

Discipline



When I first started teaching, and to this day, a lot of my frustration came from not understanding how to properly discipline and guide my students to exhibit positive class behaviors that show respect for themselves, their peers, and the school. There will never be perfection. Understanding that there will not be a perfect class helps mitigate a lot of the stress new teachers might feel. Aside from the following tips, reach out to the other teachers in your school to brainstorm the best plan of attack when it comes to employing safe, empathetic, and respectful discipline for your students. Before you employ any disciplinary actions, remember the following things:

check your bias

First, **check your bias.** Ask yourself if you are acting on past experiences with students, or even if you are having a bad day. There is absolutely no reason a student should receive harsher disciplinary actions based on how you are personally feeling that day. Further, make sure you are constantly evaluating your own biases in situations. Any disciplinary situation must be met with care and empathy, despite your frustration with the student.

get to know your students

Third, **get to know your students.** Look for reasons behind their behaviors. There's a chance that they are stressed, hungry, or don't fully understand what you are saying (Remember, English is not our students' first language). Some behavioral problems can stem from a lack of English words to describe their frustration. Remember to hold empathy with your students. Believe in the good of your students. Build on their strengths and use positive language.



firm, kind, and consistent

Second, remember to be **firm, kind, and consistent.** Consistency in discipline gives students expectations for their actions

Employing Disciplinary Actions: When a situation arises, ensure the physical and emotional safety of your students. Instead of solely punishing, **focus on corrective actions that guide behavior.**

Focus on the behavior, not the student's character

Have a list of classroom rules and routinely remind the students of the expectations.

Avoid using disciplines that are either humiliating or unrelated to the misbehavior.

Use Non-Verbal Cues and Proximity: For minor disruptions (like quiet chatter or off-task behavior), often a stern look, a finger to the lips, or simply moving closer to the student(s) can be enough to redirect behavior without interrupting the class.

Provide Private, Direct Redirection: For individual students who are being loud, not listening, or rude, calmly approach them and give a quiet, specific reminder of the expectation. For example, "Minju, please remember to listen while others are speaking," or "John, please keep your voice down so others can concentrate."

Offer Choices: For escalating behavior, give the student a choice between continuing the misbehavior (and facing a logical consequence) or choosing the appropriate behavior. For example, "You can choose to work quietly in your seat, or you can move to the quiet corner until you're ready to rejoin us."

Use Tactical Pausing/Ignoring (selectively): For minor attention-seeking behaviors that are not overly disruptive, sometimes pausing your instruction and waiting quietly, or briefly ignoring the behavior while reinforcing others who *are* on task, can be effective.

Re-teach Expectations: If a behavior is recurring for a single student or the whole class, take a moment to briefly re-teach the specific expectation before moving on.

Create Individual Education Plans (IEP): For persistent or more significant behavioral challenges, collaborate with your co-teacher to develop and implement individualized behavior plans.

IEP



You may be familiar with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) from U.S. public schools, which are formal, comprehensive plans involving extensive staff and parents. In our setting, an official IEP process is unfeasible. However, we can still create effective individualized support strategies, we'll call them 'IEP-lites,' to address students' academic and behavioral needs.