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Establishing Classroom Rules and Procedures

Now that your room arrangement has prepared the physical space of the classroom, you must consider how you will frame students' social space. An effective classroom has patterns and routines in place that make interaction and movement easy to organize and accomplish. For students to have a successful year in your classroom, they must understand and practice the behaviors you expect of them. Because you will want appropriate and cooperative behavior to become the norm in your classroom, think about how your students will know of these expectations and begin to adopt them consistently. A carefully planned system of rules and procedures makes it easier for you to communicate your expectations to your students, and it helps ensure that the procedures you set up will be workable and effective.

Some of the first questions to ask yourself are: What are rules and procedures? How do you develop, teach, and reinforce them? The goal of this chapter is to help you answer these questions and develop a sound system of rules and procedures for your class.

■ What Is an Effectively Managed Classroom?

An effectively managed classroom is one that runs smoothly, with minimal confusion and downtime, and maximizes opportunities for student learning. It is not possible for a teacher to conduct instruction, or for students to work productively, if they

have no guidelines for how to behave, when and how to move about the room, where to sit, when they may or may not interrupt the teacher, and the amount of noise that is acceptable. Consider this example:

At 8 a.m. when the beginning-of-school bell rings, 21 of Ms. Sanchez's 26 fourth-grade students are in the classroom. Most are not at their desks but are milling about the room and talking noisily. Ms. Sanchez calls out above the din, "Everyone, sit down!" With much effort, she succeeds in getting most of the children in their seats; however, three students are still standing and talking. The teacher goes to the front of the room and tries to begin a discussion of the previous day's field trip, but few children are listening. A few students straggle in at 8:06. Two others leave their seats. Ms. Sanchez asks the children what they liked about their field trip. Only a few students respond. There is already some evidence of inattention: Several students are not facing the teacher, and others are quietly conversing among themselves. The teacher abandons the discussion and asks a girl to pass out papers. At 8:09, students are sitting with nothing to do while the teacher talks with the children who have walked up to her desk. At 8:10, the teacher goes to the front of the class and announces that today she will show them something new. Two students are talking loudly, but the teacher ignores them. Three other students leave their seats: One goes to the drinking fountain, one to the pencil sharpener, and one to visit with another student. The teacher tells students to prepare for journal writing. Immediately two students leave their seats to borrow paper, and the noise level in the room increases. About half the students get out notebooks. The students by the far wall are quiet, but they seem to be ignoring the teacher. One student goes to the closet, another to the pencil sharpener. Ms. Sanchez calls out, "Everyone, be quiet and get out your journals!" Several students ask, "What for?"

Pause and Consider

Respond to the following prompts with a peer (or in writing).

1. How would you describe the social space (teacher–student, student–student interactions) of this classroom?
2. What are some things you feel could be adjusted to improve this social space?
3. Imagine you are a student in this class (select one of the following: student on time, student on task, student late to school, student needing journal paper). Describe your surroundings and the impact this has on you and your learning.

Observers of this classroom might criticize Ms. Sanchez for allowing students to get away with so much misbehavior. “Be stricter,” they might say. “Punish the misbehaving students” or “Develop more interesting lessons to capture student interest.” Some might even suggest that Ms. Sanchez set up a reward system to encourage good behavior. Although these suggestions could be helpful under some circumstances, they do not address the fundamental problem in this classroom: The students have not learned the behaviors that are expected of them, nor has the teacher established procedures to guide student behavior. Problems are evident in several areas: the beginning-of-day routine, bringing materials for class, talking when the teacher is leading the class, out-of-seat behavior, attending to the teacher, and responding to questions.

Of course, even if the students know what is appropriate, they will not necessarily behave as they should. (For that reason, this book will not end with the present chapter!) However, giving the students a clear set of expectations for what is appropriate is a major step toward establishing a positive classroom environment.

Keep in mind that the unique setting created by elementary school organization makes it essential to have a good set of classroom procedures. You will work with 25 to 30 students every day. Although your students will leave the room for lunch, recess, and perhaps some instruction, you will generally be limited to a single room with limited space and materials. You will be responsible for teaching many cognitive skills to a diverse population of students, and at the same time you will have to handle administrative tasks, arrange for appropriate materials and supplies, and evaluate students. To do these things well, you and your students need an orderly environment with minimal disruption and wasted time, leaving everyone free to concentrate on the critical tasks of learning. The rules and procedures you establish with students will reflect the goals you have for yourself and your students.

■ Preliminary Considerations

Definition of Terms

Goals are target aspirations not necessarily attained every day. However, long-term goals determine our daily actions. Carefully consider your personal goals and the goals you want your students to achieve during the year. These goals are reflective of your developing philosophy of teaching. Discussing goal setting with your students is an important way to establish common values regarding class activities. Keep in mind that your beliefs and the goals you set will influence the expectations you communicate to your students.

Expectations are desired behaviors or outcomes. Within a classroom, a teacher can make his or her expectations known to students, or the teacher can cause

students to guess at the expectations. It is much easier for students to meet a teacher's expectations when they know what these expectations are. Teachers can make their expectations known to students by directly teaching the classroom rules and procedures, providing opportunities for students to practice them, and responding consistently to students' behavior. A teacher's consistent responses can include both positive consequences to reinforce appropriate behavior and negative consequences to deter inappropriate behavior.

Rules and *procedures* refer to stated expectations regarding behavior. A rule identifies general expectations or standards for behavior. For example, the rule "Respect other persons and their property" covers a large set of behaviors that should always be practiced. Rules may indicate unacceptable behavior as well as expected, appropriate behavior, although teachers sometimes manage to write rules that are only positively stated (e.g., "We ask permission before talking in class"). In addition to general rules, many teachers have a rule or two governing a specific behavior that could become an issue or that they want to prevent (e.g., "Gum chewing is not allowed").

Procedures also communicate expectations for behavior. They help students meet the expectations of the stated rules in specific situations. Procedures are directed at accomplishing something rather than prohibiting some behavior or defining a general standard. For example, you will set up procedures with your students for collecting assignments, turning in late work, participating in class discussions, using the bathroom, and so on. Some procedures (such as use of equipment at a center) are sufficiently complex or critical that you may want to post guidelines in addition to practicing them with the students. However, many procedures are not written because they are very simple or because their specificity and frequency of use allow students to learn them rapidly.

The rules and procedures you design will depend on the kind of classroom community you want to develop. For example, different rules and, especially, procedures will be necessary in a classroom where most instruction is teacher led than in one where students work largely independently or in small groups.

Identifying School Rules and Procedures

In most schools teachers are expected to enforce a set of school rules. School rules are usually expressed in a code of conduct that specifies desired and prohibited student behaviors (e.g., school handbook). Often such codes of conduct identify possible consequences for prohibited behaviors. It is to your advantage to apply school rules consistently in all classes and areas of the building, making it easy for students to learn them. These rules also acquire more legitimacy in the eyes of some students because they are everyone's rules. In addition to rules and procedures that regulate student behavior, all schools have certain administrative procedures that must be followed by every teacher (e.g., keeping attendance records). You should know your school's rules and procedures before the year begins so you can incorporate them into your own classroom system. You can find out about school rules for students and administrative procedures for teachers at a school orientation meeting or from

a teacher's handbook, a building administrator, or another teacher. Pay careful attention to the following:

1. Note the behaviors that are specifically forbidden (e.g., running in the halls, using cell phones in school) or required (e.g., being in possession of a hall permit when out of the classroom during class time, bringing a note for absence/tardiness).
2. Know the consequences for rule violations. In particular, note the responsibility you have for carrying out the consequence, such as reporting the student to the school office. If the school does not have a policy for dealing with certain rule violations, you must decide how to handle them yourself.
3. Follow administrative procedures that must be handled during class time. Some administrative tasks occur infrequently (e.g., assigning textbooks at the beginning of the year). Others are daily occurrences, including recording class attendance and talking with previously absent students. You may have to collect money for certain activities and students' school lunches, so you will need a record-keeping system and a safe place to keep any money you may be handling. You will also need a procedure for allowing students to leave the room to go to other parts of the building. Some teachers have an attendance chart for students to indicate their presence each day that includes potential out-of-class locations (e.g., restroom, library). At one glance, you can tell who is absent or elsewhere in the building without interrupting ongoing activities.

Procedures in these areas will often already be established and followed throughout the school. If standardized procedures have not been implemented in the school in some area, you may find it helpful to talk with experienced teachers about how they handle it.

When you have information about school rules and procedures, you will be ready to begin planning for your own classroom. We will present guidelines for rules first, then those for procedures.

■ Planning Classroom Rules

Many different rules are possible, but a set of four to eight rules should be sufficient to cover the most important areas of behavior. Here are four general rules that encompass many classroom behaviors.

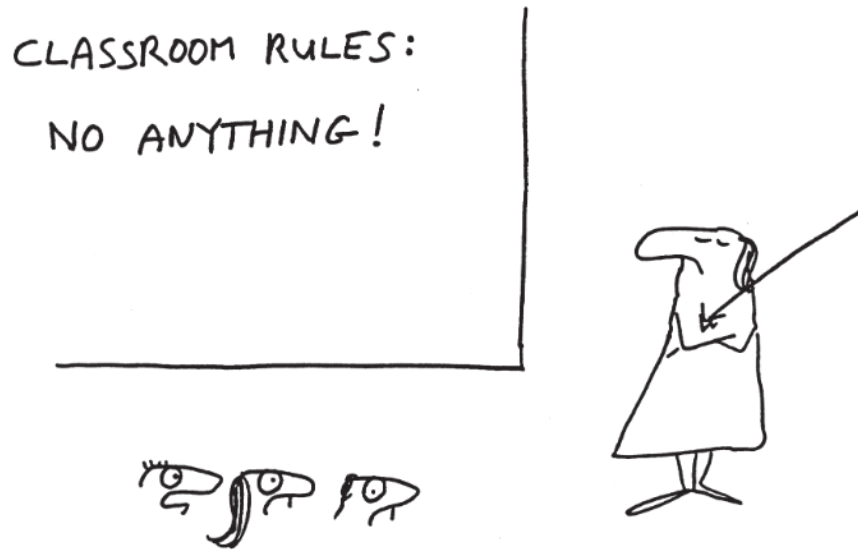
RULE 1. Respect and be polite to all people. This rule is general; be sure to give sufficient examples and explanation so that both you and your students clearly understand its meaning. You will have to define *polite*, and you may want to extend this definition to include no hitting, fighting, or name-calling. You may also want to emphasize that “all people” includes *all* students as well as you!

RULE 2. Be prompt and be prepared. This rule includes guidelines that underscore the importance of schoolwork. *Prompt* may refer to the beginning of the school day, transition to group work, and moving to individual tasks. *Being prepared* acknowledges the importance of having the right materials, as well as the mental attitude, to be successful in schoolwork.

RULE 3. Listen quietly while others are speaking. This rule will prevent call-outs and other interruptions of lessons. You can use the discussion of this rule to teach the students the procedure for how to comment or ask a question (e.g., raise a hand and wait to be called on).

RULE 4. Obey all school rules. Including this rule gives you an opportunity to discuss whatever school rules are pertinent to your supervision of students outside your classroom (e.g., on the playground or in the cafeteria). It reminds students that school rules apply in your classroom (e.g., policies governing use of cell phones) as well as out of it. It also suggests that you will monitor their behavior in the areas covered by the school rules.

These or similar rules are often found in well-managed classrooms. However, what makes the classroom well managed is not the posting alone, but rather that in these classrooms the rules are also taught and consistently reinforced. The provided rules should not be considered a definitive list. You may decide to use other rules (e.g., a rule prohibiting a specific behavior) or different wording. Some teachers may find these rules too general and might prefer to have more rules with greater specificity.



“That’s Ms. Clamhouse. She runs a tight ship.”
 Courtesy of Tony Saltzman

When presenting general rules, discuss your specific expectations with students. Emphasize the positive parts of the rules rather than just their negative counterparts to help students learn how to behave appropriately. You must be explicit about behaviors that are not acceptable when such behaviors might occur frequently (e.g., being out of seat, calling out). These specific behaviors may be incorporated in your set of rules or discussed when presenting procedures associated with specific activities. Be sure that your presentation includes concrete examples and that you explain any terms the children at your grade level might not understand. Role-playing situations that model the rules in practice can be helpful.

The rules you choose will be implemented on a continuing basis. You will discuss them with your students on the first day or two of class, strongly emphasize this focus for the first couple of weeks, and consistently reinforce the rules thereafter. Posting the rules allows you to create a strong expectation about behaviors that are important to you, as does sending a copy of the rules home for parents' review and signature. You will refer to specific rules as needed to remind students of appropriate behavior. Your posted rules need not (and cannot) cover all aspects of behavior in detail.

The rules you develop, teach, and reinforce are demonstrated by students when they follow the procedures you establish for your classroom. As you teach students the rules, identify the specific procedures associated with them. For example, the rule "Respect and be polite to all people" has a number of possible procedures associated with it that help students meet this expectation. Students can demonstrate respect and politeness by taking turns at the water fountain, using courtesies ("please" and "thank you"), following teacher-provided directions, listening to the intercom when announcements are made, and walking quietly through the hall to avoid disturbing other classes. Each of these actions can serve as a distinct procedure within your class to support students in following the rule. (Procedures are discussed in the next section.) The connection of rules and procedures is equally important when you develop the rules yourself or when you have students participate in the development of rules.

Student Participation in Rule Setting

Student involvement in rule setting can take many forms. In any classroom, students should discuss the reasons for having rules and clarify the need for and the meaning of particular rules. It is useful for students to generate concrete examples of the kinds of behaviors a particular rule covers. However, teachers must be prepared to supply positive examples (e.g., "Respecting property means putting extra supplies away so that others may use them") to supplement the mostly negative examples students tend to give (e.g., "Respecting property means not writing on the desk").

You can involve students in a discussion of the class rules by asking for their suggestions and asking them to name specific behaviors that everyone should practice to create a good climate for learning, one in which students feel comfortable participating. Many teachers utilize corresponding children's literature as a springboard for these discussions.

Students might volunteer suggestions such as “listen carefully,” “don’t interrupt,” “don’t call names,” and “encourage others.” After receiving a number of suggestions, organize the list into one or more general categories such as “respect for others.” If the goal is a rule that encourages effort and persistence, then ask students for examples of behaviors that foster success and learning. If students give examples such as “turn in work on time,” “pay attention,” “ask for help when necessary,” and “do your own work,” summarize them in a general guideline, such as “Always do your personal best.” Student participation in such a discussion is advantageous because it demonstrates the reasonableness of the guidelines and their acceptance. In early elementary classrooms (K–3), this process may take several days. In many classrooms, role-playing is crucial for students’ understanding of rules. This is the case whether students help in the rule setting or the teacher simply presents the rules.

Many effective managers do not allow choice in rule setting. Instead, they clearly present their rules and procedures to students and provide explanations of the need for them. A teacher who establishes reasonable rules and procedures, who provides an understandable rationale for them, and who enforces them consistently will find that most students are willing to abide by them.

■ Planning Classroom Procedures

If you have never analyzed the specific behaviors required of students in a typical elementary school classroom, you will be surprised by the complexity and detail in this section. Don’t hurry through it, even though some items may appear trivial; the bits and pieces will combine to form the mosaic of your management system. We describe five categories: procedures for room use, procedures for individual work and teacher-led activities, transitions into and out of the room, procedures for small-group instruction, and general procedures. A sixth area, managing student work, is presented in Chapter 5. Specific procedures for cooperative groups are found in Chapter 8.

Procedures always need to be taught and practiced, which is stressed later in the chapter. In particular, students need specific feedback to know they are meeting or exceeding your expectations. The process of supporting student learning of procedures through positive attention is a portion of the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) framework (see www.pbis.org). Remember that procedures may need to be changed—or new ones added—as the year progresses. As you read the discussion in the following sections, note ideas for procedures on the Checklist for Classroom Rules and Procedures at the end of the chapter.

Procedures for Room Use

Certain areas of the room, as well as the furniture and equipment within the room, need procedures to regulate their use.

Teacher’s Desk and Storage Areas. The best procedure is that students may not remove anything from your desk or storage areas without your permission.

Student Desks and Other Storage Areas. Just as students may not tamper with your desk, they may not bother the desks or storage spaces of other students. You can also help students learn good work habits by setting aside a few minutes each week for them to clean out and organize their desks and materials. (This is a good end-of-day activity for Friday.)

Storage for Common Materials. Develop procedures for students obtaining commonly used supplies (e.g., scissors, markers, scrap paper, rulers) and resources (e.g., supplementary books, texts, encyclopedias, dictionaries). Some teachers utilize a rotating student helper position to access needed materials; others mark walkways past cabinets/shelves as “one-way traffic” when multiple students are accessing the storage simultaneously. Still others find it helpful to label cabinet doors with a list or photographs of contents. Teach students when these materials may be used, whether permission is needed to use them, and how they may be taken and returned. If students are seated at tables, rather than desks, you may want to provide a tote to contain jointly used materials at each table.

Drinking Fountain, Sink, Pencil Sharpener. A common procedure is to allow the use of these facilities by only one student at a time and only when the teacher is not conducting a lesson or talking to the whole class. Some teachers require that students request permission to use the fountain or sink except during specified break times. Others provide specific times for pencil sharpening and keep a supply of sharpened pencils handy for breakages that might occur outside of these times.

Restrooms. When restrooms are immediately accessible from or adjacent to the classroom, many teachers allow students to use these facilities one at a time, without asking permission, whenever the teacher is not conducting instruction. Establish a system that lets a student know when the restroom is occupied (e.g., a reversible sign on the door with a green light and a red light; knocking and waiting). It is a good idea to go over restroom-use procedures such as flushing the toilet, washing hands, wiping off the sink area, and disposing of paper towels. When restrooms are separated from the classroom, both group times (before lunch, after recess) and individual procedures should be established.

Centers and Equipment Areas. Establish procedures for when an area may be used (perhaps during particular blocks of time only), whether special permission is needed, and how many may use the area at a time. You will need procedures for assigning students to centers or, if centers are self-selected, for guiding student movement among centers. Teachers often allow quiet talking in such areas as long as it does not disturb others. If talking is allowed, the area should be away from

areas where students are expected to work silently. Post rules with instructions for equipment use, the number of students allowed, and cleanup at each area with rebus images for younger students. Specifically for use of electronics, students will also need procedures for the following:

- What specific technology to use (computer, tablet, projector, printer, etc.)
- Retrieving/storing data (flash drive or individual desktop-folder use)
- Accessing software/Internet sites (during assigned times or after completing an assignment; which sites are approved)
- Sharing a computer (who controls the keyboard and for how long)

Procedures for Individual Work and Teacher-Led Activities

Major concerns include maintaining student attention, allowing for participation, and providing assistance when needed. Good procedures prevent or reduce interruptions and distractions that can slow down content-development activities or interfere with student learning.

Student Attention During Presentations. Consider how students should behave when you or another student is presenting information to the class or while you are conducting a discussion or another content activity. Typically, students are expected to face the presenter and listen attentively, and, in the older grades, to take notes. In fact, teachers often translate this expectation into a general classroom rule such as “Listen carefully when the teacher or another student is talking.” Teachers also expect students to remain seated at all times during presentations, to remain quiet, and to have only the books or other materials needed for the lesson on their desks.

Student Participation. You must identify ways to allow students to ask questions and contribute to a discussion. During presentations and discussions, the simplest procedure is to require that students raise their hands, wait to be called on, and remain in their seats. Requiring that students raise their hands gives all students a chance to participate and allows you to call on students who do not have their hands up. Some teachers teach students to call on the next speaker to avoid having all interactions channeled through the teacher. In most circumstances, allowing students to call out answers or comments without permission results in some undesirable consequences, such as domination of participation by a few students, frequent inappropriate comments, and interruptions of discussions and presentations. Two exceptions to the “no call-out” procedure occur:

1. When teachers want multiple students to provide a chorus response to a question. You can preface such an activity by announcing that students do not need to raise their hands to respond. Teach students a signal for a chorus response, such as cupping one hand behind an ear, or giving a verbal signal, or prefacing the question with “Everyone. . . .”

2. During activities in which hand raising might slow down or interfere with a discussion. True discussions do not involve raised hands; rather, you will need to teach the conversational conventions of listening for a pause, taking turns, and anticipating conversation direction.

Variations from the standard procedure of requiring raised hands usually should not be used early in the school year. Instead, follow a simple routine for several weeks until you are certain that students understand it. Then, if you choose to depart from the procedure, clearly communicate the difference to the students at the beginning of the activity.

Talk Among Students. In many activities, quiet talk is an important part of problem solving. However, students must know when and how loudly they may talk. You must decide what your policy will be and communicate it to the students. The “no talking” rule is an easy rule to break and does not necessarily reflect a learning-oriented environment.

In your decision to allow students to talk to one another and to work together during individual work activities, you will have to establish specific limitations. For example, you might tell students that during certain activities quiet talking is allowed, but if it gets too loud, the privilege will be lost. It is best to demonstrate what “quiet talking” means and have students practice it to show you they can meet your expectation.

If students work at centers and in groups, you must define with them how much noise is acceptable. Many teachers find it helpful to have a “zero noise” signal for when they need to get the whole group’s attention. A zero-noise signal could be raising your hand or turning off the lights momentarily.

Obtaining Help. When students are working at their seats and need help, have them raise their hands. It is not a good idea to allow them to call out or to come to you at your desk whenever they wish, because this can distract other students, create congestion, or prevent you from completing instructional tasks. When they raise their hands, you may then go to them or have them come to you one at a time. Another procedure is to allow students to come to you only if you are seated at your desk (or some other designated place) and not already helping another student. These procedures eliminate long lines of chatty students around your desk. They also allow you to control where you give individual assistance. If you choose to help students at a location other than their desks, choose a space that allows you good visibility of the rest of the class. Some teachers help students think about their questions by having students ask themselves, “Can another student answer this?” If the answer is yes, the student asks a classmate for help.

If students are encouraged to help each other, you will have to establish procedures for how and when. Some teachers establish the “C3B4Me” procedure, which tells students to ask three other students for help before they ask the teacher. Students need guidance in asking appropriate questions and learning how to help peers

without merely supplying answers. Chapter 7 has suggestions for teaching these important skills.

When Individual Work Has Been Completed. When students are assigned work at their desks, some students may finish before the next scheduled activity. This situation is frequently handled by having students complete an additional enrichment assignment, or by allowing these students to use the remaining time for free reading, to work at a center, or to help with classroom maintenance chores. You may also wish to have students who finish early serve as peer tutors for others. If you have enrichment activities that involve additional materials not in the students' possession, you must specify when these materials may be used, where they will be kept, and what the procedures are for returning the materials to the proper place. If many students frequently complete their work early, maybe assignments are too easy, or too much time is being allocated for seat-work activities.

Transitions Into and Out of the Room

Beginning the School Day. At the beginning of the year, you should establish a routine to open each day. Lead this routine so that it is done efficiently and helps students "settle in" to the classroom. During the course of the year, students may begin to take over this routine without your guidance. The routine need not be elaborate or time consuming. Many teachers begin with social items, such as a riddle for the day, a discussion of the day's lunch menu, the pledge of allegiance, date and birthdays, discussion of school events, or other items of interest. Some begin each day with a class meeting or a planning session during which students set their goals for the day. Such activities can be important for community building.

At this time you may also wish to collect money, permission slips, or other items brought from home. If much time is required for morning management tasks, have students begin work on a content-related review activity of the previous day's learning to establish an academic focus, ensuring that students do not have dead time.

Leaving the Room. Your students will leave the room en masse at several times during the day: at recess and for lunch, the library, music, computer lab, or some other instruction. A common technique is to have the children line up after appropriate materials have been put away, with the quietest table or row lining up first. Decide what behaviors are appropriate in line. Some teachers, particularly teachers of younger children, specify where hands and feet should be while students are lined up. For example, some teachers have students clasp their hands behind their backs; others have students keep their hands at their sides. Line leaders can be helpful, and students enjoy the privilege. Because noise disturbs other classes, talking is usually forbidden while the line is passing through the halls. You will also need procedures for helping individual students know when and how to leave the room if they are working with a speech teacher, a special education teacher, or a peer mentor in another classroom.

Returning to the Room. It is important that procedures be established for this transition, particularly after lunchtime. When students know what the “returning” procedures are, they can get started instead of waiting for you to direct them. Common procedures are entering the room quietly, taking their seats, and using the restroom, sink, pencil sharpener, or drinking fountain one at a time in each area. Note that these procedures get students ready for afternoon activities.

When students return from an out-of-room activity that has left them noisy or unusually chatty (e.g., physical education), or if they are very excited when returning from recess or lunch, your transition activity should give them time to wind down before you start academic work. For example, you might read aloud as they settle in and get ready for the next activity. Some research has found that students’ attention is better after such transitions than when the teacher tries to enforce total silence and immediately return to academic tasks. However, do not prolong the transition unnecessarily, and be sure to have the students’ attention when you begin the next activity. Monitor students so that “wind-down” time doesn’t become “wind-up” time.

Ending the Day. An end-of-day routine ensures that student desks and work areas are cleared off, key content from the day is revisited, materials to go home are ready, and students leave on time. Planning ahead for the end of the day guards against hurried closings, lost papers, and a feeling of confusion and chaos. Possible routines include feeding room pets, straightening bookshelves, tidying up desks, picking up paper, and stacking chairs on the desks. You can use volunteers for many of these clean-up routines; if you do so, rotate responsibilities so that all students have opportunities to participate. Other important end-of-day tasks include briefly reviewing important things learned that day, foreshadowing coming events, and checking materials that will be taken home. If you have children who leave early to ride a bus, you may wish to do only the essentials with them and complete the rest of the routine after they leave.

Procedures for Small-Group Instruction

One complication with using small-group instruction is that the teacher is often working with one group while the rest of the class is engaged in individual work. The dual focus complicates monitoring, providing assistance, and dealing with problems that might occur. Well-planned procedures are a must if small-group instruction is to be carried out smoothly.

Getting the Class Ready for the Activity. Students must know what they are going to do during the time they are not in the group. Therefore, post the assignments by group, and discuss work requirements beforehand with the whole class. Note any materials that will be needed when students come to the teacher-led group.

Student Movement Into and Out of the Group. These transitions must be brief, quiet, and free from disruptions. Discuss the expected behavior to students: walk, no talking, bring needed materials. Develop a signal to tell students when to come to the

group area. They should not automatically come when they see other students leave you, because you may want to check student progress before working with the next group. Some teachers use a bell or an online timer; others use a verbal signal.

Expected Behavior of Students in the Group. The rules for attention and hand raising used in the whole class can also be used in the small group. However, with smaller numbers of students, some procedures must change, and these must be taught to the children. Some teachers have each student who responds select the next student to participate. Sometimes the exchange between students can be more loosely structured.

Expected Behavior of Students Outside the Small Group. You will have given instructions to students not in the group and posted their seat-work assignments. However, students may need help as they work. It is not a good idea to allow students to interrupt you while you are with the group; therefore, establish a procedure to enable students to get help. One such procedure is to allow students to help each other. Another is to assign certain students the job of monitor. Students can then raise their hands, and the monitor can assist them. Permission to interrupt the teacher is given only to the monitor and only when assistance is absolutely necessary. Often, students are told that they should skip the part of the assignment they are unable to do and that the teacher will help them later. You should check on their progress even while you are working with the small group. Look up frequently to scan the class for signs of difficulty. When you change groups, circulate around the room to help students before you call the next group. Students can raise their hands between groups, or they may write their names on the board for assistance when you are available.

Use of Materials and Supplies. Small-group activities frequently require the use of materials and equipment. To avoid traffic jams, plan ways to distribute these items, and perhaps use more than one distribution place if necessary. Sometimes you can save time by placing needed materials on students' desks or worktables before class starts. Check equipment to make sure it functions, and have replacements on hand just in case. Student helpers can be assigned to distribute supplies and materials, to monitor supply areas, and to clean up work areas. If students need to bring special materials for group or project work, let them (and, for younger students, their parents) know far enough in advance; you may have to arrange for safe places for their materials to be stored while work is in progress. If any of the equipment you need poses a potential hazard to students (e.g., some science supplies) or can be easily damaged by carelessness (e.g., some social studies artifacts), identify safety routines and demonstrate proper use.

Using Multiple Groups. Some teachers use multiple groups extensively for a variety of tasks such as short- or long-term projects, peer coaching and other assistance, and review of content learned in other formats. Other examples include laboratory

assignments in science, the preparation of group reports or projects in social studies and reading, and study groups organized to accomplish specific learning objectives. However groups are used, it is important to develop efficient routines that support the learning objectives.

Typically, routines are introduced to the students whenever groups are first used, and they are practiced thereafter until the groups are working well. Students need to learn appropriate group behavior, especially if you intend to use groups extensively. Although you can monitor group work, the fact that six or seven groups may be working simultaneously at varying paces, using a variety of resources, precludes your being able to direct all the groups' activities. The procedures implemented for group work must be carefully chosen to encourage students to work independently toward instructional goals, to promote desirable interaction among students in the group, and to support efficient use of time. If students will frequently be working in groups and presenting their results to the whole class, emphasize the importance of attentiveness during group presentations. Detailed procedures that help cooperative group activities proceed smoothly are discussed in Chapter 8.

General Procedures

Distributing Materials. At the beginning of the year, books and supplies must be distributed to the students. Develop procedures for recording book numbers, noting damage, and handling other details. These processes are covered in Chapter 6, along with other procedures for beginning the school year. In addition to the beginning-of-year materials distribution, you will have supplies, papers, and books to pass out every day. Unless you establish efficient procedures, much time can be wasted. Many teachers have student helpers pass out materials such as manipulatives, calculators, or papers during opening activities. For the distribution of books or supplies, a student helper can be assigned to each group. If you collect papers from assignments by group or by row and preserve the order while you are checking them, you can then redistribute them to the class in the same way. This makes it easy to hand the materials to one student at each table or in each row. Be respectful of the students' privacy, however, if any of the materials you are returning contain personal information.

Interruptions or Delays. Understandably, some interruptions cannot be postponed, but most can be rescheduled. First, ask to have the contact delayed until your planning time if possible. If delays or interruptions must occur while students are working, teach the students to continue their work. Emphasize that they should be courteous and patient if you are interrupted in the middle of a lesson by a visitor or a phone call and that you will return to them as quickly as possible. If you will be detained very long, give the students something to do in case they finish their work before you return. Avoid leaving your classroom unless it is absolutely necessary. You retain liability for your students in this instance. In the rare case that you must be away from the room, make sure that a nearby colleague is aware of your absence and can check on your class.

Restrooms. If restrooms are located away from your classroom, a hall-pass system may be established to monitor the number of students out of the room and to let students know whether they may go to the restroom. You might hang a restroom hall pass next to the hall door to be placed by the student around his or her neck or carried en route to the restroom. See if there is a schoolwide procedure to follow. Teaching students the procedure of recording their departure and return times on a sign-out sheet can assist them in making their trip efficiently.

Library, Resource Room, School Office. When one or a small group of students must go to another area in the school, you will generally remain in the classroom with the rest of the students. For example, small groups doing research may go to the library. Schoolwide procedures are usually established to handle these situations. Find out if a hall-permit system or some other procedure is used to regulate the movement of students in the halls. Also, review any school rules that govern behavior in transit or at the location. Make sure your students understand these procedures. Be sure the teacher in the other location (e.g., librarian) is prepared for these additional students.

Cafeteria. Review the school policies for the cafeteria, and be ready to explain them to your students before they go to lunch and after they return if necessary. If you are planning to (or must) sit with the students, decide ahead of time who will get to sit by you (and whether this will be at random or a privilege) or whether you will use assigned seats. If your students make too much noise or misbehave, you may wish to establish an incentive for good behavior or include lunchroom behavior as part of your in-class reward system.

Playground. Safety rules are a must, and you should prohibit overly aggressive behavior and dangerous play. If any equipment on the playground poses a potential hazard, you will need to talk about it with your students. Make clear to your students what part of the school grounds they may use for recess. Also establish some signal for getting students' attention when it is time for them to line up and return to the classroom; this could be a whistle or a raised hand. If you plan to play a game on the playground, announce this before leaving the room, telling students where they should go when they reach the playground.

Fire and Disaster Drills. You need to know what school policies and routines have been established to protect the children and you. Teach these procedures at the beginning of the year, review them before each drill, and intermittently practice them throughout the year. Maintain a current roster with emergency contact numbers to carry with you.

Classroom Helpers. Teachers often use students to help with such chores as erasing the board, passing out materials and supplies, carrying messages to the office, watering the plants, tidying up, and feeding the animals. Students are often chosen

to be line leaders. Some teachers use these activities as privileges or rewards for especially good or improved behavior, or to encourage some students to accept more responsibility. Other teachers make sure that every student has a job each week so that all are contributing to the classroom community. Teachers frequently display job titles and the assigned corresponding helpers on a bulletin board or chart with rotating slots. If the jobs rotate or are used for rewards, their appointment usually is given at the beginning of the week and lasts for 1 or 2 weeks.

■ Who Will I Teach? Considering Student Cultural Backgrounds

Consider the possibility that your class may contain students from cultural groups that are unfamiliar to you. For example, students might be immigrants, from another ethnic group, or living in a household with little access to financial resources and thus belong to a “culture” of poverty. Persons who don’t have direct experience with such cultures tend to make false assumptions about them (Gorski, 2013; Higgs, 2014; Stairs, Donnell, & Dunn, 2012). For example, it might be assumed that parents don’t care very much about the children’s education or that they are lazy. Such stereotypic views might be reinforced by encountering individuals who fit the stereotype or by media reports, when, in fact, data strongly indicate that, for example, education is highly valued by immigrants, minority ethnic groups, and the poor, and that most such parents work very hard when jobs are available. A lack of familiarity with a cultural group’s norms and practices may cause a teacher to misinterpret the way a student responds to classroom activities or procedures. If that misunderstanding is combined with a negative stereotype, then there is more potential for an overreaction to the student and a setback in the child’s adjustment to the classroom and the teacher’s ability to form a constructive relationship with the student.

Jim rarely speaks in his fourth-grade class and never volunteers an answer. Even when called on, he gives limited answers. His teacher considers him unmotivated and lower achieving. In actuality, Jim’s Navaho background causes him to value group accomplishment and to downplay asserting individual achievement when in a large group setting. His culture emphasizes community knowledge whereby the individual responding would be seen as boastful.

There are other possibilities for a disconnect between common classroom practices and procedures and the cultural backgrounds of students. Consider the examples shared here and your view of them. For example, some cultures insist

on a child making eye contact with the adult in charge when they are being admonished. Others require a child to look down, out of respect to the adult. What do you expect? Similarly, handshakes, high-fives, pats on the head, and other physical contact are successful ways to encourage student participation with expected procedures. However, in some cultures, physical contact with a nonrelative of the opposite sex is forbidden. How do you interpret a smile? In some cultures, smiling is seen as encouraging, whereas in others, it is seen as a sign of ignorance or lack of focus. Some teachers might use a paper-passing procedure to quickly and efficiently distribute work to students, but some students may see the teacher's efficiency as a sign that the work is not personally connected to them (and therefore not of value to complete). Would you lean on the side of efficiency or seek to hand papers directly to each student? If you discover a cultural norm that conflicts with your procedural practices, you have options. You can modify or drop the teaching practice (e.g., touching) when interacting with the affected student, seek advice from others (including the child's parents), or explain to the child that what is expected behavior in school is not always the same as at home or in the neighborhood.

In order to best prepare the social space of your classroom for the students you will teach, you will want to get to know them and their families. In advance of that opportunity, resources you can explore to learn more are included in the Further Reading section at the end of the chapter. Perhaps you already know that your class will have students from a culture that is unfamiliar to you. If so, find a teacher or another person who has experience with the cultural group and discuss your classroom management plans. You could also do some reading about the group, with a view toward anticipating the issues that might arise.

■ Chapter Summary

Classroom rules and procedures structure the social space of a classroom. To make this space appropriate for learning, the established rules and procedures must be taught, practiced, and consistently reinforced. Elementary students can often participate in the development of classroom rules and can benefit from active involvement in the establishment of these rules (e.g., role play) and from getting constructive feedback as they learn. For students to meet the expectations of the posted rules, classroom procedures outline the specific behaviors that should become routine. Procedures are needed in many areas, including how to use the room and its components, how to participate in instructional activities, how to transition between these activities as well as in and out of the classroom, how to complete assigned work, and how to meet expectations for other school areas and events (e.g., library, fire drill). Procedures must take into account students' cultural backgrounds and not reflect only the teacher's personal preferences. An effectively managed classroom has the social space structured through rules and procedures to run smoothly and maximize student learning.

■ Further Reading

Clark, R. (2004). *The essential 55*. New York: Hyperion.

This engaging book by a Disney Teacher of the Year explores one teacher's experiences with classroom rules.

Evertson, C. M., & Poole, I. R. (2004). *Norms and expectations*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, Peabody College, IRIS Center (iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu).

This website contains many activities and case studies for accommodating students with special needs who are in the regular education classroom.

Evertson, C. M., & Poole, I. R. (2008). Proactive classroom management. In T. L. Good (Ed.), *21st century education: A reference handbook* (Vol. 1, pp. 131–139). Los Angeles: Sage.

This chapter describes preventive actions teachers can take to prepare and manage the classroom environment effectively, including discussion of classroom rules and procedures.

Fenning, P. A., & Bohanon, H. (2006). Schoolwide discipline policies: An analysis of discipline codes of conduct. In C. Evertson & C. Weinstein (Eds.), *Handbook of research on classroom management: Research, practice, and contemporary issues* (pp. 1021–1039). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

The authors describe the history, purpose, and uses of schoolwide codes of conduct and conclude that using a code of conduct to support positive student behaviors is more efficacious than setting up a system of punishments that increases expulsion or suspension rates.

Good, T. L., & Brophy, J. E. (2008). *Looking in classrooms* (10th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

This book is an excellent source of ways and means for teachers to develop into successful professionals. It synthesizes the knowledge base about teaching and provides research-based and accessible summaries about effective classroom practices. Particularly helpful are observational tools and rich examples of classroom practices that support teachers' professional development.

pinterest.com/weareteachers/classroom-rules-that-work

Pinterest allows individuals (and, in this case, groups) to pin examples of resources they would like to return to or promote to others. When exploring the resources within this site, consider how the examples fit with your developing philosophy of teaching as well as the students with whom you work. This particular group also includes pins for classroom organization (Chapter 3), classroom jobs (this chapter), lesson plans in specific instructional areas, and other topics.

Pratt-Johnson, Y. (2006). Communicating cross-culturally: What teachers should know. *The Internet TESL Journal*, 12(2), iteslj.org/Articles/Pratt-Johnson-CrossCultural.html, accessed June 2, 2014.

This article is an excellent overview of the need for teachers to develop skill in communicating with students across cultural differences.

■ Suggested Activities

1. Seek a local example or search online (e.g., Pinterest “elementary classroom rules”) for schoolwide rules for an elementary school. Discuss with a partner: How would these rules impact your teaching if you were a member of the faculty?
2. Goals represent desired directions of student growth and may be academic, behavioral, or emotional. Write one goal in each area that you would consider appropriate for your students at a specific grade level. Write one in each area for yourself as a teacher at that level. Consider how the goals you wrote are reflective of your philosophy of education.
3. As you think about planning your routines and rules, consider what role students will play in choosing and implementing them. Some teachers prefer that students participate extensively by helping formulate rules, by discussing their rationales, and by role-playing nonexamples and examples of following the rules. Other teachers prefer a more traditional, teacher-led system of rules and procedures. Still others prefer a blending of teacher and students working together. Write a response to these questions: Which approach resonates more strongly with you? Why? How does your preference relate to your developing philosophy of education?
4. Reconsider the vignette of Ms. Sanchez at the beginning of the chapter. Work with a partner to describe five procedures this teacher could put in place to have a smoother, more learning-oriented opening for the school day.
5. Read Case Study 4.1. It illustrates classroom procedures and rules for most major areas and will help you envision your own system of management. Create a list of reasons Mr. Abrams’s class will probably run smoothly. How does his classroom compare with the one you envision for yourself and your students?
6. Case Study 4.2 illustrates a more complex classroom organization that involves introducing multiple areas and centers for student activities. List some of the advance planning decisions Ms. Miller has made. What procedures has she developed? How are they taught and monitored? What do you expect her classroom rules are?
7. Develop a list of four to eight general classroom rules. Be sure they emphasize areas of classroom behavior important to you and to the functioning of your classroom. Review them with an administrator or another teacher.
8. Make a copy of the checklist at the end of the chapter. Observe an elementary classroom for 30 minutes (or find an online classroom-observation video of similar length). Fill in as many blanks as possible in Section III to describe the procedures in this classroom. Which procedures were most helpful to the lesson’s progression? Were there any procedures you would recommend to better support students’ learning? Consider how the checklist could help you plan your classroom procedures and help students meet your expectations. Where you have questions, ask other teachers their opinions/experiences. You may also find examples of routines and procedures on websites that feature information for teachers, (e.g., K6edu.com, educationworld.com) as well as on websites posted by individual teachers.
9. Revisit Activity 4 in Chapter 3. What procedures would need to be established to make the environment safe for student movement, including Cheri’s?

■ Case Study 4.1

CLASSROOM RULES AND PROCEDURES IN A SECOND-GRADE CLASS

Mr. Abrams's students follow four rules: We use quiet voices in the classroom. We do our best work. We are polite and helpful. We follow all school rules. At the beginning of the year, Mr. Abrams and his students decide what "quiet voices" means and practice using quiet voices in different instructional activities. The students also role-play situations in which students are and are not using quiet voices. In this way, Mr. Abrams helps students connect classroom conversation procedures with their corresponding rule. When Mr. Abrams needs to get the attention of the class, he routinely uses a bell as a signal. He practices this signal with the students. When the bell rings once, they stop talking and look at him. He explains to the class that using the bell is a shortcut to save time, that he will ring the bell only once and not several times, and he expects students to respond immediately. He uses the bell in a very consistent manner and provides feedback to encourage student compliance.

Students identify the rule "We do our best work" as including the procedures for listening carefully when the teacher gives instructions, participating in class discussions, completing all assignments, turning in neat work, and using time wisely. Mr. Abrams provides brief examples and nonexamples for students to role-play this rule and corresponding procedures in action.

Procedures relating to the rule "We are polite and helpful" include listening quietly when the teacher or another student is giving a presentation, cooperating with other students during small-group work, sharing materials and supplies, and respecting others' opinions. Mr. Abrams explains to his students that during some discussions they can raise their hands and wait to be called on to allow everyone a chance to talk and be heard. His signal for this procedure is raising his right hand, and he practices it with the students. At other times students contribute to a discussion without seeking permission. His signal for this procedure is placing his right hand by his ear. He also practices this signal with the students several times. Consideration and respect for fellow students, the teacher, and other adults in the school are included under this rule. In addition, the school rules referred to in the fourth classroom rule govern behavior in the halls, cafeteria, and other common areas of the school grounds. Mr. Abrams makes sure to teach and consistently reinforce all corresponding procedures as the class travels to these additional locations.

Several other important classroom procedures provide guidelines for behavior in Mr. Abrams's classroom. Students are expected to stay seated at their desks whenever he presents directions or instruction to the class. At other times, they can leave their desks to get supplies, hand in papers, sharpen their pencils, and use the restroom adjacent to the classroom without asking permission so long as they do not disturb other students. For example, students can sharpen a pencil without permission except when the teacher is talking or when another student is addressing the class. No more than two students can be at the pencil sharpener at one time, one sharpening and one waiting. When the teacher is working with a small group or helping an individual, students may not interrupt. They stay at their desks and raise their hands to request help. Students who finish their work early may read books from the classroom library, go to one of the classroom centers, or play an instructional game. They may talk, using their quiet voices, but they may not disturb anyone still working on the assignment. Mr. Abrams connects each of

these procedures to their corresponding rule as he teaches them to the class. When students forget or fail to follow one of the procedures, Mr. Abrams reminds them.

■ Case Study 4.2

USING CENTERS IN A MULTITASK CLASSROOM

Ms. Miller designed her classroom with centers for listening, reading, writing, and creating. Special-interest centers on topics the class is studying in science, social studies, or math change every month or so. Although each child has an assigned place at a table, students are seldom in their seats; instead, they work on a variety of projects individually, in pairs, and in groups. When they meet as a whole class, they gather on a carpet instead of in traditional rows of desks. On any given day in November, a visitor may see an active, busy, somewhat noisy place, but it is easy to discern that there is a sense of order and purpose to the tasks the students are doing.

This classroom didn't get this way all at once. Much of the first six weeks of school was spent preparing students to work independently and collaboratively. On the first day of school, Ms. Miller taught cues for when to gather on the rug and when to return to seats. She explained that there would be times when they could talk with each other, but that during "rug time" they were to raise their hands so only one person would be speaking at once. Ms. Miller prepared a poster with the day's schedule and "center time" clearly marked. She went over it with the students before posting it on a highly visible bulletin board. She referred to the poster during the first weeks of school when giving students instructions for activities, or she asked students to tell her when certain activities were to start or stop.

Centers were introduced one at a time, over several weeks. When each new center became available, Ms. Miller presented it to the whole class, demonstrating the material found there and pointing out times on the day's schedule when it would be available. She also pointed out two signs in each center. One lists the procedures for the center. For example, the sign in the reading center says, "Silent readers may leave the center to find a quiet place to read. Students reading aloud to each other should stay in the center." Every list of procedures ends with instructions for cleanup. The second sign lists the capacity of that center. For example, the listening center has only four sets of earphones, so its capacity is four. Ms. Miller explained to the students that they may sign up for centers each morning when they arrive at school. One period of the day is allotted to "free center time," when students may go to the centers they have chosen. During free center time, students cross their names off the sign-up sheets when they leave the center so other students may enter.

Another period is "assigned center time," when Ms. Miller decides who should be in each center. After each new center was introduced, Ms. Miller saw that every student visited it during assigned center time. She monitored the center's use carefully, making sure that all students understood the use of each new center before another center was introduced. At this point, after all centers have been introduced, Ms. Miller continues to monitor them. If she sees any problems, she brings them up for discussion during rug time. She balances the available centers so that if activities at one center require her attention, the other centers have more familiar activities available on which students can work independently.

Checklist for Classroom Rules and Procedures

- I. What are my short- and long-term goals for myself this year?
- II. What are my short- and long-term goals for my students this year?
- III. With these goals in mind, what will be my basic procedures for the following areas?

Check When Taught to Students	Area	Procedures
	Room Use	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Teacher's desk and storage areas	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Student desks and storage areas	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	C. Storage for common materials	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Drinking fountains, sink, pencil sharpener	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. Restrooms	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	F. Centers or equipment areas	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	G. Technology use	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	H. Board	_____
	Individual Work and Teacher-Led Activities	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Attention during presentations	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Participation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	C. Talk among students	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Obtaining help	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	E. When individual work has been completed	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	F. Transitions between daily in-room activities	_____
	Transitions Into and Out of the Room	
<input type="checkbox"/>	A. Beginning the school day	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	B. Leaving the room	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	C. Returning to the room	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	D. Ending the day	_____

- Procedures for Small-Group Instruction
- A. Getting the class ready _____
 - B. Student movement _____
 - C. Expected behavior in the group _____
 - D. Expected behavior of students outside the group _____
 - E. Materials and supplies _____
 - F. Using multiple groups _____
- General Procedures
- A. Distributing materials _____
 - B. Interruptions or delays _____
 - C. Restrooms _____
 - D. Library, resource room, school office _____
 - E. Cafeteria _____
 - F. Playground _____
 - G. Fire and disaster drills _____
 - H. Classroom helpers _____

MyEducationLab *Self-Check 4.1*

MyEducationLab *Self-Check 4.2*

MyEducationLab *Application Exercise 4.1* Using what you've learned in this chapter, view the video and respond to the questions.



MyEducationLab *Application Exercise 4.2* Using what you've learned in this chapter, read and respond to this scenario.

MyEducationLab *Application Exercise 4.3* Using what you've learned in this chapter, view the video and respond to the questions.



MyEducationLab *Classroom Management Simulation 4.1* Engage with the Classroom Management Simulation *Creating Classroom Behavioral Expectations*.

