

Philosophy of Discipline

The attitudes and behaviors of students influence the learning experiences that occur in a classroom. A positive classroom environment is necessary for students to have a safe, enriching, and successful learning experience. Many factors influence the classroom environment. The factors that a teacher can control include the classroom rules and procedures, communication with parents and students, lesson design and learning strategies, and timeliness of action to maintain control.

Students must know what teachers expect from them before they can meet those expectations. Clear and reasonable rules and procedures are necessary for students to understand exactly what to do and to be successful in doing it. Regular communication, positive reinforcement, and consistent consequences form a strong foundation for any set of classroom rules and procedures. Timeliness ties it all together. Immediate recognition with verbal praise will help students see the connection between their good behavior and the reward. Immediate and consistent consequences will redirect misbehavior before it gets out of control.

Good communication with parents is an essential part of preventing problems and ensuring a positive experience for all students. If parents know how their children are supposed to act in the classroom, they can reinforce classroom expectations at home. Communicating progress is also important. Teachers should contact parents at least twice during the year to communicate both good and bad behavior as well as any improvement students have demonstrated.

Interesting and engaging lessons are necessary for keeping students involved and on task. Down time, where students have nothing to do, is an invitation for bad behavior. If students are engaged in the lesson and have structured transitions between tasks, the learning experiences will be positive. The teacher can then enhance the learning by posing and answering interesting questions rather than spending time addressing problem behaviors.

Ultimately, students should moderate their own behavior. Fair and consistent reinforcement, communication, warnings, and consequences will be meaningful to students. Students will then be more likely to exhibit good behavior consistently on their own.