Droichead

Classroom Management Toolkit

1. Suggestions for managing transitions between lessons

1. Use this time as an opportunity to revise material already covered in class e.g. songs, poems, tables, spellings, drama ideas (See '100+ Ideas for Drama').
2. Ask pupils if they can name three things they learned from our lesson on….?
3. Have a list of word games, maths games, language games, songs and poems close at hand so that you can refer to the list when needed.
4. Action songs or rhythm work.
5. Use Bizzy Breaks Resources (Booklet, Poster and Interactive Resources) from the Irish Heart Foundation https://irishheart.ie/schools/primary-schools/bizzy-breaks/ (free for all teachers).

2. Suggestions for managing noise level

1. Teach the pupils the appropriate voice levels for the various activities to be conducted in the classroom. When? Where? How?
2. Have procedures in place for quietening the pupils and getting their attention e.g. counting to 5, drum roll, raising your hand, timer (online timers available), bell, etc. It is important to use non-verbal cues whenever possible.
3. Do not speak until you have everybody's attention. Be consistent in requiring pupils' attention and only look for it when ready to speak to them.

3. Suggestions for managing group work

1. Begin with pair-work
2. Ensure children know the rules for working in groups. Teach, re-teach, revise, model and check for understanding.
3. Assign role/job to each member of the group. Pupil has a sticker reminding them what they

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have to do e.g. recorder, reporter, illustrator etc.
4. Ensure that you model and practice the speaker-listener relationship.
5. Ask yourself: Does the class understand what acceptable working voices sound like? Do they know what unacceptable working voices sound like? How have you explained wrap-up time? Visual aids of working voices are important for junior classes.
6. Clearly state the learning objective beforehand or write it on a flip chart. Check back on the learning objective throughout the lesson if group is on task.

4. Suggestions for managing independent learning

1. Make sure to differentiate your work from the start, particularly your written work so that those children who finish early can work on extension activities as part of the topic which you are covering.
2. Prepare a bank of appropriate worksheets.
3. Try to be creative and ensure a balance between fun, creative activities and those that provide opportunities to extend, revise and consolidate work already undertaken in the classroom.
4. Have a system in place for giving children the opportunity to recheck their work e.g. sample on display, list of requirements regarding the activity, general checklist for work undertaken in the class, rubrics, spell-check on the computer, etc.
5. Give children a choice regarding the activity they might undertake when the assigned activity is completed e.g. work card, silent reading, project work, computer work etc.

5. Suggestions for managing corrections

1. When you begin with a new class, give a small amount of written work until you can gauge the class level and the amount of written work which is appropriate.

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2. On the spot corrections are most effective so it is best to circulate and correct as pupils undertake an activity.
3. Have one evening each week set aside to check copies.
4. Name and date stamps can be used.
5. When collecting the pupils' work ask them to leave the book or copy open at the page they have just worked on. It will save you time searching for the appropriate pages.
6. Get the children to correct each other's work where appropriate. Ensure that you have guidelines in place around this practice.
7. When designing an activity think about the quickest and most effective way to correct that activity. What lessons require a written activity? Consider other options.
8. If correcting work outside of class time plan to give feedback to the children the next day.
9. When circulating in the class as the children are working, have a pen ready so that you can correct as you move around.

6. Suggestions for managing individual needs

1. Consult with the Special Education Teacher as soon as you can. Observe and make notes on the times when support is most needed. These notes should be evidence-based.
2. Try to set aside some time during the day when you can spend some time on a one-to-one basis with the pupils concerned.
3. Have a conversation with the pupils' parents to suggest how you can work together to support their learning.
4. Consider how you might differentiate in an appropriate way for the children concerned (see guidelines on long and short-term planning on www.oide.ie.
5. Try to ensure that pupils can successfully complete activities assigned to them. If not scaffold the activities so that they can experience success at their own level and build on their experiences.

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Learning Environment Checklist

Environment / Physical Condition: Tick the area where action could be taken to make a difference for the pupil

☐	Layout of room & furniture	☐	Adequate working space for pupils & teachers
☐	Good décor/lots of displays etc?	☐	Ease of movement in room
☐	Temperature	☐	Lighting
☐	Noise level	☐	Seating - facing board - neighbouring pupil compatibility - height for writing
☐	Appropriate resources/equipment organised and readily available for all pupils?		

Social Factors / Relationships:

☐ Classroom procedures & rules are made clear and understood by all pupils and consistently applied

☐ Clear instructions are given about the tasks in a variety of ways (oral, visual, gestures)

☐ Changes between tasks are managed smoothly and effectively

☐ Pupils know what to do next without asking

☐ The class is generally on task

☐ A variety of different actions (academic and behaviour) are frequently noticed and praised

☐ A variety of praise and rewards are used

☐ Pupils can be monitored sufficiently during a task to ensure understanding and continuing progress

☐ Any disruptive or off-task behaviour is effectively managed

☐ Good communication and feedback between teacher and each pupil about progress is maintained

Teaching & Learning – Methods, Materials & Procedures:

The extent to which........

☐ Tasks set are appropriate for the pupil's level of understanding and skills

☐ Learning goals are clearly defined and shared with the pupil

☐ Opportunities are provided for the pupil to engage in activities in which s/he can be successful

☐ Steps in learning goals are small enough to ensure progress

☐ Activity content/tasks are of interest to the pupil

☐ Tasks set take account of pupil learning style: pace of activity, variety of activities, length of activities and time allowed to complete a task are appropriate

☐ A variety of teaching approaches is used

☐ Opportunities are provided for a variety of pupil responses - oral/practical/written

☐ Opportunities are provided for pupil involvement in decision making and recording

☐ Opportunities are provided for pupil to generalise/transfer learning from one situation to another

☐ Regular monitoring and recording of progress occurs

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers (NEPS, 2010, p.67)

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Classroom Activity

Routines established for:

☐	Entering class	☐	Leaving class
☐	Giving out resources	☐	Gathering resources
☐	Asking for help	☐	Gaining whole class attention

Rules/Rewards/Consequences

Rules are:

☐	Few in number	☐	Decided upon in consultation with pupils
☐	Displayed		

Rewards and consequences are:

☐	Named	☐	Linked to behaviour
☐	Rewards in rewarding to class	☐	Rewards are achievable
☐	Sanctions are understood and fair	☐	Sanctions are imposed consistently

School Environment

Tick which area needs change

☐	Playground/yard	layout │ equipment │ supervision │ rules
☐	Movement: effective routines for	movement around school │ lining up │ corridors
☐	Break/lunchtimes	clear simple rules │ rewards and consequences clear │ activities available
☐	Staff support	staff discuss difficulties
☐	Policy	behaviour policy exists policy is understood and agreed by staff range of rewards for good class, playground, school behaviour range of sanctions in place range of strategies used for managing behaviour behaviour is assessed and monitored

Summary of Concerns

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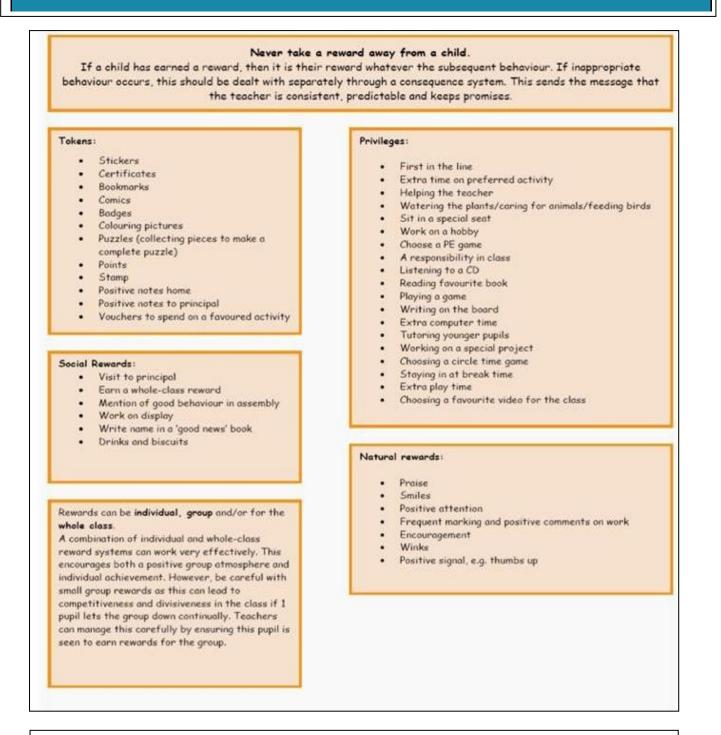
General Classroom Management Strategies

1) Wait for silence and everyone's attention before talking to the whole class. This behaviour will need continual reinforcement. Non-verbal signals can be used to alert the pupils to the need for quiet, e.g. 'Give Me Five' (See example in Section 3 – CLASSROOM STRUCTURES AND SUPPORTS). The teacher needs to model the behaviour, and using a signal should make shouting unnecessary. Make sure pupils who have difficulties with behaviour recognise that they are part of the class and are included in discussions.

2) Check that pupils have understood the task by asking them to tell you what they were asked to do.

3) Scan the room frequently and use praise to keep reinforcing good on-task behaviour - be specific so pupils are clear about what they are doing that the teacher is pleased about.

4) Use proximity control (move in close to the pupil that is off-task)

5) Use non-verbal signals, e.g. 'the look' or pointing at the pupil's copy. This will often redirect a pupil back to work.

6) Make on-task behaviour into a game by saying that every two to three minutes you will look up and give a tick on the board against each group where all members are working. At the end of ten minutes, stop the class and write down the results. Use this as a baseline for each group and encourage them to improve their score. If you fear this strategy may encourage competitiveness between class groups, use a whole-class reward system instead, and name pupils who are on-task, awarding a point towards a whole-class reward on the basis of their good behaviour.

7) Focus on effort and on positive aspects of work, no matter how few, and encourage the pupil to improve their performance.

8) Use peer tutoring and pair pupils of differing ability, so that a pupil can offer immediate help which will help keep the others on-task.

9) Encourage pupils to complete work in time allowed by acknowledging and rewarding task completion. This may involve setting different outcomes within a time limit for pupils of different abilities.

10) Some pupils need time to adjust to changes as they find transitions particularly difficult. With each change of activity, be explicit about your expectations for pupils' behaviour. Be aware of times between tasks as they are as important as time on-task and prepare and anticipate when these times might be, e.g. clearing up/setting out, choosing a different activity, playtime, assembly, visits or trips.

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers

(NEPS, 2010, p.113)

Setting Up Whole-Class and Group Reward Systems

Never take a reward away from a child.

If a child has earned a reward, then it is their reward whatever the subsequent behaviour. If inappropriate behaviour occurs, this should be dealt with separately through a consequence system. This sends the message that the teacher is consistent, predictable and keeps promises.

Tokens:

- Stickers
- Certificates
- Bookmarks
- Comics
- Badges
- Colouring pictures
- Puzzles (collecting pieces to make a complete puzzle)
- Points
- Stamp
- Positive notes home
- Positive notes to principal
- Vouchers to spend on a favoured activity

Social Rewards:

- Visit to principal
- Earn a whole-class reward
- Mention of good behaviour in assembly
- Work on display
- Write name in a 'good news' book
- Drinks and biscuits

Rewards can be **individual, group** and/or for the **whole class.**

A combination of individual and whole-class reward systems can work very effectively. This encourages both a positive group atmosphere and individual achievement. However, be careful with small group rewards as this can lead to competitiveness and divisiveness in the class if 1 pupil lets the group down continually. Teachers can manage this carefully by ensuring this pupil is seen to earn rewards for the group.

Privileges:

- First in the line
- Extra time on preferred activity
- Helping the teacher
- Watering the plants/caring for animals/feeding birds
- Sit in a special seat
- Work on a hobby
- Choose a PE game
- A responsibility in class
- Listening to a CD
- Reading favourite book
- Playing a game
- Writing on the board
- Extra computer time
- Tutoring younger pupils
- Working on a special project
- Choosing a circle time game
- Staying in at break time
- Extra play time
- Choosing a favourite video for the class

Natural rewards:

- Praise
- Smiles
- Positive attention
- Frequent marking and positive comments on work
- Encouragement
- Winks
- Positive signal, e.g. thumbs up

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support – Guidelines for Teachers (NEPS, 2010, p.115)

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Teacher Attitudes and Behaviour

- Model the behaviour/attitudes expected from pupils
- Develop positive relationships
- Be aware of ...
    - ... behaviours that 'push your buttons'
    - ... managing emotions and conveying a sense of calm and control
    - ... tone of voice/body language
    - ... the need to seek support of colleagues

Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – A Continuum of Support - Guidelines for Teachers, Pg. 27

Social and Emotional Teaching Strategies

Example of Skills to be taught
Relationship Building
Social and Emotional Understanding
Conflict Negotiation
Regulating Emotions/Behaviours
Engagement/Persistence

Primarydisplays.co.uk

Sample Strategies
Friendship Tree
Songs/Games/Stories
Feelings check in.. Pg. 158 BESD Guidelines
Turtle Technique Pg. 154 BESD Guidelines

Social and Emotional Strategies Pg. 35 BESD Guidelines

Teachable Moments

SPHE ⟶
- Self Identity
- My Friends and Other People
- Relating to Others
- Developing Citizenship

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Classroom Organisation

(BESD Guidelines, Pg. 23-27)

Physical Environment

- Layout - Pleasant/welcoming, safe, clean, well-maintained, uncluttered
- Classroom Display
- Resources

Classroom Rules

- Few in number
- Negotiated / Age appropriate
- Stated positively in terms of observable behaviours
- Explained/ role played/ practised

Routines/Procedures Pg. 25 BESD Guidelines

A Systematic Approach to Responding to Behaviour

(BESD Guidelines, Pg. 28-32)

Informed by School Policy

- Teacher attention and praise
- Planned ignoring of minor non-disruptive and attention-seeking behaviour
- Using incentives and rewards to encourage positive behaviour and motivation
- A stepwise approach to responding to misbehaviour

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