

What Is It?

Establishing classroom rules and procedures helps teachers maintain class routines and student expectations for classwork and behaviors. Classroom rules and procedures that are clearly defined and posted help students understand what is appropriate and what is not, as well as the consequences for rule violations. Clear classroom rules create a framework that provides choices to students and helps teach them to self-manage their classroom behaviors.

When to Use It

- Establish routines, a set of classroom rules, and expectations for student success at the start of the school year.
- Review classroom rules and expectations throughout the year, especially after long breaks from school.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

	1. Ask the class to discuss and help choose approximately five classroom rules. Ask for input and provide examples (i.e., vignettes, role-play scenarios).
	2. Provide clear consequences for rule violations (i.e., redirection, time out, phone call home). Be firm and consistent with the identified consequences.
	3. Post the list of classroom rules so they are clearly visible from all student areas and seats.
	4. Establish routines for different parts of the school day (beginning of the period, end of the period, when using materials, participation, etc.).
	5. Address students individually when a rule is violated. Explain the consequences and provide clear choices to complete an assignment or meet behavioral expectations.

Example

Ms. Silva is a 2nd grade teacher who was hired halfway into the school year. Substitute teachers taught her class of twenty-four the first half of the year. On her first day, the students walk around the room and take supplies off of her desk without permission. Ms. Silva wants to establish class rules prior to instruction.

At the start of the next school day, Ms. Silva sits down with her class and explains why some rules are important. She provides examples. She asks the students to name the rules they think are important for their class and lists them on the board. Ms. Silva asks her class to select the five most important rules for different times in the school day. She also explains the consequences for breaking rules in class. Together, she and her class create a visual schedule of classroom rules. Throughout the day Ms. Silva refers to the classroom rules they have posted on the wall.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Keep rules simple and easy to understand. For younger students, or students who need support in reading or understanding English, use pictures to illustrate written rules.
- Use posted rules as a reference when you must take disciplinary action or when addressing rule violations.

Resources

Emmer, E. T., & Evertson, C. M. (2013). *Classroom management for middle and high school teachers* (9th edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

Ratcliff, N. (2001). Use the environment to prevent discipline problems and support learning. *Young Children*, 56(5), 84-88.