manifested in various situations. Procedures provide the students specifics about how to behave during group work, independent work, whole class instruction and discussions, as well as in between activities. This allows the

students the vital exploration of the specific expressions of the general rule, and how that expression changes in different situations, while the rule remains true. This sets the stage for students to be able to apply their own personally derived values as they grow and decide what is important to each of them as individuals.

The classroom's physical design should be the last, most readily observable manifestation of the classroom management plan. Physical layout of the classroom has a lot to accomplish: It must give the students a sense of both comfort and flexibility. The view and direction of each child must be considered, in terms of where focus is directed and what might divert it. Possibly the most important aspect is making it plain that the teacher is accessible to the students and vice versa. The teacher's desk should be at the front of the room, visible to all students. The students' desks should be positioned so as to have easy visual access to the teacher, and in a way that facilitates the teacher's easy navigation throughout. Seating charts must be changed at a rate that encourages social development: uncommon enough that students become comfortable with those nearby, common enough that social interaction is encouraged between all students.

Individual mindsets have many influences. They are an amalgam of unpredictable cultures and sources, but are first and foremost a unique combination of all influences. This philosophy is derived from a central underlying principle differences are to be

respected and valued, no matter the source. All students have special needs, whether or not those needs are specifically addressed by legislation for individuals with disabilities. All three of these major classroom design components and their underlying purposes aim to provide for students with individual differences in abilities and situations.

All students, regardless of academic ability, benefit from rich disciplinary thinking strategies; regardless of cultural extraction, benefit from construction of positive personal values; and regardless of future job performance, benefit from increased sense of roles and the accountability inherent in them.

Members of this community will:

- Be polite, courteous, and respectful at all times.
- Come to class prepared.

Rewards

Students will consistently receive praise for working hard and showing that they have learned. Letters and notes home, small tangible rewards, and classroom treats will be distributed occasionally and at random. The random nature of these rewards ensures positive reinforcement and internalizes the motivation. Dependable rewards create the unintended side effect of creating acceptable misbehavior. When rewards are clearly defined, students are inadvertently told that they should weigh their options, and should the behavior outweigh the reward, choose to misbehave.

Consequences

Consequences will be expressed to the students as follows:

1. Warning
2. Recess or free time eliminated
3. Parent call and written assignment
4. Sent to the office

The first step, although not expressed above, is a reminder. Should misbehavior occur or seem imminent, students will be verbally redirected to the rule or procedure that needs to be followed.

Should this not cause the student to adjust behavior, a written warning will be given. This gives the student and teacher a concrete initiation into the system of consequences.

Depending on the time of day, defiance of a written warning can result in being detained from lunchtime recess or end-of-day free time,

likely accompanied by an immediate, temporary period of relocation and discussion with the teacher.

If disrespect continues beyond this point, it must be addressed in a more significant way. The teacher will call the student's parent and allow them to speak with each other regarding the issue at hand. Additionally, the student will be issued a reflective written assignment on the event, its cause, and ideas about prevention of future infractions. This assignment is a logical consequence of the infraction. The goal of this assignment is reflection on the child's personal values and their interaction with those of the classroom.

In severe cases, students will be referred to administration.

Procedures

Morning Procedures:

1. Put your things away and be seated at your desk by the time the bell rings.
2. Silently take out your journal and work on today's entry.
3. When you are done, follow the agenda.

Transition Procedures:

1. Put your things away from the last activity neatly.
2. Get out the appropriate materials for the next activity on the agenda.
3. Wait quietly.
 - If you have any personal needs or to sharpen a pencil, this is the time to ask.

Whole Class Procedures:

1. Raise your hand and wait to be called on before speaking (unless you are told otherwise).
2. Be prepared to summarize the last speaker's comments or questions (teacher or student).

Group Procedures:

1. Fulfill your specified role.
2. Keep your voice at an appropriate level.
3. Be prepared to summarize the last speaker's comments or questions.

Goals

Teacher Goals:

- Provide a safe, supportive learning environment.
- Provide varied instruction to help each student develop in a personally relevant way.
- Maintain consistency with students.
- Be receptive to new ideas, especially from students.

Student and classroom goals will be decided as a class. Great care will be taken at the start of each year to make sure that they are consistent with the values and goals stated above. Students will also create goals at the beginning of each unit, in connection with the introductory lesson. Classroom goals will be reevaluated quarterly.

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