

What Is a Classroom Discipline Plan?

A classroom discipline plan is a system that allows you to spell out the behaviours you expect from students and what they can expect from you in return. The plan provides a framework around which all your classroom behaviour management efforts can be organised.

The goal of a classroom discipline plan is to have a fair and consistent way to establish a safe, orderly, positive classroom environment in which you can teach and students can learn.

A classroom discipline plan consists of three parts:

1. **Rules** that students must follow at all times
2. **Supportive feedback** that students will receive for following the rules
3. **Corrective actions** that you will use when students choose not to follow the rules

Sample Classroom Discipline Plan Primary

Classroom Rules

Follow directions.
Keep hands, feet and objects to yourself.
No teasing or name calling.

Supportive Feedback

Verbal recognition
Individual rewards, such as:
 First out the door for recess
 Positive notes sent home to parents
 Positive phone calls to parents
 Positive notes to students
 Eat lunch with teacher

Classwide rewards

Corrective Actions

First time a student
breaks a rule: Reminder
Second time: 5 minutes working away from group,
 near teacher
Third time: 10 minutes working away from group
Fourth time: Teacher calls parents
Fifth time: Send to principal
Severe clause: Send to principal

Benefits of a Classroom Discipline Plan

Here are four reasons why a classroom discipline plan will help you create a learning environment in your classroom that benefits both you and your students.

1. A discipline plan makes managing student behaviour consistent.

Planning is the key to successful classroom management. When you have a plan for how you will respond to student behaviour, you won't have to make on-the-spot decisions about what to do when a student misbehaves—or how to properly recognise a student who does behave appropriately. You will know what to do, your students will know what to expect and the guesswork (and stress) will be eliminated from your daily disciplinary efforts.

A plan also provides the basis for teaching self-management. When the system for required school behaviour is taught up front to the class, students then have the responsibility to use self-control and make good choices.

2. A discipline plan protects students' rights.

All students have rights to the same due process in the classroom. A discipline plan will help ensure that you respond to each student in a fair and consistent manner.

3. A discipline plan increases the likelihood of parental support.

When you communicate your discipline plan to parents, you let them know that you care about teaching their children to behave responsibly. This is a powerful message of support and professionalism to give to parents. Parents are more likely to give support (if you need it) when they know you are using an equitable system for all students.

4. A discipline plan helps ensure administrator support.

A discipline plan demonstrates to your administrator that you have a well-thought-out course of action for managing student behaviour in your classroom. When your administrator understands the commitment you've made to effective classroom management, you will be better able to get support when you need it.

It's Your Turn

The rest of this section will take you through the steps of creating a classroom discipline plan that is tailor-made for you and your students.

First, you will plan the general rules for your classroom.

Second, you will choose the supportive feedback you will use to motivate students to follow those rules.

Finally, you will learn how to most effectively correct students' behaviour when they are not following the rules.

Establishing a Discipline Hierarchy

The best way to use corrective actions is to organise them into a discipline hierarchy as part of your classroom discipline plan. When placed in a hierarchy, corrective actions guide students toward self-management.

- The hierarchy is progressive, starting with a verbal reminder.
- The corrective actions then become gradually more substantial for the second, third, fourth and fifth time that a student chooses to disrupt within a day.

The discipline hierarchy works as follows.

First time a student disrupts

Give a reminder the first time a student disrupts or breaks a classroom rule.

A reminder is important because it gives the student an opportunity to choose more appropriate behaviour before a more substantial corrective action occurs.

Second or third time a student disrupts

The second or third time a student disrupts in the same day, you need to provide a corrective action.

These actions should be easy to implement and not time-consuming. Typical corrective actions for second and third infractions include changing seats and sitting close to the teacher.

Fourth time a student disrupts

Four disruptions during one day are not acceptable. You need to contact parents if a student disrupts a fourth time in a day.

For some students, involving parents will be the only way you will motivate them to behave appropriately. Students need to know that you will be consistent in the enforcement of this corrective action.

Fifth time a student disrupts

Sending a student to the principal should be the last corrective action on your discipline hierarchy.

In preparation for implementing this corrective action, you must have already met with the principal and discussed actions he or she will take when students are sent to the office.

Severe clause

Sometimes you have to act quickly and decisively to stop a student's disruptive behaviour. In the case of severe misbehaviour, such as fighting, vandalism, defying a teacher or in some way stopping the entire class from functioning, a student will not receive a warning. He or she loses the right to proceed through the hierarchy. Severe misbehaviour calls for immediate removal of the student from the classroom.



Refer to *Classroom Management, Third Edition*, for an in-depth look at using corrective actions.

Sample Discipline Hierarchy for Years P–3

First time a student breaks a rule:	Reminder
Second time:	5 minutes working away from group, near teacher
Third time:	10 minutes working away from group
Fourth time:	Call parents
Fifth time:	Send to principal
Severe clause:	Send to principal

Sample Discipline Hierarchy for Years 4–6

First time a student breaks a rule:	Reminder
Second time:	10 minutes working away from group
Third time:	15 minutes working away from group, plus writing in behaviour journal
Fourth time:	Call parents
Fifth time:	Send to principal
Severe clause:	Send to principal

Keeping Track of Corrective Actions With a Behaviour Tracking Sheet

For your discipline hierarchy to be simple to use and easy to integrate into your teaching routine, you will need a system to keep track of student misbehaviour and corrective actions accrued. You'll need to know at a glance the names of students who have received corrective actions, and where they are on the hierarchy. Keeping track doesn't have to be time-consuming and, most importantly, it doesn't have to interrupt your teaching.

On the following pages, you will see how to keep track of corrective actions using a "Behaviour Tracking Sheet".

Here's how a Behaviour Tracking Sheet works:

Make copies of the Behaviour Tracking Sheet on page 51. Keep a sheet attached to a clipboard and close by you throughout the day and observe the following guidelines.

First time a student breaks a rule

Write down his or her name on the sheet and say, for example, "Mark, the rule is 'Keep your hands to yourself'. This is a reminder."

- Circle the "Reminder" designation on the tracking sheet.

