

justteachers Guide to Behaviour Management

Effective behaviour or classroom management is intrinsic to successful learning and is one of the major concerns of schools and naturally of overseas supply teachers. As an overseas supply teacher, it may be challenging to walk into a new classroom, full of pupils you have never met before, and to manage successfully the behaviour, and therefore the learning, of those pupils.

There is no one way of effective teaching and learning - no hard and fast rules or easy routes for you to follow. Every teacher has their own particular style, approach or 'toolbag' of skills and techniques that they deploy in the classroom, this will be largely the same at home or in the UK.

As the teacher you are the manager of the classroom as a learning environment for pupils and, as such, are responsible for all that goes on within it. The teacher's job is clearly defined as being responsible for managing the classroom, so that all the learners will absorb as much as possible in the time available. This sounds very straightforward but, as any teacher knows, there is much more to it than that!

The key to successful behaviour management is... you!

justteachers have 6 succinct tips for effective behaviour management in UK schools for overseas supply teachers:

1. You will find that every school has different behavioural policies. justteachers recommend that you familiarise yourself with the policies and procedures of the schools where you have been placed. Do not assume that all schools have the same behaviour policies, they do not.
2. If for any reason you cannot familiarise yourself with the school's individual policies and procedures, justteachers recommend that you adopt a strategy to encourage good behaviour.
3. Please do not leave your class unattended for any reason either in or out of the classroom.
4. Difficult children should be dealt with in a calm and firm manner. Please do not point or shout at a child, or have any physical contact with them.
5. If there are any incidents or accidents, however minor you think they are, please ensure that you report them to a member of school staff as well as to your assigned justteachers consultant, followed up with a written account.
6. If you should encounter any extremely disruptive or violent behaviour whether directed at yourself or another child/adult, please send for a member of staff immediately.

You might want to get a book on behaviour management, such as Getting the Buggers to Behave by Sue Cowley or The Behaviour Management Pocketbook by Peter Hook and Andy Vass. The books will help you not just in the UK but throughout your career.

More top tips

The following tips were published on the internet by British Teacher Doug Belshaw.

1. **Don't shout:** Absolutely fundamental. Shouting is what you do to give people a short, sharp shock if you shout every lesson at a class then they will ignore you in the end.

- 2. Teach well:** It's tempting to fall into the trap of thinking that if pupils aren't doing their best for you, then why should you do your best for them? Although it may not be politically correct in the teaching world to say so, the quality of your teaching has a direct influence on the behaviour of your class. Obvious really, but it may explain why that class who you always give worksheets to in order to 'keep them quiet' always play up.
- 3. Smile:** Many pupils I come across have fairly dreadful home lives, from what I overhear and what they tell me. If you always greet them with a smile on your face - no matter what their behaviour was like in the previous lesson - then they are more likely to look forward to being around you. This has obvious repercussions for how they will behave in your lessons.
- 4. Mean what you say:** If you tell a pupil that if they do **x** then **y** will happen as a result and they subsequently do **x**, then **y** must happen - no matter how sorry they are. Pupils must learn the causal link between their behaviour and your sanctions.
- 5. No 'earning back' time:** Help pupils to understand the difference between good behaviour and bad behaviour by separating them out. By allowing pupils to 'earn back' the time that you intend to detain them encourages them to 'play the system' and act awfully at the beginning of the lesson and then rush their work off at the end. Apologise if necessary, but stress that their actions have certain consequences which you will either reward or punish.
- 6. Make your classroom your own:** Pupils should feel comfortable in your classroom but also realise that when they enter your classroom they are entering *your* domain where *your* rules apply. Do this by having a seating plan (but allowing them to choose their own groups/partners from time-to-time), making the area round your desk a special area, having a place for everything, and so on.
- 7. Be consistent:** Consistency is a very important quality in a teacher. Many pupils may be used to an inconsistent adult figure of authority in their home life, one that their persistence may break down. No matter how you feel, how much a class is wearing you down, be consistent in the standards of behaviour and work you expect from them. Inevitably, you will have to meet them somewhere in between what they want to do and what you want, but make sure it's closer to your end of the spectrum!
- 8. Give them a fresh start:** Tell pupils right at the beginning that every lesson with you is a fresh start. Tell them that you've got a selective/defective memory and that you only remember the good things that happened. Emphasize this through smiling and not reminding pupils of their previous bad behaviour. *Expect* that they will behave well and express your disappointment if they don't.
- 9. Separate behaviour and personality:** Make pupils see that whilst you 'like them as a person', you 'don't like their behaviour'. Everyone wants to be liked, so give pupils a chance to be liked by you 'even more' by showing them the difference between their behaviour and their personality. Tell them how it makes you feel when they behave in a certain way if necessary. Make them think that you think that they're, at heart, different than the behaviour they're exhibiting.
- 10. Get parents involved:** Although pupils will, inevitably, tell you that they don't care if their parents/carers are informed of their behaviour, they will be. Even the most irresponsible and uninterested parent doesn't like to be asked to come into school to discuss their child's behaviour. Threaten this and carry it out with the most persistent offenders. When you meet their parents, work out 2-3 targets for them to achieve whilst they're 'on report' to you. Contact parents weekly to inform them of their son/daughter's progress. Watch the rest of the class come into line.

The Department of Education is very conscious of the impact of pupil behaviour on teaching and learning, see the Departments Improving Behaviour in Schools site, which gives official policy news and carries case studies. Please go to www.dcsf.gov.uk/ibis/index.cfm

Useful websites



The Times Educational Supplement the UK's largest education publication has a Behaviour Management Forum with lots of top tips and advice, click on the above logo or <http://community.tes.co.uk/forums/5.aspx>

Behaviour 4 Learning - This resource assists teacher trainers and their trainees in managing classes and pupil behaviour. The focus of the initiative is upon developing trainee skills and insights which foster a classroom ethos of 'behaviour for learning'. Please go to www.behaviour4learning.ac.uk/

Behaviour UK - This site provides a range of resources on behavioural issues, including news, articles, discussion forums and opinion polls. Please go to www.behaviouruk.com/

Pivotal Education - This company runs a weekly free behaviour management tips service for teachers as well as on line resources and courses. Please go to www.pivotaleducation.com/behaviour or for the tips www.pivotaleducation.com/behaviour/tips.php

Please do e mail justteachers any tips that have worked for you, e mail paul@justteachers.co.uk