

PART III

Establishing & Upholding Expectations

Classroom Management: Philosophy, Context, and Goals

Philosophy: The proposed plans are described as I envision them before the start of the academic year based on my *principles and goals for K-12 classroom management*. The purpose of the strategies is to help the instructor connect with students and foster a healthy student-teacher relationship based on trust, respect, honesty, communication, and community. The relationship should enrich and support students, and enhance their opportunities for academic success.

Context: My Classroom Come to Life project is based on my internship placement experience at Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS) in Virginia. The plan is designed with grades 4 and 5 in mind but is applicable in all K-12 settings with the appropriate modifications.

Implementation: The instructor must implement the following plan in accordance with the policies and protocols outlined explicitly in the school handbook and information published on the ACPS district website. The instructor is also encouraged to forward the final plan to the department chair and school principal and make any adjustments per the recommendations given. The CCTL plan should align with the District and school's teaching philosophy and vision and have full approval from the school principal before implementation.

CCTL Objectives: To establish a strong sense of community in a clean, orderly, optimized classroom setting where students feel welcomed, supported, and inspired to learn.

Goal 1: To establish a positive, healthy, supportive, and welcoming classroom environment that embraces diversity, equity, and inclusion with a plan that meets district policies and guidelines and streamlines the path to student success and well-being.

Goal 2: To foster a culture of trust and confidence between teacher and students so that all students know and understand that the instructor always wants what is best for them even when the work or consequences result in outcomes students may not find pleasant.

Goal 3: To implement a classroom management plan that employs restorative strategies to balance fairness, responsibility, and accountability for offenses that are relatively minor and commonly occurring in the student age group. A zero-tolerance policy will be employed for infractions that pose an immediate danger to students, teachers, and staff or liability for the school and district.

PART III

Classroom Expectations

Classroom Expectations

Establishing and upholding expectations in K-12 classrooms will vary from teacher to teacher. A classroom is best managed when the instructor can draw from their unique strengths and learn to improve over time and with accrued experience.

Establishing a Climate Conducive to Learning

Expectations will be based on core values. Elementary school children need guidance in learning the importance of core values and understanding their inherent meaning and true worth. The instructor must be a role model and exemplify the core values daily through appropriate language, a calm demeanor, a caring and nurturing approach, fairness and equity, the skill of discernment, and showing respect to all. The trait that will serve as the glue for connecting the core values is consistency. Teachers are not superhuman, but as professionals in the business of helping people, all instructors must consistently manifest professionalism worthy of respect. Children have the natural ability to judge character. Behavioral expectations begin with the instructor and the quality, professionalism, and consistency they bring to the classroom and their work.

Include the Students in the Process

It is vital to allow students to participate in the process of establishing expectations. Students will feel more responsible for their learning when teachers include them in the process. They will understand that education is precious and that learning time should be approached with seriousness, focus, and respect.

Therefore, the CCTL plan calls for the instructor to involve students in establishing and operationalizing the core values at the beginning of the school year, particularly during the first week of classes. The expectations will be discussed periodically through various activities that will teach students to value their learning opportunities and respect their peers' learning opportunities. In disciplined classrooms, students understand that:

1. Disruptive behavior always leads to more problems, work, and unpleasantness.
2. They make their own decisions and control their behavior.
3. The class is a real learning community.
4. The instructor and students are valued members of the learning community.
5. Ubuntu: The learning community depends on its members to do well and be well. When one individual is not well, the community, as a whole, is hurt as a result.
6. A safe, welcoming classroom environment is the most conducive to learning.

Table 1. Established Core Values and Classroom Expectations

Core value	Actions	Expectations
Integrity	Do the right thing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listen to your conscience - Be honest with the instructor and with peers.
	Choose modesty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never show off or brag about your blessings. - Don't look down on others. - Don't talk over others.
	Help those in need whenever possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report bullying and fighting. - Stand up to bigotry and bias.
Respect	Show kindness and respect to all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be tolerant. Don't be judgmental. - Respect the opinions and beliefs of others. - Embrace diversity and learn to be enriched by it. - Be mindful and considerate of others. - Work toward peace and conflict resolution.
Responsibility	Be accountable for your actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take your commitments seriously. - Clean up after yourself. - Be a good steward of borrowed learning materials.
	Do what is expected of you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attend class and be on time. - Enter the classroom fully prepared. - Learn the class rules and protocols and follow them.
Diligence	Work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Try your best - Submit homework and projects on time.
	Be dependable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Honor your commitments - Do what you say you will do. - Be trustworthy.
	Be a role model.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reflect the core values in your behavior at school and at home. - Build your character, personality and work ethic.
Optimism	Always maintain a positive outlook when learning and interacting with members of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring positive energy and enthusiasm. - Find joy in serving others.. - Be thankful for all you have. - Learn from every mistake

Table 3. Examples of misbehavior, level of seriousness, and instructor responses

Offense	Level of seriousness	Time frame	Established responses / consequences
Unexcused tardies	Level 1	Tallied weekly	1 st Unexcused tardy: Discrete oral reminder 2 nd Unexcused tardy: Second oral reminder is given with emphasis on student well-being and developing good habits for academic success. 3 rd Unexcused tardy: yellow card is given for the third weekly offense 4 th Unexcused tardy: Email sent to parents, red card given on day of 4th unexcused tardy.
Unexcused absences	Level 1	Daily	Refer to school policy and protocol.
Excessive talking in class	Level 1	Daily	1 st offense: gentle oral reminder or gesture from instructor in the classroom. 2 nd offense: second oral reminder is given with emphasis on respect for others' right to learn per the established norms. 3 rd offense: Take-a-break 4 th offense: email to parents, yellow card is given for the day of the 4th offense.
Unapproved use of phones and other personal devices	Level 1	Daily	1 st offense: oral reminder or discrete gesture from instructor to put device away. 2 nd offense: <i>Take-a-break</i> 3 rd offense: instructor meets with student, second oral reminder is given with emphasis on developing good habits and focusing on student well-being and success. 4 th offense: email to parents, red card is given for the day of the third offense.
Being disruptive in class with the intention of derailing instruction	Level 2	Daily	1 st offense: oral reminder or discrete gesture from instructor to put device away. 2 nd offense: Take-a-break 3 rd offense: instructor meets with student, second oral reminder is given with emphasis on developing good habits and focusing on student well-being and success. 4 th offense: email to parents, red card is given for the day of the third offense.
Failure to comply with a class policy, protocol, or routine	Level 2	Daily	1 st offense: oral reminder or discrete gesture from instructor to put device away. 2 nd offense: Take-a-break 3 rd offense: instructor meets with student, second oral reminder is given with emphasis on developing good habits and focusing on student well-being and success. 4 th offense: email to parents, red card is given for the day of the third offense.
Unapproved use of phones and other personal devices	Level 2	Daily	1 st offense: oral reminder or discrete gesture from instructor to put device away. 2 nd offense: Take-a-break 3 rd offense: instructor meets with student, final oral

			reminder is given with emphasis on developing good habits and focusing on student well-being and success. 4 th offense: email to parents, red card is given for the day of the third offense.
Obscene gestures	Level 2	Per offense	If the incident occurs during a lesson, the instructor will use discreet tactics to shut down the drama and get the lesson back on track. <i>Take-a-break</i> is an option. The instructor will meet with the student after class and use restorative strategies to redirect him/her toward self-reflection and hopefully enhanced understanding of the misbehavior and consequences. Repeat offenses will result in an email to parents and a red card for the day of each repeated offense.
Destroying property	Level 2	Per offense	Intervention required Restorative strategy
General bullying	Level 2	Per offense	Intervention required Restorative strategy
Aggressive bullying	Level 1	Per offense	Intervention required Restorative strategy
Stealing property	Level 1	Per offense	Intervention required Restorative strategy
Use of racial and ethnic slurs to offend others	Level 1	Per offense	Zero tolerance, refer to school handbook and district policy, report immediately.
Verbal assault on a peer	Level 2	Per offense	Zero tolerance, refer to school handbook and district policy, report immediately.
Physical altercation, striking another student, fighting	Level 1	Per offense	Zero tolerance, refer to school handbook and district policy, report immediately.
Sexual harrassment	Level 1	Per offense	Zero tolerance, refer to school handbook and district policy, report immediately.
Bringing illegal drugs and or paraphernalia to class	Level 1	Per offense	Zero tolerance, refer to school handbook and district policy, report immediately.
Bringing a weapon to class	Level 1	Per offense	Zero tolerance, refer to school handbook and district policy, report immediately.

Offense Types

Level 1 offense - The most severe type of offense. The class will adopt a zero-tolerance policy. The instructor will refer to the school handbook, follow protocol, and contact administrators and parents as needed.

Level 2 offense - Will be addressed in the classroom. Restorative strategies will encourage students to reset, learn from their mistakes, and get back on track with learning.

Level 3 offense - Addressed in the classroom, minimal drama, use signals and discretion to correct misbehavior. When a student commits the same Level 3 offense three times in one day, the student will receive a red card for the day.

No offenses will always result in a green card reward for the day.

Red, Yellow, and Green Cards

Students will be scored on classroom behavior, and the scores will impact students' ability to participate in activities deemed as privileges. Refer to the school handbook to ensure this system does not break district policy on consequences for disruptive behavior. The cards never lead to actual sanctions.

For each day of the instructional calendar, students will receive a card that documents their classroom behavior for the day.

Red cards = zero points

Yellow cards = half point

Green cards = 2 points

Total points possible per academic year = 360 points

Total points needed for high commendation letter/award = 320

Total points needed for standard commendation letter / award = 288

Three nominal prizes (TBA) will be awarded to the top-three point earners in the class.

Restorative Strategies

Restorative strategies are not appropriate for all situations. However, when used, they should begin with caring and nurturing language. Still, a therapeutic approach always leaves the door open for students to contemplate the errors of their ways in a safe setting. The gentle language will hopefully calm the student and allow them to "reset" their thinking and the level of conflict they feel. When the student appears to respond rationally and reasonably, the instructor will begin asking a series of questions to inquire about how the student feels and why. This is not a scripted interview and will be difficult for many new teachers to navigate. When the student is calm, the instructor can gently shift the conversation roles from teacher-student to adult-child. Without sounding authoritarian or parent-like, the instructor can ask why the student chose to act out in a way that is not conducive to the learning community. With a soft and serious tone, remind them of the agreements for classroom behavior while stressing the importance of the student's inclusion in the community and overall well-being. The objective is to get students to open up to new perspectives.

The questions should appeal to the student's sense of reason, so be gentle and serious.

- 1 Ask the student how their choice(s) impacted others.
2. Ask how the situation worked out for the other student? Then ask; *And, how did it work out for you?* (This question prompts the student to be rational and wise.)
3. Ask if there was a better way to address the situation. Let them take their time to think about it.
4. Use language that contextualizes the circumstances regarding kindness, honesty, and respect.
5. Finally, ask if they would make the same choice if faced with the same situation again?

Take-a-break

Take-a-break is a restorative strategy that allows students to take the time they need to decompress, "reset," and rejoin the group when they are ready for "learning." Students would never be removed or secluded from the learning environment unless the behavior presented a clear and present danger. Instead, they can "*take a break*" in the large open space (within the same physical environment) or the book nook area, where they will have an opportunity to calm down, reset, then rejoin the group when they are ready for "learning."

Culturally Responsive Classroom Management

Teachers must always be aware of their words and actions. Educators must use language that reflects tolerance, patience, and understanding in a diverse society. Teachers must avoid saying and doing things that could be perceived as offensive by members of certain groups. They must avoid the pitfalls of bias and discrimination, which is not always easy. Suppose the instructor ever offends a student with an unintentional remark or gesture. In that case, I will immediately apologize for the offense and use the opportunity to learn more about the student's culture. I would explain to the student that we are all capable of making mistakes since we are unaware of specific cultural sensitivities in other cultures. I would ensure the student understood that the language or gesture was perfectly acceptable in Western culture and that they might experience it again. I would do this to prepare students for a reality they must address. Still, I would also emphasize that the language/act means two different things in two different cultures and that there was never any intention to offend anyone. Then, I would promise to make every effort never to repeat the same mistake. I would go one step further. If I made the same mistake again, I would allow the student to correct me and explain to the class why, but only if they felt inclined to do so. My rationale would be "*because I want to know more about you and the important things to you, even if I didn't grow up with your culture in my life.*"

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