

Discipline Plan

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Purpose

This document is intended to illustrate and inform others of my beliefs and expectation for my classroom. I believe it is extremely important to have a plan in place to help deal with misbehavior and work to correct problems so that optimal learning may occur. This document outlines my classroom management philosophy, elaborates on six procedures and routines I plan to follow in my classroom, goes through detailed explanations of my implementation of classroom management practices, and includes a sample parent letter outlining the rules and expectations of my classroom. The last section of this document includes a visual of my intended classroom arrangement.

Philosophy of Classroom Management

My philosophy for classroom management stems from bits and pieces of three theorists and their philosophies. I consider these theorists to have many of the same beliefs, values, and strategies for maintaining an effective and enjoyable classroom as I do. Lee and Marlene Canter stress the importance of positive recognition and give great advice for preventing and correcting off-task behavior. Fred Jones explains the importance of body language, classroom rules and chores, and earned activity time for students. Finally, Barbara Coloroso elaborates on inner discipline, discipline instead of punishment, and steps to take in problem solving. The following are my “Top Ten Beliefs and Practices” for obtaining and maintaining a successful classroom.

Assertive Teachers

Canter describes an assertive teacher as being a clear, confident, and consistent model that expresses expectations. This atmosphere allows both the teacher’s and the students’ needs to be met. The teacher provides clear expectations, consistency, and an atmosphere of warmth and support. I consider this to be a very important aspect to incorporate into my classroom. First of all, the students understand the expectations and know that the teacher will be consistent and follow through with the

rules. From all of my education classes, I have learned that consistency is extremely important in a classroom; the students understand what is acceptable and know what will happen if they do not behave in that manner. They do not have to guess whether the teacher will enforce the consequences or let them slide. If the teacher follows through on her rules and consequences, the students understand that they can not get away with misbehavior. Secondly, being an assertive teacher gives the students a warm and welcoming environment where they can trust the teacher to help them when they are in need. Trust is crucial in a classroom. If the students do not trust their teacher with personal information or trust that they are leading them in the right direction, then they will not feel safe in the classroom. A safe and welcoming environment helps everyone to function at their optimal best.

Positive Repetition

Positive repetition, another key component of Canter's Assertive Discipline philosophy, is giving sincere personal attention to students who behave and follow the classroom rules and expectations. Rather than constantly pointing out the students that misbehave, the teacher is able to verbally recognize and praise the student who is doing what they have been asked to do. The hope is that the students who are misbehaving or off task will see what they should be doing and correct their actions. I feel confident in this concept, because it puts the focus on the good behavior instead of always focusing on the disruptions or misbehavior. The student who is misbehaving is not getting the attention they may want, but the student who is behaving gets praised for their effort. This can be used as often as the teacher would like to use it and in a variety of ways. I believe this is a great way to build self-esteem for the students who are following the rules. It encourages good behavior instead of drawing attention to misbehavior. Most importantly, I want to implement this concept because using positive repetition puts the responsibility on the misbehaving student to correct their actions and adjust their behavior.

Discipline Hierarchy

If positive repetition does not work, Canter suggests using a discipline hierarchy to correct the actions. A discipline hierarchy is a list of consequences determined by the teacher that get more unpleasant they go up. The students start with a verbal warning and explanation from the teacher for their misbehavior. The second and third time they disrupt, the teacher explains that the behavior is not acceptable and explains that they have chosen a five minute time out. I find the wording that goes with the system is vital for the students to understand how their actions result in their consequences; it declares that the student “chose” their consequence by the actions they performed. This helps take the blame off of the teacher and places it on the student’s action. For the fourth interruption, the teacher explains the rule they broke again and informs them that they have chosen to have their parents called. The fifth time the student interrupts or misbehaves the rule is explained and again they are told they have chosen to go talk to the principle about their behavior. The final concept of this management plan is the severe clause that states a student can skip all of the other steps and go directly to the principle if a behavior is so severe. This points out that the teacher will not accept cruel or intentional misbehavior. I like this system because it points out to the student what the consequence is to their action, and it gives them ownership in what occurred. Also, since there are five steps to this plan, the teacher must keep track of the offenses. This will be valuable information during parent-teacher conferences or when meeting with the parents to discuss their child’s behavior. It shows proof that you are trying to explain to them and the types of misbehavior their child is displaying.

Redirecting Off-Task Behavior

Some students may not be misbehaving, but they just need redirected for their off-task behavior. Canter points out four actions the teacher can perform to redirect the student’s back to their task. The teacher can give “The look,” or make eye contact with the student and show awareness and disapproval of their actions. They can move beside the student using physical proximity. They can simply mention the student’s name when repeating directions. Or, they can use proximity verbal

recognition, meaning verbally praising the students sitting around the off-task student that are doing what has been asked of them. I feel these actions would work well in a classroom; they are subtle, yet efficient ways to correct a student's behavior without drawing unnecessary attention to them. These students may just need a reminder about what they should be doing, not a severe consequence.

General and Specific Rules

To help prevent students from misbehaving, Fred Jones feels teachers should have both general and specific rules set out for the students to follow. General rules define the teacher's guidelines, standards, and expectations for behavior. These usually consist of only two or three rules. From my experiences in classrooms, the more rules a teacher expect students to know, the less the students are going to remember them or be able to carry them out. Two or three general rules can be broad but cover a wide range, which is why I feel this is a great concept to implement into my classroom. Specific rules describe procedures and routines students are expected to carry out. It describes what they are expected to do and how they should do it. I consider these rules to be one of the most important concepts to have in a classroom. By having them in place, they can cut back on confusion, constant questioning of how to do something, and misbehavior. Students need to know how a teacher expects them to do something or it will be complete chaos for everyone. This also puts the responsibility on the student to fulfill their duties in the classroom.

Classroom Jobs

Fred Jones also stresses the importance of classroom jobs for the students. These are chores the students complete throughout the day to help the teacher and keep the room organized and clean. As a student, I loved having a job to do in the classroom. It made me feel important and gave me a sense of pride in myself for completing it. I want my students to feel that pride and have a sense of belonging in the classroom. This concept, I feel, helps the students buy into the class program and helps them build a sense of responsibility. The classroom jobs I plan on incorporating into my classroom are outlined later in this document.

Preferred Activity Time

Rewarding students for their good behavior is an important part of Fred Jones's philosophy. He uses the term Preferred Activity Time, or PAT. PAT is time students have earned that allows them to do learning or enrichment activities. PAT can be earned in a variety of ways. For example, if the teacher gives the class three minutes to clean up an activity and they do it in one minute, then they have earned two minutes toward PAT. The class is able to build up time and use it at the end of the week. I feel this is a great way to reward students for good behavior and following through with the rules or guidelines. They are able to earn points for being responsible and reap the benefits by learning activities. This is a win-win situation for the teacher. They are able to praise and reward their students' good behavior, and they are able to provide enriching activities for their students.

Inner Discipline

By following through on Jones's and Canter's concepts outlined above, my main goal is to teach students to be responsible for themselves and their actions. I feel those concepts will help me reach my overall goal of teaching my students responsibility. Coloroso defines this as inner discipline: the ability to behave creatively, constructively, cooperatively, and responsibly without being directed by someone else. My goal for using this concept in my classroom is to teach students that they are responsible for their own behavior, can make their own decision, and resolve their own problems. This is not only a concept that I want them to have in my classroom, but I want them to take this concept away with them and use it the rest of their lives. I hope that I will be more than a teacher to my students; I want to be someone that affects their life. Hopefully, by teaching them to be responsible for their actions, they will become responsible adults.

Discipline, Not Punishment

Along with inner discipline, Coloroso expresses the importance of discipline, not punishment, when dealing with students. I feel that by using discipline, students learn how to handle a problem positively; they become fully aware of their actions; they take ownership of the problem; they are

provided options to solve the problem; and they are able to keep their dignity intact. It is my responsibility to guide students to solve their problems and help them through whatever has occurred. Using discipline allows me guide the student through the process of correcting the problems instead of forcing a consequence on them and expecting that to solve the problem. It is a team effort, but it still allows the student to take responsibility for their actions.

Six Steps to Solve a Problem

Coloroso provides six steps to help a student solve a problem. First of all, the teacher and the student need to identify and define the problem. This is necessary for them to effectively resolve the problem. Secondly, they need to list possible solutions, which help them see the options they have to fix what was done. Next, they have to evaluate and weigh their options. Carrying this step out shows them which solution works best for them and the others involved. Then, they select the option that seems most promising. They make a plan and carry it out. Finally, they reevaluate the problem and the solution. These steps allow the teacher to work with the student to correct or fix their behavior. I find this appealing because the students are still making the decisions and finding out what works best for them, but the teacher is there to guide them and support them in their actions and decisions. This helps form a bond between the teacher and student that shows that the teacher still cares about them even when they do wrong.

One of my goals as a teacher is to instill in my students the sense of responsibility and ownership for their actions. I feel this is a quality that they can carry out of my classroom and into the real world. If I make the decisions for my students, I believe this takes away from the learning experience they need to grow and become responsible citizens in and out of the classroom. The plan I have outlined above will be my guide to helping me achieve this goal.

Routines and Procedures

The following routines and procedures are designed for classrooms ranging from first to fifth grade. They are extremely important aspects of a classroom. If set up correctly, these routines and procedures will help erase some of the confusion and distraction the students would make. They will also help keep the students on task and helps them understand what to do for particular situations. The following six procedures and routines are ones that I feel are important pieces to put in place from day one of school.

Morning Routine

The beginning of the day can be a bit chaotic if plans are not made ahead of time to correct this. In order to avoid this disorder in the morning, I will have a certain routine for the students to follow each day. The students will know that the first thing they should do is to put their book bags and coats away. They will get out any notes, homework, or lunch money from their book bags, bring them to their desk, and place them on the corner of it. As soon as the students walk in the door, they will need to move their attendance/lunch clip. Once these things are accomplished, they will need to read the white board for any special news or assignment I have for them. Then, they will return to their seat and start the morning work I have already placed on their desk. When they get their morning work finished, they should complete the assignment I wrote on the white board. This could be anything from writing in their journal, reading a book, or reviewing for a test. During the time they are working on their morning work, I will be coming around to their desk and checking to make sure they have their homework. Once I have checked and collected everyone's homework, I will call everyone over to the carpet for Morning Meeting. They will need to bring any notes or lunch money they have for me at this time.

The structure of this routine for the beginning of the day allows me to deal with any problems or situations that may have come up or need to be addressed. It gives the students the responsibility to

get any important notes or money to me and to get their work done. Most importantly, it gives them a routine to follow even if I am not there or in the room. This eliminates down time and lessenes the possibility for misbehavior. The students will be expected to put their things away, get out any notes or homework they have, move their attendance/lunch clip, and complete their assignments. The teacher has the responsibility of checking and collecting all homework from the students.

Attendance and Lunch Count

The attendance and lunch count will be a simple task for the students to do first thing in the morning. As soon as they walk in the door, there will a board on the wall for their clips to hang on and two jars on a table. One jar will be School Lunch and the other will be Carried Lunch. They will simply take their clip off of the board and put it on the jar that shows the kind of lunch they will be eating. This takes care of attendance and lunch count and does not rely on me to do anything at that time. Again, this frees me up and gives the students the responsibility to account for themselves. It is a very simple task that does not take long and will not cause a whole group to crowd around for a long period of time. The student's will be expected to move their clip in the morning. At the end of the day, I will have a job assigned to a student to move all of the clips back to the board for the next morning. The teacher's job is to simply monitor that the students are completing this task, record the information, and choose the helper each week.

Classroom Jobs

Assigning student jobs in the classroom gives them ownership in the class and helps them become responsible for completing and carrying out a task. Depending on the number of students in the class, I would like to have enough jobs for everyone. The jobs could include: board eraser, paper passer (two people), line leader, office helper, table/desk washer (washes tables or desks at end of the day), sweeper (uses the handheld sweeper to pick up any little pieces of paper), girls/boys bathroom monitor (reports students who talk or misbehave in the bathroom), bookshelf organizer, door holder, mail carrier (passes back papers, gardener (waters plants), and attendance/lunch count clip mover. For

the most part, these jobs are done at the end of the day. This saves me from having to do them all after school. I will inform my students that their job can be taken away if they do not take it seriously, so I feel that this will help prevent or eliminate some of the misbehavior that could occur. The student's will be expected to complete their job when the teacher asks them to do so. The teacher's responsibility is to explain the jobs to the students, change them every Friday, and post the jobs and the helpers in the room.

Getting Attention/Signaling for Quiet

It is extremely important for the teacher to be able to get the students attention and for them to know how to respond. In my classroom, I plan to have a wind chime that I ring when I need the students to listen to me. One of my student teaching placements uses this method and is extremely effective. When I ring the wind chime, I will raise my hand in the air. The students are to stop, look, and listen; they stop what they are doing, look at me and raise their hand, and listen to what I have to say. If we are not in the classroom or I am not close to the wind chime, I will also use the phrase, "Give me five." This means the same thing. They will stop, look, and listen. The students need to know that both of these methods mean the same thing and expect the same results. The students are expected to stop, look, and listen when they hear the chimes or when I say, "Give me five." When their hand is in the air, they need to know that their mouths are closed. The teacher is expected to ring the chime and raise her hand or say, "Give me five," and raise her hand. This should immediately stop all talking and get the students ready to listen to me. It also eliminates me from having to talk over their voices to get their attention.

Sharpening Pencils

Nothing is more distracting for me than a student sharpening their pencil during the middle of a lesson. My policy on pencil sharpening is that it should be done before school, during recess, or during lunch time. It is not acceptable during class time, because it disrupts other students learning and my teaching. This eliminates students from walking around while I am teaching or during work

time, which also cuts back on student misbehavior during that time. It is the students' responsibility to have an extra pencil in their desk that is sharpened and to make sure their pencils are sharpened before going to recess or lunch. The teacher has no expectations for this but to make sure the students are following the procedure.

Hallway Procedure

Hallway procedure is important for students to know and follow through with so that they are not disrupting other classes or touching things on the wall. When I am walking my class through the hallway, they will need to have their hands behind their back; their mouths closed; and they should be directly behind the person in front of them. This makes one straight line so other classes can pass us in the hall; it eliminates their hands from touching objects on the walls or people around them; and it keeps them from talking and being disruptive. Students are expected to keep their hands behind their back, close their mouths, and position themselves behind the person in front of them. The teacher's job is to explain the procedure and monitor it while in the hallway. These rules are a safety precaution from temptation to talk or mess with anyone or anything on the wall.

Implementation of Classroom Management Practices

Classroom rules and expectations are a vital part of keeping a classroom organized and efficient. I believe that students should have some say in what rules are expected in the classroom; however, I also feel that the teacher needs to create the backbone to the structure. My plan is to have three simple rules set up in the classroom. These rules are: respect for self, respect for others, and respect for school. These are the backbone to my discipline and belief. The students will then be able to list the rules that go under each category. This allows them to give input on what is acceptable in the classroom, but does not stray away from what I expect of them. Once we have decided on all of the rules and expectations, I will post them in the classroom so they are visible for everyone to see. I will also send a copy of this home to the parents so they know and understand the expectations in my

classroom. To make sure they are enforced, I will monitor them and have Canter's discipline hierarchy set out as the consequences. Also, since the class came up with the rules, they will know what is and is not acceptable.

To keep the students interested and help prevent them from misbehaving, I believe an active learning style is necessary. Hands-on activities and student involvement are crucial to more than just learning. This eliminates down time and keeps them active, instead of being bored and looking for things to do to keep them busy. Involving students in projects and allowing them to experience a concept is much more exciting and memorable for them than reading about it out of a textbook. A large part of keeping students from misbehaving is the teacher's responsibility. If students are engaged and active, they have less time to act out or be disruptive. I also believe that if the students' have a feeling of belonging and community in the classroom, they will be less likely to disrupt or cause problems for other students. It is my responsibility then to give them that sense of belonging and importance to our classroom.

When a student is misbehaving, it is my duty to be supportive of them and try to redirect them or their behavior, but not in a way that is degrading to them. In order to do this, I will use physical proximity, show interest in their work, or even provide them with a light challenge. Physical proximity shows the student that their actions have been noticed and that they are not acceptable. By showing interest in the work that they have completed so far, the students can be redirected back to what they are supposed to be doing and gives them a boost of confidence in their ability to do the work. A light challenge can be anything from seeing how many problems they can get done in a certain amount of time or filling up a whole page of a story. This gives the students something to work toward, but it also helps them get back to their work.

Even though a teacher can try to prevent misbehavior and redirect student, this is not always going to work. Students are still going to break the rules, but the way a teacher reacts to the broken rule is important. A corrective approach to a misbehavior is important to help the student know what

they have done, but not degrade them for their actions. The teacher should approach the student in a sensitive manner and talk calmly to them. If the teacher is still upset from what occurred, they should wait a minute or so to talk to the student until they are calmed down. This prevents the teacher from overreacting or humiliating the student. The teacher needs to be respectful of the student and treat them in the manner they would want to be treated if the situation was reversed. The teacher then needs to inform the student of the consequence. It is extremely important to be consistent when enforcing rules. If a student breaks a rule, they need to have the consequence enforced. The teacher can not show favorites or allow some students to slip by just this time. This would send a message to the other students that they are not as special or important as the student that did not have to follow through with the consequence. This is not the kind of community I want to build in my classroom. I want everyone to be equal and feel as important to me as everyone else.

Closing

Creating a classroom discipline has allowed me to reflect on my beliefs and goals as a teacher.

I have been able to see and think about how I really want my classroom to run. This plan has helped me create the backbone to what I believe is essential to maintaining an effective and well organized classroom. The more organized I am as a teacher the better off my students will be now and in the future. I do not want to go into my first year of teaching feeling overwhelmed and not knowing how to handle certain situations. This plan has helped me prepare myself for this and has taken away some of the uncertainty I was feeling. I now believe I am one step closer to being a true educator.

Citation:

Charles, C.M. (2005). *Building Classroom Discipline* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.