

Rules and routines: positive behaviour management strategies



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As adults we all have to obey society's rules and routines, eg pay our bills, wait in queues and not steal others things. As adults, we know these as laws, customs and good manners and learn the consequences of breaking them. Children need to learn how to behave and teachers can use rules and routines to help them do this and consequently create an appropriate learning environment.

A simple positive behaviour strategy used in all schools is the use of rules. A rule in the classroom is principle that generally governs the pupil's behaviour.

In schools there are two types of rules, there are whole school rules created to encourage a safe and pleasant environment around the school grounds. There are also classroom rules, which are used to maintain an effective learning environment within the classroom. ' Effective rules provide pupils with a physically and psychologically safe predictable environment' (Chapalin 2003 quoted Learning to Teach in the Primary School, by James Arthur et al, page 107)

It is vital that a rule is effective in order to create the correct setting. ' Whatever the rule, it should be established quickly, with firmness and consistency.' (Yeomans and Arnold 2006).

Many schools develop classroom rules within the first week or two of the school year, ' this helps build a natural readiness and expectation of pupils' (Classroom Behaviour, by Bill Rogers, page 27). Pupils must be aware and agree with a rule in order for them to respect it. Teachers attempt to achieve this by involving the pupils when creating the classroom rules. Another <https://assignbuster.com/rules-and-routines-positive-behaviour-management-strategies/>

method often used is to have the pupils' think of rules for the teacher (e. g. be kind, considerate and helpful). This requires a certain level of maturity from the pupils but, if achieved, the pupils will have a better understanding of why rules are in place, which will, in turn, enforce their respect for them.

Discussing the classroom rules with the pupils helps them understand their purpose and that it is in their own benefit to behave in an appropriate manner. It also helps to replace the sense of teacher versus pupil, when the pupils understand that one person misbehaving will affect the learning of the whole class. ' The ultimate goal is to have a pupil point out that anyone not meeting the expectations is spoiling something for everyone else.' (The Art of Peaceful Teaching in the Primary School, by Michelle MacGrath, page 128) In this way, teacher and pupil are on the same side, which makes discipline less stressful and unsettling for both.

It is vital that the rules are not ignored or forgotten. The teacher needs to constantly reinforce the rules when they are broken otherwise they will become meaningless and the pupils will lose respect and forget about them. As well as reciting the rules to the pupils, the teacher should not assume that children know why they should or should not do something. ' This is not always the case and it is worth explaining why the expectations are in place; for example, why it is better to stand still when lining up rather than pushing others.' (The Art of Peaceful Teaching in the Primary School, by Michelle MacGrath, page 129). By illustrating why the rule is in place, it helps to enforce the pupils' perception of their own behaviour and may help them remember the rule in future.

A method used to help prevent pupils from forgetting the classroom rules is displaying the rules prominently around the classroom for all to see. This has greatest effect if the display is bright, colourful and eye catching. A friendly and attractive display will look less daunting compared to plain black and white words on a wall. If the display is encouraging and captivating, it may help to change the pupil's perception of the rules from fear of discipline, to a more positive feeling. This works especially well if the display was created by the pupils (during an art lesson ect) as they may feel a sense of pride towards their hard work and the rules it represents, in turn this may encourage more respect for the rules and less chance of the pupils forgetting them.

To gain maximum effect the rules should be worded positively, ie telling pupils what they can do, rather than what they cannot do. This makes the rules seem less restricting and dictatorial. ' Negatively framed words are not effective long term' (Becker et al 1975 quoted in Learning to Teach in the Primary School, by James Arthur et al, page 107). Rules should be short, easy to remember and few in numbers. It is best to keep them general but still focusing on key concerns (e. g. ' pay attention in class' rather than ' do not play with your pencils' and ' do not play with your ruler' ect..). ' Rules also need to be realistic and enforced consistently.' (Learning to Teach in the Primary School, by James Arthur et al, page 107). If used correctly, rules can be an effective and powerful positive behaviour management strategy resulting in a productive learning environment.

Most schools and classrooms operate on a series of set, secure routines. '

Whilst the rules provide the framework for the conduct of lessons, they are <https://assignbuster.com/rules-and-routines-positive-behaviour-management-strategies/>

few in number. The teachers therefore rely on a large number of routines to provide the link between expectations and actions.' (Learning to Teach in the Primary School, by James Arthur et al, 2006)

Like rules, routines both apply around the school and in the classroom. School routines are first encountered when pupils are in minor Nursery/ reception class school. This often involves walking the children around the school to familiarise them with the corridors, and teaches them the appropriate behaviour while walking in single file. ' School routines are usually developed around the school timetable with fixed times, such as assembly, lunch, break and hall times.' (Beginning Teaching Beginning Learning in Primary School, third edition by Janet Moyles, page 49). Once these routines are established, more freedom can be given to the pupils (letting them decide when they want to go to the toilet or get a drink) and less time is required from the teacher in enforcing them. This is an important contribution to the successful organisation of the school.

I have witnessed well-established routines within a school. I watched as the playground assistant rang the bell and all the children got into the appropriate line to await their teachers, then walked back to class. The routine of lining up after playtime and of getting back to class in a disciplined manner, had the advantage of quieting and calming down the children before leaving the playground and entering the classroom. It also reminded them of the change from playtime to class time.

Many teachers spend a considerably amount of time in creating routines during the first week of term, this is often achieved through constant verbal

reminder (“ Push in your chairs please”) and praise (“ Thank you, James, for pushing in your chair”). If effectively practiced these actions will become the children’s dominant habit, so will be preformed automatically with out any need of a reminder from the teacher. ‘ Jones and Jones (1990) found that up to 50 per cent of some lessons were lost to non-teaching routines such as getting out equipment and marking work.’ (Learning to Teach in the Primary School, by James Arthur et al, page 111) So decisive and efficient routines provide a real learning bonus of extra time for teaching.

The routine of entering the classroom in the morning is a very important one, with lots of advantages if followed correctly. When the children enter the classroom in a well planned routine, it means they enter under their own accord and independently take responsibility for their own actions with only little guidance from the teacher.

If the children know what to do as soon as they enter the classroom; for example, put their homework in the homework box, bags under the desk, then sit and read their ongoing class reader, the teacher can deal with any immediate problems, speak to any parents and then commence teaching a class that is settled and ready to begin work. With out such a dominant daily routine, other unwanted behaviour is more likely to occur, especially from the more insecure children in the class. Then, there is less chance of the teacher intervening and telling the children off for bad behaviour, which in turn could set the pattern for rest of the day. With the more insecure children, it is better if the first contact of the day with the teacher is of a positive nature.

Routines can be very helpful to the teacher and the classroom learning environment but we must ensure they do not become boring, ' as a little deviation from the dominant routine helps to keep children and teacher alert and interested.' (Beginning Teaching Beginning Learning in Primary School, third edition by Janet Moyles, page 176.) For example, taking the children outside on a nice day for reading time.

Rules and Routines have a big role to play as positive behaviour management strategies in schools and classrooms as well as preparing the children for adulthood. If used correctly they will save time and energy, resulting in less stressors effecting the teacher allowing him/her to teach more productively and confidently in a well organised and controlled classroom environment.