

Student Discipline

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Parent Involvement

- Parents make a difference in student achievement and behavior.
 - Schools should institute policies requiring teachers to contact parents periodically through the year.
- Half-term or end-of-term reports are often not enough.
 - Calling takes time, but parents can often provide solutions to difficult classroom problems.
- While not all parental involvement will be positive or have a measurable effect on student behavior, many successful schools use this approach.

School Wide Discipline Plan

- Discipline plans provide students with acknowledged consequences for misbehavior.
- Effective classroom management should include the dissemination and use of a discipline plan.
- Teacher training on implementation along with periodic reviews can encourage the consistent and fair application of behavior standards.

Establish Leadership

- The actions of the principal and assistant principals form the basis of the overall mood for the school.
- If they consistently support teachers, fairly implement the discipline plan, and follow-through on disciplinary actions, then teachers will follow their lead.
- If they slack on discipline, it becomes apparent over time and misbehavior typically increases.

Practice Effective Follow Through

- Consistently following through on the action plan is the only way to truly foster discipline in schools.
- If a teacher ignores misbehavior in the classroom, it will increase.
- If administrators fail to support the teachers, they could easily lose control of the situation.

Provide Effective Alternative Education Opportunities

- Some students need controlled environments where they can learn without distracting the wider school community.
- If one student continually disrupts a class and shows an unwillingness to improve his or her behavior, that student might need to be removed from the situation for the sake of the rest of the students in the class.
- Alternative Schools provide options for disruptive or challenging students. Moving other students to new classes that can be controlled at the school level can also help in some situations.

Build a Reputation for Fairness

- Hand-in-hand with effective leadership and consistent follow-through, students must believe that teachers and administrators are fair in their disciplinary actions.
- While some extenuating circumstances require administrators to make adjustments for individual students, in general, students who misbehave should be treated similarly.

Implement Additional Effective School Wide Policies

- Discipline in schools can evoke the image of administrators stopping fights before they begin or dealing with hostile students in a classroom setting.
- However, effective discipline begins with the implementation of school-wide housekeeping policies that all teachers must follow.
 - For example, if a school implements a tardy policy that all teachers and administrators follow, tardies will decrease.
- If teachers are expected to handle these situations on a case-by-case basis, some will do a better job than others and tardies will have a tendency to increase.

Maintain High Expectations

- From administrators to guidance counselors to teachers, schools must institute high expectations for both academic achievement and behavior.
- These expectations must include messages of encouragement and means of support to help all children succeed.
- Michael Rutter researched the effect of high expectations at school and reported his findings in "Fifteen Hundred Hours": "Schools that foster high self-esteem and that promote social and scholastic success reduce the likelihood of emotional and behavioral disturbance."

Classroom Management

- Discipline problems challenge most new teachers and even some veteran educators.
- Good classroom management combined with an effective discipline plan helps keep bad behavior to a minimum so the entire class can focus on learning.
- Classroom rules must be easy to understand and manageable. Make sure that you don't have such a large number of rules that your students can't consistently follow them.

Classroom Discipline

- Discipline starts with you. Begin each class period with a positive attitude and high expectations. It'll help create a positive learning environment.
 - If you expect your students to misbehave, they probably will.
 - Come to class prepared with lessons for the day.
 - Reduce downtime for students to help maintain order.
- Work on making transitions between lessons smooth.
 - For example, as you move from whole group discussion to independent work, try to minimize the disruption to the class.
- Have your papers ready to go or your assignment was written on the board so you can move quickly through the process.
 - Many disruptions occur in transitional times during lessons

Classroom Discipline

- Consistency and fairness are essential for effective classroom management.
 - If you ignore disruptions one day and come down hard on them the next, your students won't take you seriously.
- You will lose respect and disruptions will probably increase. If you appear unfair in how you enforce the rules, the students will resent you.
- Address disruptions with in-kind responses.
 - In other words, don't elevate disruptions above their current significance.
 - For example, if two students keep talking in class, don't disrupt your lesson to yell at them. Instead, simply say the students' names and issue a verbal warning. You can also try asking one of them a question to bring their focus back to the lesson.

Diffusing the Situation

- If a student becomes verbally confrontational, remain calm and remove them from the situation as quickly as possible.
 - Do not get into yelling matches with your students.
 - Do not bring the rest of the class into the situation by involving them.
- When a student becomes visibly agitated, you must maintain a safe environment for the other students.
 - Remain as calm as possible; your demeanor can sometimes diffuse the situation.
 - You should have a plan for dealing with violence that you discussed with students early in the year.

Have Back-Up

- You should use the call button for assistance or have a designated student get help from another teacher.
- Send the other students from the room if it appears they could get hurt.
- If a fight breaks out in the classroom, follow your school's rules concerning teacher involvement as many administrators want teachers to stay out of fights until help arrives.

Moving Forward

- Keep an anecdotal record of major issues that arise in your class.
- This might be necessary if you are asked for a history of classroom disruptions or other documentation.
- Most importantly, let it go at the end of the day.
- Classroom management and disruption issues should be left at school so you have time to recharge before coming back to another day of teaching.