

PRINCIPLES OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

At Mill Park Secondary College our approach to student and classroom management is based on the values of mutual respect and personal and collective responsibility. The principles below give us the best possible means of promoting these values. The philosophy of Restorative Practice will be identified throughout, particularly in recognising the importance of relationships and repairing the damage that poor behaviour has on them. We hope to encourage teachers and their classes to develop positive and productive relationships, in which issues may be identified and resolved collectively and in which individuals recognise their responsibilities.

HAVE AGREED BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

It may take time with each class, but if expectations of conduct are agreed on, poor behaviour can always be referred back to these and the effect on everyone else, promoting ownership and group responsibility. These behaviours should protect students' rights (e.g. the right to learn).

BE A CALM ADULT

Situations in the classroom can be stressful. Acknowledge that you are not at your most rational when stressed and will not make decisions that promote the most effective results. Follow a standard system and be consistent. Stressed teachers upset the learning of the whole class.

SEPARATE THE BEHAVIOUR FROM THE INDIVIDUAL

If an adolescent feels personally rejected by their teacher, they may not have the emotional maturity to avoid antagonism. All students will make mistakes that teachers may need to address. Try to ensure that the language used focuses on what is wrong or what has happened. Avoid the implication that the student themselves is 'defective'. Issues should be about the behaviour, not the individual.

KEEP THE STUDENT IN THEIR 'ADULT'

Sometimes students may try to drag you into a 'discussion' which places you as the (responsible) adult and them as a child (no responsibility). This dynamic is unproductive and does not teach students to take responsibility for their actions. Calmly and consistently expect students to justify their behaviour and issue appropriate consequences when required. The student will be forced to revert to an adult frame of mind.

REWARDS WORK BETTER THAN PUNISHMENT

Poor behaviour makes us angry and propagates a desire to punish. This is understandable, but less productive than rewarding effort (not the behaviour). Effort-Reward systems (e.g. acknowledging those who ask their peers to be quiet or when challenging students say something nice) promote better behaviour patterns and greater levels of responsibility than punitive measures. Effort-reward systems take time to devise and implement but save time throughout the year. They also save stress. It should, however, be the aim to reduce the need for reward-for-effort.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

There is no guaranteed approach to resolve all your classroom management issues. Do what you feel comfortable with that doesn't 'damage' any student. Familiarise yourself with the ideas here and practice dialogues that work.

THE BEST 'TECHNIQUE' IS A STRONG RELATIONSHIP

A productive and cooperative classroom environment relies on positive relationships. Adolescents learn best from an adult whom they recognise as having positive feelings towards them. Recognising positive effort and minimising the attention paid to negative behaviours has an overall effect on the whole class and particularly on more challenging students. Learning about your students' personal lives builds goodwill which can, when required, be drawn upon. No-one outside your classroom can solve your student management issues - they can only draw on their own relationship with each student you send to them, which doesn't alter the situation for you.