

# Creating Your Classroom Discipline Plan Rules

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Teachers at the secondary levels sometimes assume that students should automatically know how to behave in the classroom. They expect that after numerous years in school, a student should understand the general expectations of the classroom.

This assumption is often erroneous. Whether year sevens or year twelves, your students all share something in common when they arrive in your class—each brings a variety of behavioural expectations from previous teachers and schools.

In addition, different teaching styles and curriculum needs result in different behavioural expectations in secondary school classes.

Your students can't be expected to know how *you* want them to behave in *your* classroom unless you make these expectations clear to them. General classroom rules, therefore, are the first part of your classroom discipline plan.

## **What are general classroom rules?**

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General classroom rules are those rules that are in place all day long—throughout all activities. General classroom rules are important because they let your students know what basic behavioural expectations you have at all times.

These guidelines will help you choose appropriate rules.

## **Choose rules that are observable and continually in effect.**

Address behaviours that you can clearly see. Vaguely stated expectations may mean one thing to one student and an entirely different thing to another. As a result, they often cause problems by opening the doors to arguments regarding interpretation.

For example:

### ***Observable Rules***

- Keep hands and feet to yourself.
- Be in your seat when the bell rings.
- No yelling.

### ***Vague Expectations***

- Respect teacher and fellow students.
- No fooling around when class starts.
- No unnecessary talking.

### **Choose rules that apply throughout the period.**

General classroom rules are rules that apply all period, no matter what activity is taking place. These are rules that students are expected to follow at all times.

### **Choose a limited number of classroom rules.**

Three to five general classroom rules are plenty. The more rules you have, the more difficult it will be for students to remember them. Choose the ones you most need so that you can teach and your students can learn.

Now, before you choose your own rules, take a look below at some rules that are *not* appropriate general classroom rules. Though often seen in classrooms, we have found that these rules are not appropriate general classroom rules because they are not applicable throughout the period. Notice that while each rule *sounds* sensible, it cannot be a realistic ongoing expectation.

### **Rules to Avoid**

- **Raise your hand and wait to be called on before you speak.**

There are going to be times when students are expected to speak out (for example, during group work or in certain whole-class discussions). Also, you may not want to put yourself in the position of having to provide a corrective action for what might simply be a student's overly enthusiastic behaviour.

- **Stay in your seat unless you have permission to get up.**

There may be many times during the period when it is OK for a student to get up without asking permission. Again, this rule may not be enforceable throughout the class period.

- **Complete all homework assignments.**

This rule does not relate to classroom behaviour, and there may be times when completing homework is out of a student's control.

When you establish general classroom rules that do not clearly reflect your consistent expectations, you run the risk of confusing students, and you will not be able to enforce these rules with consistency.

### **General Classroom Rules Appropriate for Students in Years 7–12**

Notice that each of these rules is applicable every day—throughout the entire class period.

- Follow directions.
- Keep hands to yourself.
- Do not leave the room without permission.
- No swearing, teasing or yelling.
- Be in your seat when the bell rings.
- Don't interrupt when someone else is speaking.

## Clock Busters

Time is a precious commodity to an adolescent. That's why Clock Busters tickets will be well worth students' good behaviour efforts. A Clock Buster ticket, earned for appropriate behaviour, entitles a student to an extra day to hand in an assignment.

Here's how to use Clock Busters tickets:

Explain to students that when they receive a Clock Busters ticket, they are to save it to use sometime when they need an extra day to complete an assignment. (Clarify any expectations you may have, such as the due date for a long essay.) When they wish to redeem a ticket, students fill in a description of the assignment, fill in the due date and sign the slip. To make record-keeping easy for you, draw a circle in your record book for the assignment due that day. The next day, the empty circle will remind you that the assignment from the day before is due.

<p><b>Clock Busters!</b></p> <p>You have earned the privilege of handing in an assignment one day after it's due!</p> <p>To redeem, fill in this information:</p> <p>Class/Period _____</p> <p>Assignment _____</p> <p>Due Date _____</p> <p>Your Signature _____</p> <p>Teacher's Signature _____</p> <p>*Hand in this coupon on date assignment is due.</p>	<p><b>Clock Busters!</b></p> <p>You have earned the privilege of handing in an assignment one day after it's due!</p> <p>To redeem, fill in this information:</p> <p>Class/Period _____</p> <p>Assignment _____</p> <p>Due Date _____</p> <p>Your Signature _____</p> <p>Teacher's Signature _____</p> <p>*Hand in this coupon on date assignment is due.</p>
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## Privilege Passes

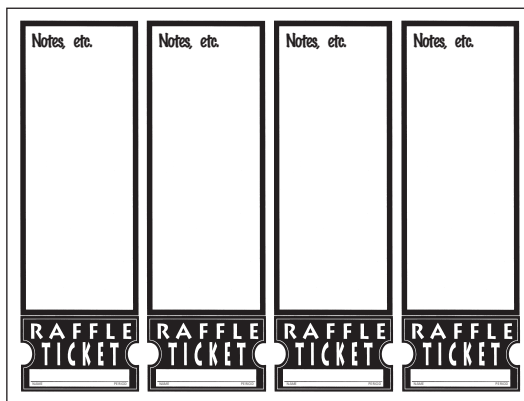
Secondary students love getting out of class, even if it's only for a minute or two. Now they can earn the privilege by demonstrating exemplary classroom behaviour. Students will gladly give their best efforts to earn the privilege of leaving class to get a drink, or go to the library or toilets. When you want to reward a student, just fill in his or her name on a Privilege Pass and "pass" along a well-deserved award.

<p><b>privilege PASS</b></p> <p>Student Signature _____</p> <p>Teacher Signature _____</p>	<p><b>privilege PASS</b></p> <p>Student Signature _____</p> <p>Teacher Signature _____</p>
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## Good Behaviour Bookmark/ Raffle Ticket Combos

There's a bonus attached to these bookmarks! Each bookmark also contains a raffle ticket. Each time a student is awarded a bookmark, he or she also earns the right to enter a raffle drawing. The student fills the ticket out and deposits it into a class collection box. Once a week (or every two weeks, etc.) the teacher draws a predetermined number of tickets and awards privileges or prizes.

Or try this: At the beginning of the week, pass out a bookmark to every student. Explain that as the week goes by, you will recognise responsible behaviour by allowing students to enter their ticket portion in a class raffle.



## “Notables”

Just for students, these open-ended positive notes are designed to provide you with an appealing graphic background that will enhance your message and help you communicate your sincere words of appreciation.

## Get the community involved!

Free items from local merchants are great positive rewards and motivators for students. This idea takes a little work up front, but the results are worth it, both in terms of motivating students *and* in generating community involvement.

Here's what to do:

1. Make copies of the School-Community Positive Recognition cards on page 44.
2. Notice that the cards contain space for student's name, name of school and teacher's signature. The remaining spaces are blank.
3. Contact local merchants, asking them to become part of a positive recognition program for your classes. Explain that you want to give meaningful recognition to students who are making responsible behaviour choices—and that as members of the community, the recognition they can offer is important.

Ask each merchant to offer a “freebie” that the student receives when he or she brings a signed School-Community Positive Recognition Card into the place of business. Explain that students who are in possession of these cards will be those who have earned them through responsible behaviour. (After a prize is redeemed, the merchant can “X” out the box or punch a hole through it.)

Here are some examples of recognitions that merchants typically offer:

Movie theatre:      Free box of popcorn

Fast-food

restaurant:      Free hamburger

# CLASSROOM

★ *Rule* ★

**Keep hands,  
feet and  
objects to  
yourself.**