Minnesota Department of
Education

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Alternatives-to-Suspension Fact Sheet: Effective Classroom Management Practices

Classroom management strategies are universal practices that support all students. These practices help to build a sense of community and foster relationships between teachers and students and among students. Effective classroom management strategies help to prevent student misbehavior and missed instructional time due to exclusionary disciplinary practices such as out-of-school suspensions. Proactive, preventative strategies teach and reinforce positive student behavior.

Foster Positive Relationships in the Classroom Community

- Welcome students to class by name and encourage classmates to greet each other.
- Call or send positive notes home to acknowledge positive behavior.
- Learn about students' interests, families and accomplishments outside of school.
- Build positive relationships among students by providing opportunities for students to work in groups.
- Empower students to take an active role in the classroom through helping teaching staff and other students with tasks.

Establish an Inclusive Classroom Environment

- Use and reinforce language that is gender neutral and free of bias.
- Select curricular materials that reflect the cultures and life experiences of the students.
- Encourage and expect participation from all students.
- Hold high expectations for all students.
- Learn about and honor cultures that are represented in your classroom.

Make Data-Based Decisions to Support Positive Behavior

- Create and maintain data on student behavior.
- Use this data and student referral records to identify classroom management strategies that effectively support positive behavior and "hot spots" of inappropriate behavior.
- Examine data by:
  - Time of day.
  - Location.
  - Type of task.
  - Day of the week.
  - Time of year.
  - The students who are involved.
- Make changes to "hot spots" and monitor data to evaluate the effectiveness of the change.

Teach, Review and Reinforce Clear Expectations

- State expectations positively (e.g., raise your hand).
- Establish behavioral expectations/procedures.
- Teach behavior expectations in the context of routines and in the location that they occur (e.g., teach cafeteria procedures in the cafeteria).
- Remind students of expectation prior to the routine or context.
- Monitor student behavior and provide specific feedback.
- Praise or reinforce students for following expectations.
- Review procedures/expectations preventatively.
- Give more praise for good behavior than correction for misbehavior.

Optimize the Physical Space of the Classroom

- Arrange furniture to allow easy traffic flow.
- Make high traffic areas easily accessible.
- Ensure that students can be supervised in all areas.
- Create seating arrangements that are conducive to work.
- Ensure lighting is adequate for task.

Create Routines for Common Activities/Tasks

- Completing work in groups vs. independently.
- Communication with students and families.
- Turning in homework, grading, returning homework.
- Permission to use the bathroom, go to the nurse.
- Getting and returning materials.

Provide Engaging Instruction

- Vary the method (lecture, audio, video, materials).
- Maximize active engagement by varying response format.
- Vary individual versus group responding.
- Vary response type (oral, written, gestural).
- Move around the room, scan the room and interact with students.
- Positively acknowledge responses and effort.
- Use media and technology.

Respond to Inappropriate Behavior

- Respond quickly and objectively.
- Make simple, positively stated requests.
- Acknowledge students who are engaging in appropriate behavior.
- Ask the student to take a break in a predetermined, supervised place.
- Anticipate situations that may result in misbehavior and proactively teach students appropriate behaviors beforehand.
- Objectively follow school procedures for major behavior problems.
- Teach and reinforce new skills or replacement behavior to increase appropriate behavior and decrease misbehavior.

For more information, see the Alternatives-to-Suspension Fact Sheets on the Minnesota Department of Education website or contact Cindy Shevlin-Woodcock at (651) 582-8656 or cindy.shevlin-woodcock@state.mn.us