

Philosophy of Classroom Management

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“Classroom Management constitutes the provisions and procedures necessary to establish and maintain an environment in which instruction and learning can occur” (Wong, 2014, p. 9). Evidently, classroom management is one of the most important aspects of teaching. Before true learning can occur, children need to feel safe and accepted in the learning environment. Without effective classroom management, the classroom environment is unpredictable and chaotic. By using procedures and routines, relational strategies, strategies for student engagement, and by skillfully using discipline, educators can take strides towards maintaining successful management in the classroom.

My philosophy of classroom management encompasses an emphasis on forming strong, healthy relationships in the classroom. Procedures and routines are taught from the very first day of school, allowing students the creative liberty to manage their own learning and pursue their passions. All rules, procedures, and disciplinary actions are focused on enabling each student to discover a love for learning and achieve their full potential. The organization of the classroom will give students freedom of movement and access to materials for both collaborative and independent learning.

The classroom environment has a huge impact on classroom management. In my classroom I will be using flexible seating. There will be many different types of tables and seating that the students will be free to use. I will encourage the students to work wherever they work best. A flexible seating contract will be agreed on and the students will sign it (See Appendix B). One of our classroom mottos will be, “I am flexible!” Using this phrase, I will promote the idea of flexibility in the classroom. This motto will help my students to understand that they have many options. If someone is using a seat that another student wanted to use, he

will be able to find another seat because he is flexible. Emphasizing flexibility not only emphasizes adaptability, creativity, and imagination, but also prepares students to work both collaboratively and independently. It helps students understand that change is good and necessary for each person to be able to grow. My desk will be set up in the corner of the classroom and will allow me an overview of the entire room. There will also be a community space where large group learning can occur (See Appendix A). Furthermore, there will be accessible materials in the classroom for the students to use whenever they need. All of the furniture will be easy to move so that large group projects and learning can occur.

Plan for the First Five Days

Establishing classroom procedures and rules is integral to the success of a classroom management plan (Wong, 2014). As an elementary teacher, I will dedicate the first few weeks of school to teaching, rehearsing, and reinforcing procedures until they become routine. Procedures create consistency in the classroom. From consistency comes trust. Once my students trust me and feel safe in the classroom, they will be able to freely learn and grow. The first five days of class will be extremely important and will set the tone for the entire year. Using Wong's (2014) strategy, I will create each procedure, implement it, and then assess it to make sure it is effective.

Day 1 (1st, 2nd, or 3rd grade)

On the first day of school I will start by allowing all the students and parents to meet each other and meet me in the classroom. After the parents leave, I will introduce myself to the students and tell them about my life. Then, the students will be able to draw pictures and create a scenes describing their summers. There will be art supplies already laid out on the tables for them to use. After this activity, I will begin telling my students about the importance of learning

how to use the classroom space and materials correctly. I will tell them how I want them to be able to use the materials and be safe in the classroom. I will then proceed to teach rules and procedures. I will start with explaining how each child will have the ability to sit where they work best. I will explain to them that there will be times when we have large group or partner activities. During these times the students may be assigned an area to work. However, if I do not specify a place for them to sit, they are free to use the classroom space as needed.

Rules

I am a firm believer of the student-centered approach to learning. I want to give my students the freedom to explore, discover, and express their learning in the classroom. Because of this, I do not have any specific rules that I want to use in my classroom. Instead, I will collaborate with my students and have a class discussion about what the classroom rules should be. This will allow my students to have a say in the rules and to take responsibility for them. Not only does this empower students to be responsible, it also fosters a sense of community and belonging in the classroom. Furthermore, according to Marzano (2003), negotiating rules in the classroom can increase student success and promote positive behavior. My students and I will also collaborate to come up with a set of rules for flexible seating (See Appendix B).

Day 1 Classroom Management

- Attendance Procedure
 - Student will enter the room and proceed to the attendance wall by whiteboard
 - Student will move velcroed name from the “Absent” wall to the “Present” wall
- Cubby Procedure
 - Every student will have their own cubby
 - Every day student enters room, hangs backpack in cubby, and brings books to their chosen work spot
- Bellwork Procedure

- Every day each student will enter the classroom, attend to their cubbies and then proceed to a space to sit
- Writing materials will be in little organizer bins in the middle of tables
- There will be a picture on the whiteboard or smartboard
- Each student will write or further draw a story about the picture (depending on their abilities)
- When the teacher tells the students, they will turn to a partner and describe their story.
- My Time/ Your Time Procedure
 - When the teacher is talking, everyone must be quiet and look at the teacher
 - When the teacher is not talking, students are free to talk with the appropriate noise level
- Voice level Procedure
 - There will be four push on lights on the wall
 - The signs next to the lights will read
 - Loud and Proud (As loud as they want)
 - Partner talk - (A little quieter, inside voices)
 - Whisper
 - Silence
 - I will give examples of noise levels in each category
 - When a certain light is on, students must maintain that noise level in the classroom
- Lining up Procedure
 - There will be a designated line leader each day
 - There will be a spot on the whiteboard that says “Line Leader”
 - Each day, a different name will be velcroed next to it
 - Each student will quietly make their way to the door
 - A line will be formed naturally
 - For the first few days there will be a long piece of tape on the ground indicating where the students should stand
 - When I say “Ten Hut,” all students must snap to attention by putting their feet together, hands by their sides, and being absolutely quiet
 - When I say “Fall Out”, students will be allowed to be relaxed in the line and talk to each other
 - This will help my students know when they can be in a more relaxed line or when they have to be quiet and calm
- Bathroom Procedure
 - There will be a bathroom push on light on a wall
 - Student will raise two fingers

- Teacher will give consent
- Student will push the bathroom light
- Student will use the facilities
- Student will re-enter the classroom, sanitize with hand sanitizer by the light, and then push the light off
- If the light is on, students will know to wait until the light is off before raising fingers

Day 1 Instructional Program

- Name art
 - Students will design name tags necklaces
- Teacher trivia
 - Students will play trivia and guess answers about my life
- Learning inventory
 - Students will take two inventories that will assess their learning preferences and learning styles
- Students will start an “All about me” project
 - Students can use art or building materials to create something that reflects them as a person
 - They might include personality traits, hobbies, interests, favorite foods, etc.

Day 2

Day 2 Classroom Management

- Students will rehearse all of the previous day’s procedures
- Heading Paper Procedure
 - Students will learn to put their name, date, and subject in the top right corner of their assignments
- Homework Folder Procedure
 - Every student will have a folder
 - One pocket will have a handprint marked “Left at home”
 - The other side will have a handprint marked “Right back to school”
 - Students will put papers to take home on the left side
- Homework turn in procedure
 - Students will take the homework out of their folders and place it in the homework bin before they begin the bellwork
- Silent Reading Procedure
 - After lunch students will have silent reading time
 - Students will enter the classroom quietly

- Students will quietly select a book to read
- Students will find a quiet spot away from distractions
- Class job Procedure
 - There will be a class job chart by the whiteboard wall
 - The class jobs will be listed with names velcroed to them
 - I will change the jobs every week

Day 2 Instructional Program

- Bellwork
 - Picture of a fairy tale
- Spelling assessment
- Work on “All about me project”
- Math assessment
- Quiet Reading Time
- Read a book together “ The Giving Tree”
 - Discuss the book
 - Draw summaries of the book

Day 3

Day three will be used to review and rehearse the procedures that the children had the most trouble with on day two. Then more procedures will be introduced.

Day 3 Classroom Management

- Morning Check in Procedure
 - After bellwork, students will proceed to the rug in the community space
 - Everyone will sit in a circle
 - I will ask the students to “rate themselves” on how they are doing that morning
 - Students will hold up a number 1-5
 - 1 is a bad morning
 - 5 is a great morning
 - Teacher will talk to students about why they are holding up their number
 - Students will express their feelings
- Unfinished Work Procedure
 - Students will put their unfinished work in their unfinished work folder

- When they have free time during the rest of the day they can work on that work
- Done Early Procedure
 - Students will choose from a list of options that are posted near the whiteboard
- Introduce Class Agenda

Day 3 Instructional Program

- Bellwork
- Finish “All About Me” project
 - Children will break into groups and present their projects for each other
- Introduce Brain Breaks
 - Play GoNoodle video
- Math Lesson #1
- Talk about Metacognition
 - “Thinking about your thinking”
- Introduce Self-Reflection Journals
 - Students reflect on their thinking and their projects
 - Students think about how to resolve difficulties
- Quiet Reading time
- Spelling Groups
 - Words their way

Day 4

Day four will be used to introduce the learning areas and zones in the classroom (See Appendix A). The Students will learn procedures for each zone.

Day 4 Classroom Management

- Reading/ Library zone
 - This zone is reserved as a quiet space
 - No talking is allowed unless the teacher says otherwise
 - Students can use this space during independent work time or free time
- Sensory Table
 - This table will have water and sand in it
 - The natural materials inside will switch from time to time
 - Students are free to use the sensory table during free time
 - After using the sensory table, students must wash and dry their hands at the sink
- Building/Engineering Center
 - This center is full of building materials such as:
 - Popsicle sticks

- Cups
- Plastic spoons
- Balloons
- Dried Spaghetti
- Rubber bands
- String
- Etc.
- Students may use this center during free time or when the teacher allows
- Students may use the materials for any projects they are working on
- Students may build whatever they like
- There is a box of building challenges that students can complete
- There are worksheets for the students to summarize and draw their projects when they are done
 - Each worksheet goes into the photobook at the table
- Students may use the ipad to take a picture of their work
- Listening Center
 - Students may use this center during free time or during silent reading time
 - Students can listen to audiobooks and follow along in the text
 - Students may listen to audiobooks together
 - Students can draw a picture of what they listened to and present it to the class

Day 4 Instructional Program

- Bellwork
- Morning Check In
- Math Lesson #2
- Spelling
 - Words their way
- Vocabulary Introduction
- Brain Break
- Silent Reading Time
- Free Time
- Unit 1 Opener (Literature)
- Science Lesson 1 - Plants

Day 5

Day five will focus on reviewing all the procedures that have been a struggle for the students.

Day 5 Classroom Management

- Art and Craft Supplies Procedure
 - Where to find them
 - How to clean up when done
- Pencil sharpening procedure
 - Two cups
 - One with sharpened pencils
 - Other one with unsharpened pencils
- Ipad Lab
- Emotions Procedure
 - Talk about emotions
 - Talk about using words to describe emotions
 - Use charts on board to help children describe their emotions
- Taking Turns Procedure
 - “We are flexible!”
 - Students will learn how to share objects and use other objects when someone else is using what they want
- Test Taking Procedure
 - Students will be silent during tests or quizzes
 - Students will spread out and keep focused on their own work

Day 5 Instructional Program

- Bellwork
- Morning Check In
- Math Lesson #3
- English Lesson #1
- Brain Break
- Introduce “Flashlight Friday” (Silent Reading Time)
 - All the lights will be shut off in the classroom and the blinds will be closed
 - Students can read with flashlights
- Spelling
 - Words their way
- Vocabulary work
- Read to someone

In addition to establishing rules and procedures, I will make every effort to establish good relationships with all my students and with their parents. Communication is exceedingly important and leads to trust. I will send out letters to the parents (See Appendix D) and start a class website with a class schedule, unit plans, student work, homework information, my biography, and classroom announcements. Furthermore, I will provide opportunities for the parents to volunteer in the classroom and work with their students in their homes. I want to make sure that each parent knows how important they are in their child's education. According to Santrock (2018), children are more motivated to participate and engage in school and after school activities when their parents promote and encourage them.

Even after establishing rules, procedures, and relationships, I know that there will be behavior problems in my classroom. In the primary grades, children are still learning how to express and manage their emotions. Before resorting to any disciplinary actions, I will use both Marzano's strategies for maintaining student engagement and love and logic strategies. According to Marzano (2003), using games, friendly controversy, questioning techniques, interesting facts, sharing stories, and having a good tone and voice pitch can help students to be engaged and interested in the classroom. For every new unit, I will use interesting facts or an interesting video to get my students' attention. As an elementary teacher, I will be implementing many games into the curriculum. I will also use friendly competitions to help my students stay motivated in learning. At the beginning of the year I will make sure to share many stories with my students and help them to get to know me.

When there are misbehaviors in the classroom, I will use love and logic strategies to address the misbehavior and help my students achieve their full potential. Fay and Funk (1995)

advocate strategies that allow students to cool down and think through problems. These strategies help improve relationships in the classroom. Fay and Funk (1995) emphasize using enforceable limits, providing choices within those limits, and applying consequences with empathy. For example, I may come across a situation where two students are sitting next to each other and distracting one another during a quiet time. First, I will remind the students that the “silent” light is on. Then I will use the ripple effect by praising all of the students who were quiet and on task. If they keep talking, I will calmly walk over to them and give them a choice. I will let them know that they can either stay in their seats and not talk, or they can move to a better seat where they will not be distracted. If the children stay and continue to talk, I will let them know that they have lost the privilege of sitting next to one another. I will move them to different seats and then tell them that I would like to see them after class. After class, I would discuss the situation with them and ask them why they were not able to listen. We would then collaborate to come up with a plan for better behavior in the future.

In another scenario, two students might be fighting over a toy. I will calmly walk over to them and say, “You both have two choices. You can either share, take turns, and be nice to one another, or I can hang on to this toy and you can both find different toys to use.” I would be comfortable with either choice and the students would be able to think through the problem and solve it.

Both of these scenarios would be pretty typical situations in an elementary classroom. However, sometimes children can exhibit extreme behaviors. Oftentimes, these children come from an environment where they do not receive much love or attention. I will make every effort to use early intervention skills to help these students develop appropriate behaviors. For

example, I might one day have a second grader who is very aggressive. He gets angry easily and sometimes takes out his anger by throwing objects in the classroom or pushing other students. As soon as I recognize these behaviors, I will sit down with the student and talk with him about his behavior. Together, we will come up with a positive reinforcement system where he can earn special prizes for good behavior. During class, I will use Zirpoli's (2014) strategies for extreme behavior. I will affirm the child a lot and speak positively. I will set aside a little extra time during every school day to interact with him and get to know him. I will give the student chances to be autonomous and independent and to be a leader in the classroom. I will tell the student how much I appreciate him and like him and how he has so many positive behaviors in my class. These strategies will help the student to develop a good self-esteem and good behaviors.

Successful classroom management comes from planning and over-planning. This plan that I have developed should help me immensely in establishing a safe and trusting learning environment. The biggest factor in classroom management will always be me, the teacher. Planning is wonderful and necessary; however, I will always need to be flexible and open to asking others for help. I will strive to always have a positive attitude in my classroom in order to create a positive environment for my students. Above all, I must remember that classroom management is for my students. They are the most important part of my classroom. Using all of the strategies discussed, I will strive to create a classroom where students and parents alike feel welcomed, appreciated, respected, and motivated.

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Appendix A - Sample Classroom



There are storage cabinets for teacher materials. The shelves with bins will all be accessible to students.



The cubbies are shown on the back wall.



The white board and carpet area on the far wall can be used for community activities. There will be a larger whiteboard with a smartboard.



The furnishings will be light or on wheels so that the students can move things around.



Building/ Engineering Center Located Above



Listening Center Located Above

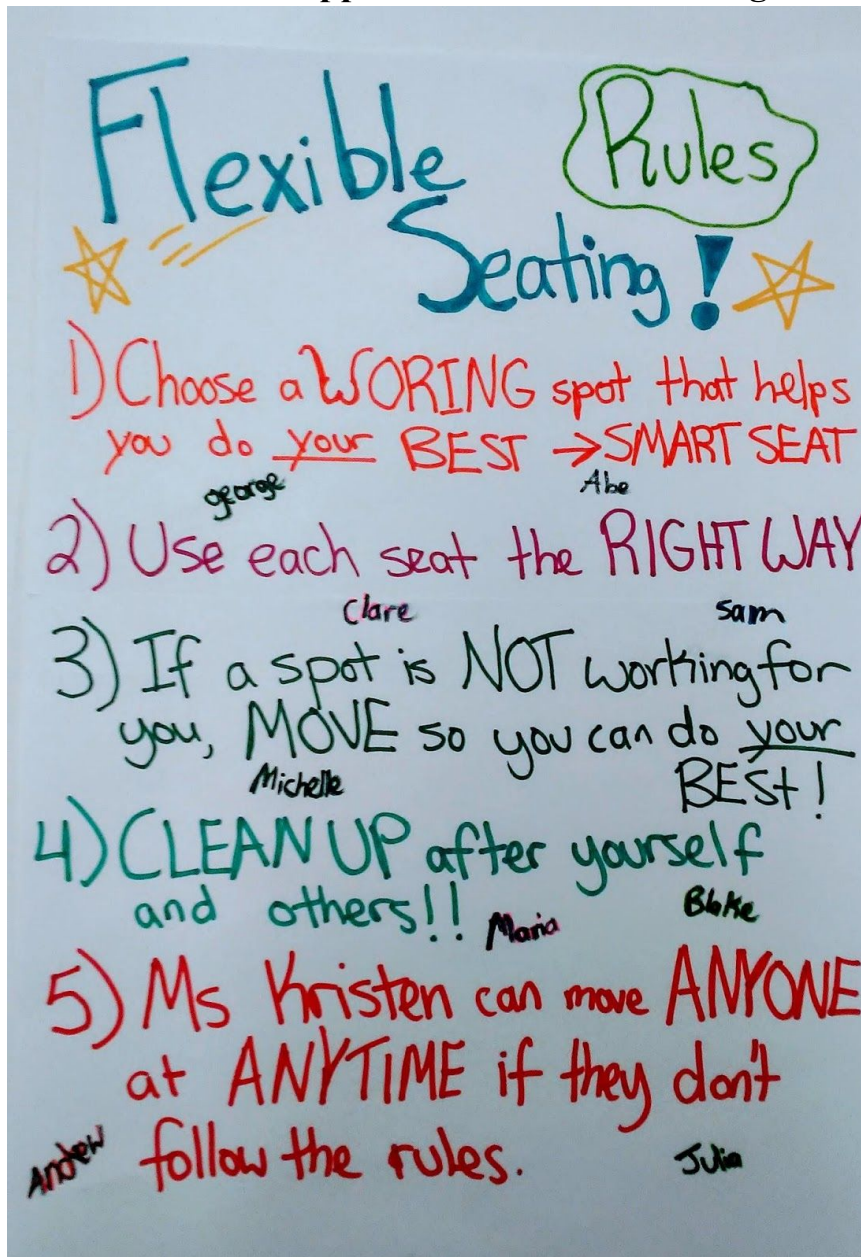


Library/ Reading Center Located Above



Sensory Table Located Above

Appendix B - Flexible Seating



Flexible Seating Policy:

I really like the idea of being flexible. Sometimes I think that we can get too caught up in our own ways and fail to see how change can be so needed and so good in our lives. I want to promote the idea that we are all flexible learners. We will work with what we have and make the best of every situation. If something is not working, we can change how we approach it because we are flexible. If a seat is already taken, students will be able to find another seat because they are flexible. I think that this concept will be very useful in everyday life. At homes and in the workplace, flexibility is extremely important. Planning is a big part of life; however, often things do not go as planned. Being flexible allows people to collaborate and work better in group settings. It also helps people adapt to situations as needed. Furthermore, flexibility promotes creativity and imagination. Therefore, one of our class mottos will be, "I am flexible!" My students and I will create a list of guidelines for our flexible seating in the classroom. After we come up with a contract we all agree on, the students will sign the contract.

Appendix C - Student Welcome Letter

HELLO 1ST GRADER!

My name is Kristen Harrison. I am so excited to be your teacher this year! We are going to have so much fun learning together! I hope your summer was amazing! I can't wait to hear all about it! I am so excited to meet you on the first day of school on Monday, August 15! Do you want to know a little more about me? Here are some of my **FAVORITE** things!



Color: Green
Season: All of them!
Foods: Pizza, ice cream, and chocolate!
Books: The Lord of the Rings
Hobbies: Being outdoors, reading, baking, painting, listening to music



I can't wait to meet you and hear all about your favorite things! See you soon!



Love,
Ms. Kristen

Want to hear me read this letter to you? Have your parents scan the code above with any QR Reader app.

Appendix D - Parent Welcome Letter

Dear (Insert Parent Names),

Welcome to room 19! My name is Kristen Harrison. I am so excited to work with your little students this year. First grade is an exciting transition into elementary school. I am a firm believer of hand-on, student-centered learning. I believe that children should have the freedom to be creative, independent, and collaborative in the classroom. In order to give your students creative liberty, freedom of movement, and the ability to monitor their own learning, I will be implementing flexible seating in the classroom. This means that your child will not have their own desk, rather they will be able to work wherever they work best! This may be new to your child, but rest assured, we will spend the first couple weeks learning how to use the space and materials in the classroom. After that, safe, effective, and fun learning will be able to occur!

Maintaining connections is really important to me. I cannot wait to meet each and every one of you and your students. Throughout the year I will be sending letters with classroom updates. Additionally, I have started a class website that you can find at <http://www.Room19.com>. On this website there will be classroom updates, unit themes, and current lessons. You will also find a class calendar, class announcements, homework information, contact information, my biography, and a list of educational websites that can help your children learn. As we progress into the school year, your students will have the opportunity to start and maintain a classroom blog. This blog will be accessible from the classroom website. From time to time I hope to display student work or pictures and videos of the students in the classroom!

Please visit our class website for a list of materials that your student should bring to class. Each child will have a personal cubby where they can store their materials inside of the classroom. If you are unable to view the website or have any questions at all, please contact me at 222-222-2222 or at kharrison222@edu.org! I will be sending out emails and letters as well with all necessary information!

I am so excited to start this new year! I cannot wait to meet all of you! If you ever have questions, please contact me! I am very grateful for the opportunity to help your students grow and learn. I hope to find and foster a deep love for learning in each of your students. I will strive to help them pursue their passions and bring their interests into their learning. Thank you for your time! If you would like to volunteer in the classroom or on field-trips, please let me know!

Sincerely,
Kristen Harrison

