

## More Help with Preventing Misbehavior

Solving discipline problems is very complex. No perfect solutions have been found. Go to the **Going Beyond** folder for Chapter 18 at [EffectiveTeaching.com](http://EffectiveTeaching.com) for a quick refresher course in discipline basics.

Solving discipline problems is very complex. Books have been written on the subject, yet no definitive solution has been found. Notice this section is headed “preventing misbehavior.” The effective teacher proactively prevents misbehavior. Whereas, the ineffective teacher reacts to every misbehavior.

### Behavior is caused. Discipline is learned.

Remember that behavior is caused—probably by the lack of a classroom management plan. Discipline is learned. Discipline is a practice, and disciplined people consistently produce positive results, whether it’s in dieting, exercising, or studying. Effective teachers know how to teach students to be responsible and disciplined.

Here is a quick refresher course in some discipline basics.

- What Is the Value of a Schoolwide Discipline Plan?
- Why You Should Have Only Three to Five Rules
- Should I Involve Students in Forming Rules?
- Must I Follow District and School Rules?
- What Are Some Examples of Negative Consequences?
- What Are Some Suggestions for Positive Consequences or Rewards?
- Ten Free Rewards That Do Not Rot Your Teeth
- How to Introduce Your Discipline Plan
- How Can I Call the Parents or Guardian Without Fear?
- How to Get Administrative Support

### Schoolwide Discipline Plan

The most effective discipline plans are applied universally, so no matter where the students go they encounter the same plan. **The key to a good discipline plan is schoolwide consistency.** This is why there are many schools where the students are all busily working and the teachers are all busily teaching—and everyone is happy and succeeding.

**The best discipline plan is schoolwide.** In a schoolwide discipline plan, all persons in authority are trained in an agreed upon discipline plan; they support the plan and continuously work together to refine it. As a result, the students acknowledge and are familiar with the discipline plan. **The key to an effective schoolwide discipline plan is that everyone uses it and applies it with consistency.**

A schoolwide discipline plan is like a speed-limit law. We know there are speed limits; however, the limits are often defined differently from one neighborhood, community, or state to another. Nonetheless, the acceptable speed on any given roadway is posted for all to see and obey.

Likewise, under a schoolwide discipline plan, the bus drivers may define the rules differently than the teachers, food service personnel, nurses, librarians, paraprofessionals, and counselors. Still, the rule is posted for all to see.

- A schoolwide discipline plan is posted in every room, bus (yes, bus), office, gymnasium, cafeteria, library, hall, and any other location where an employee is responsible for the safety or education of students.
- The plan has the same basic design, so that when a student goes from room to room or to the office, cafeteria, bus, library, or recess, it is basically the same.
- Since everyone at the school uses the same plan with consistency, the students know what is expected of them and all members of the staff support one another. This also makes life much easier for new employees, because a plan is already in effect.
- Introducing a discipline plan to each new class of students is easy because the existing plan is rooted in a prevailing culture at the school.

### **Why You Should Have Only Three to Five Rules**

Have you ever noticed that your phone number, credit card, social security number, auto license number, and ZIP code are written in groups of five numbers or less? That is because people find it easier to remember numbers in groups of three to five.

- Limit rules to a number that you and the students can readily remember—never more than five.
- If you need more than five rules, do not post more than five at any one time.
- The rules need not cover all aspects of behavior in the classroom.
- You have the right to replace one rule with another.
- If a new rule becomes necessary, replace an older one with it. The rule you replace can be retained as an “unwritten rule,” which the students have learned. The students are still responsible for the rule you have replaced.

### **Should You Involve Students in Forming Rules?**

You can involve the students in forming rules, but their role should be limited for the following two reasons:

1. Schoolwide and district rules must be accepted as they are. These generally address such things as attendance, substance abuse, smoking, profanity, hitting, use of the facilities, and fund-raising activities. These and many more are usually found in a policy book.

- Classroom policies essential to managing instruction cannot be left to student discretion; for example, coming to class on time, attentiveness, homework, and care of the classroom and equipment.

What is left is rather limited: gum chewing, eating, talking during seatwork, and pencil sharpening. Most of these are not rules per se; they should be treated as procedures. (See Chapter 20.)

Do not spend too much time with the whole class forming rules. It's more constructive to involve the class in discussing matters such as

- why rules are needed;
- why a particular rule will help students succeed; and,
- specific examples of general rules, such as "What does it mean to 'respect others?'"

### District and School Rules

Many schools have rules prohibiting or requiring certain behaviors, and teachers are expected to enforce these rules. It is to everyone's advantage to do so! A set of rules enforced consistently acquires greater legitimacy because the rules are everyone's. You must know the school rules.

- You can be sued for negligence if you allow a behavior that is forbidden and a student is injured.
- Find the rules in the teachers' handbook.
- Listen carefully at orientation, faculty, and department meetings.
- Ask your administrators, department head, another teacher, or the secretary about school and district rules.

### Example of Negative Consequences

#### Classroom Rules

- Follow rules the first time they are given.
- Raise your hand for permission to speak.
- Raise your hand for permission to leave your seat.
- Do not touch anyone else with your hands, your feet, or any object.
- No cursing or profanity.

#### Consequences or Penalties

Marvin	Your name on the board = 10 min. detention at lunch hour
Marvin ✓	One check = 20 min. detention at lunch hour
Marvin ✓ ✓	Two checks = 30 min. detention at lunch hour, home called
Marvin ✓ ✓ ✓	Three checks = Lunch hour detention, home called, and you are sent to the office

The consequences shown here are examples only. They are not to be used universally. Lunch hour detention may be illegal in your district; board policy may state that you cannot deprive anyone of lunch. Lunch hour detention is also not recommended for students in the primary grades. Having lunch in the room with the teacher may be considered a reward rather than a penalty by many children.

### **Suggestions for Positive Consequences or Rewards**

#### **The Logical Reward**

- Earn good grades
- Make the honor roll
- Tapped for honor society
- Receive a scholarship
- Get extra credit
- Have good work posted
- Is first to be dismissed for lunch, recess, etc.
- Participates in a special event
- Is chosen as student of day, week, month, etc.
- Is awarded a VIP certificate

#### **The Ultimate Reward**

An enjoyable, interesting, and challenging class

#### **The Simplest and Best Reward**

- A smile
- A high five
- A pat or handshake
- A word of encouragement
- Praise for the deed, encouragement for the person (See page 184.)
- A note or “warm fuzzy”
- A note home
- A phone call home
- An email home
- A text message sent

### **Ten Free Rewards That Do Not Rot Your Teeth**

Please stop the plundering of the treasure box. It only manipulates and bribes the students. It also rewards good behavior, not good teaching and learning. Instead, use the following:

- Extra center time
- Write on the Smart or Promethean Board
- No homework pass
- Keep a stuffed animal or gadget at your desk
- Get a drink of water when you want

- Make a bulletin board
- Operate the digital projector
- Create a PowerPoint program
- Load the tote trays for distributing materials (See page 208.)
- Be a mentor to a younger student

### How to Introduce Your Discipline Plan

**It is important to introduce the discipline plan on the first day of school.** Before you do so, check to see that the following things have been done:

1. You have carefully written the rules for expected behaviors.
2. You have posted the rules. It's your option to post the consequences and rewards.
3. You have welcomed the class (Unit B), introduced yourself (Chapter 13), and taken care of administrative duties (Chapter 16).

To introduce your discipline plan, this is what you might say:

- Step 1.** “We are all here for **YOU**—for you to succeed and to enjoy this class. Because I care about each of you, I am here to help you. So I will not allow you to do anything that will interfere with your success in this class.”
- Step 2.** “We will be working together this year. We need to have a class where you can come without fear of being ridiculed or threatened. Because I care about **ALL** of you, I will not allow you to do anything that will interfere with someone else who is trying to learn.”
- Step 3.** “So that **YOU** can learn, so that **WE** can all learn, so that I can teach, I have a set of rules to ensure that we will have a safe and orderly classroom.”

**The discipline plan should be written and permanently posted in the classroom and given to students on paper or copied by students into their notebooks.**

### Getting Administrative Support

You will be fortunate indeed if you are hired as a new teacher and find yourself at a school with a schoolwide discipline plan. That is like getting hired to work at Nordstrom rather than Walmart. (See page 88.) Successful businesses and schools have an established culture. You can fit into the culture and devote more time to student achievement.

Have high expectations that the administration wants to help. School administrators want to cooperate with you, because they want a disciplined situation as much as you do, maybe even more. You need to approach them in the same way you would approach your students: in a nonconfrontational, friendly, cooperative manner.

## ***More Help with Preventing Misbehavior*** (continued)

If there is no schoolwide discipline plan, go to your administrator with your plan. It is imperative that you have thought out your plan. You need to know what you want to accomplish.

Present your plan in writing, with your rules, consequences, and rewards. Most administrators know this system, so it will not be a surprise to any of them.

Check that your plan does not violate any school board policy and can be supported by the administration.

Show the administrators what YOU plan to do if the students violate the rules.

Show the administrators that you plan to refer the student to the office after a certain number of violations.

Ask the administrators what they plan to do when you refer students to the office. It is imperative that your plan be clear, consistent and fair, that the office knows what you plan to do, that you know what the office will do, and that the students and their parents know what you and the office will do.

A predictable school environment is created when administrators and teachers work together.