

AFFIRMATIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

*How do I develop effective rules
and consequences in my school?*

Introduction.....	1
The Nature of Rules	2
Categories and Qualities.....	8
Exceptional Expectations.....	13
Developing Rules	15
The Nature of Consequences	20
Fair Is Not Equal	37
Putting It All Together.....	40
Encore	45
References	51
Related Resources.....	51
About the Author	52



Introduction

This guide is written to help teachers create a positive, practical plan for managing behavior issues. It is written to help administrators guide teachers through a process that will improve their classrooms and support efforts to develop the best behavior plan for their schools. It is also written for professors of education, who can use all of the activities to help prepare students of education to be better teachers.

When groups of people get together to form a community, no matter how big or small, a social contract is built, based on three key elements:

- Values, beliefs, or goals
- Rules or laws
- Punishments or consequences

How well developed these three elements are determines how effectively the society functions. Schools work the same way.

Try This: Reflect on the different challenges that students today face. This might be done in a group or faculty meeting, with everyone sharing their insights. Here's a scenario to get you started.

(1) Relive a day in your life when you were the age of your students. Start by recalling waking up, getting ready to go to school, the clothes you wore, what you had for breakfast, and how you traveled to school. Go through your classes, both the good ones and the bad; try to remember your teachers, your books, your relationship with other students. Remember going home and how you felt about the day. (2) Now repeat the exercise, this time imagining you are one of your students.

The Nature of Rules

The way to motivate students to follow rules is by deriving those rules from what is most important to them and to us: our values. For those who may not have seen the connection of rules and values before, consider the following illustration.

When you board an airplane, the first thing the flight attendant might say is, “The number one value of this airline is safety.” Safety is a value, not a rule. It cannot be enforced because it’s too vague. The flight attendant next provides three actual, specific, enforceable rules: Fasten your seat

belts, shut off all electronic devices, and set tray tables and seat backs in the upright position.

Although these three rules can be enforced, what actually motivates us to follow them is that we believe in the value that underlies them: safety. There is nothing inherently motivating about fastening seat belts. If we didn't grasp this rule's connection to safety, we would be much more likely resist it, to cheat.

One of the best strategies for connecting rules to values is the "Operationalizing of Fuzzy Concepts" technique (adapted from Tom Hutchinson's work at the University of Massachusetts). Think of a value you hold, then close your eyes and watch a mental movie of that value being broken in your classroom. Use no words, just mental pictures of behaviors. For example, if you value students being kind, what does it look like when students are behaving in a manner that is unkind? Perhaps you see a student ignoring someone who needs help. Now you have the basis for a rule. The value is "be kind," and a rule you might derive from that value is "help others when they need it."

Here is another example. You value respect. Your mental movie of a behavior that violates that value shows a student swearing at a classmate. The value is "show respect for other students," and a rule based on that value is "swearing at others is not allowed."

Both rules and values are equally important and dependent on one another.

Try This: See how many behaviors you can think of for the following values:

1. Be respectful.
2. Be honest.
3. Be fair.
4. Be nice.
5. Try hard.

Now look at the list of rules that follows and identify an underlying value for each. Do not limit yourself to the five values above. Think of any value that makes sense to you.

Twenty Potential Rules

1. No touching others without permission.
2. Do your work on time.
3. Do not use inappropriate words.
4. Raise your hand before speaking.
5. Be on time.
6. Help others who need it.
7. Do not insult the teacher in public.
8. No running in the halls.
9. Do not throw food during lunch.
10. Shut off and keep off all phones during class time.
11. Clean up your area.
12. Do not deface school property.
13. Complain to the teacher only in private.

14. No putdowns of other students allowed.
15. Leave all weapons at home.
16. Come to school dressed appropriately, without offensive or provocative clothing.
17. If you know that a student is going to do harm in the school or to someone, tell an adult.
18. Do not use racial slurs.
19. Do not touch another student's property without permission.
20. Make sure all notes home reach your parent(s).

Developing Great Rules

My definition of a rule is *what you will formally enforce every time it's broken*. Issues covered by rules are serious and significant enough to always require intervention, no exceptions. A step down from rules are expectations, which cover issues that are still important but less significant; depending on circumstances, you may or may not wish to engage the student about falling short of an expectation. An example of an expectation is raising hands during a discussion. Most of the time, a class functions more smoothly when students raise their hands before interrupting the teacher or other students. But when a discussion becomes intense, students may just offer ideas without raising their hands. Interrupting this great discussion with a reprimand about hand-raising would be inappropriate.

Defining a rule as something that is always enforced has two implications. The first is that we must choose only