**12. Managing Classroom Behaviour**

**This guide is tailored for educators who may be delivering one-off lessons or sessions in a classroom setting.**

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| **PLAN** |
| While the core principles of behaviour management remain the same, certain adjustments are necessary when you are not regularly present in the classroom with a group of students and are delivering a one off or short series of sessions.  **Establish Clear Routines**   * **Clarify Expectations Early:** Before the lesson begins, take a few minutes to clearly define behavioural expectations. Since you may not have the advantage of long-term relationships, be explicit about the rules regarding punctuality, participation, and respect. Consider writing these expectations on the board or displaying them visually. * **Consistency Despite Short Timeframes:** Even though you are only in the classroom for a short period, consistency is crucial. Apply the rules fairly and uniformly to establish your authority quickly. Ensure that any consequences are reasonable and can be followed up within the limited time you have. * **Coordinate with Regular Staff:** Prior to the session, liaise with the regular classroom teacher or support staff to understand the existing routines and expectations. Align your session with these established practices to provide continuity for the students.   **Build Relationships Quickly**   * **Quick Rapport Building:** While you won’t have the time to develop deep relationships, you can still establish rapport by showing genuine interest in the students from the moment you enter the classroom. Use icebreakers or brief personal introductions to create a connection. * **Leverage Existing Relationships:** If possible, ask the regular teacher or support staff to introduce you and reinforce your authority. This helps students see you as part of their learning environment, even if only temporarily. * **Cultural and Group Awareness:** Be aware that you may not fully know the cultural dynamics or individual needs of the students. Approach the session with sensitivity and an openness to adapt based on the students’ responses.   **Prepare for Behavioural Issues:**   * **Pre-emptive Strategies for New Environments:** Since you may be unfamiliar with the students, plan for a variety of behavioural scenarios. Use strategies like strategic seating, engaging activities, and clear signals to manage behaviour proactively. Be prepared to adjust these strategies on the spot if needed. * **Understand the Classroom Dynamics**: Before the lesson, ask the regular teacher/staff member about any specific behavioural challenges or classroom dynamics you should be aware of. This can help you tailor your approach to prevent issues before they arise. * **Clear Communication with Support Staff:** Ensure that any teaching assistants or support staff in the classroom are briefed on your approach. This ensures they can assist effectively, especially in managing students who may need additional support. |

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| **DO** |
| **Tom Bennett**, a leading figure in UK education, advocates the "3 Rs" for managing behaviour in classrooms:  **Routines, Relationships, and Responses**   1. **Routines**: Establishing clear, consistent routines helps create a predictable environment, reducing anxiety and disruptive behaviour. 2. **Relationships**: Building positive relationships with students fosters trust and respect, making it easier to manage behaviour. 3. **Responses**: Consistent and proportionate responses to behaviour, both positive and negative, reinforce expectations and maintain order.   These principles are designed to create a structured and supportive classroom atmosphere.  **Implement Effective Routines in a New Setting:**   * **Reinforce Routines Immediately:** Start the session by reinforcing the established routines or introducing your own if necessary. Make sure students understand what is expected of them, even in this one-off context. Use visual or verbal cues to reinforce these routines throughout the session. * **Adapt Quickly:** Be prepared to monitor how students are responding to the routines you introduce. If something isn’t working, adjust your approach swiftly to maintain order and engagement. Flexibility is key when you are unfamiliar with the group. * **Acknowledge Adherence to Routines:** Praise students who quickly adapt to your routines. This not only reinforces good behaviour but also helps you establish authority and rapport more quickly.   **Engage Students Actively:**   * **Dynamic and Interactive Content:** Use dynamic teaching methods that immediately engage students. Opt for interactive activities that keep students involved and focused. This reduces the likelihood of behavioural issues. * **Pacing and Differentiation on the Fly:** Keep the session moving at a brisk pace to maintain momentum and minimize opportunities for misbehaviour. Be ready to differentiate instruction on the spot to cater to the varying needs of students, even if you don’t know them well. * **Immediate Adaptation:** If you notice that certain activities are not resonating with the students, be ready to pivot. Having a backup plan or alternative activities prepared can be extremely useful in maintaining engagement.   **Apply Consistent and Proportionate Responses:**   * **Immediate and Clear Responses:** Ensure that your responses to both positive and negative behaviour are immediate and clear. This helps reinforce your expectations quickly. Use non-verbal cues where possible to manage behaviour without disrupting the flow of the lesson. * **Collaborate with Support Staff for Continuity:** Work closely with any classroom assistants or regular staff to apply consequences or rewards that align with the students’ usual experiences. This consistency helps maintain classroom norms, even when you are a new presence. * **Use the School’s Behaviour Policies:** Familiarise yourself with the school’s behaviour policies and ensure that your approach aligns with these. This not only ensures consistency but also gives you a framework within which to operate.     **De-escalate issues Quickly**  **De-escalation techniques are essential for managing conflict and preventing situations from escalating into serious disruptions.**   * **Stay Calm and Composed**   Maintain a Neutral Demeanour: Keep your voice steady, your facial expression neutral, and your body language open. This helps to defuse tension and signals that you are in control.  Breathe Slowly: Deep, slow breaths help you stay calm and can have a calming effect on the student.   * **Give Space and Time**   Allow Physical Space: If a student is visibly upset or angry, give them some physical space. Standing too close can feel confrontational and escalate the situation.  Pause Before Responding: Take a moment before responding to gather your thoughts and prevent a knee-jerk reaction that could make things worse.   * **Use Non-Threatening Language**   Avoid Commands: Instead of telling a student what to do, try offering choices or asking open-ended questions. For example, “Would you like to talk about this now or after class?”  Lower Your Voice: Speaking softly can encourage the student to calm down and listen more carefully. It can also reduce the overall tension.   * **Acknowledge Feelings**   Show Empathy: Acknowledge the student’s feelings without necessarily agreeing with their behaviour. For example, “I can see that you’re really upset right now.”  Validate Their Experience: Let the student know that their feelings are valid. This can reduce their need to prove their point through continued outbursts.   * **Redirect the Focus**   Shift Attention: Calmly redirect the student’s attention to something neutral or positive. For example, discuss their favourite subject or a recent achievement to break the cycle of negative thinking.  Offer a Task: Give the student something to do, like helping with classroom tasks. This can distract them from the conflict and refocus their energy.   * **Provide an Exit Strategy**   Offer a Break: If the situation is escalating, suggest that the student take a short break. A brief walk or a few minutes in a quiet space can help them regain composure.  Private Conversation: If possible, move the conversation to a private setting. This reduces the pressure of performing for peers and can lead to a more honest and calm discussion.   * **Use Reflective Listening**   Paraphrase Their Words: Repeat back what the student says in your own words to show that you are listening and understanding. For example, “So you’re feeling frustrated because...”  Ask Clarifying Questions: Encourage the student to elaborate on their feelings or thoughts. This can help them process their emotions and feel heard.   * **Defer and Delay**   Postpone the Discussion: If the student is too agitated, suggest revisiting the conversation later when both of you are calmer. For example, “Let’s talk about this after class when we can focus.”  Set a Time Limit: Give the student a short amount of time to cool down, then check back in with them. This shows you’re still in control but sensitive to their need for space.   * **Avoid Power Struggles**   Don’t Engage in Arguments: Avoid getting into a back-and-forth argument with the student. This only escalates the situation and can make both parties more entrenched in their positions.  Focus on Solutions: Instead of debating who’s right or wrong, steer the conversation towards finding a solution to the problem at hand.   * **After the Incident**   Reflect Together: Once the situation has de-escalated, have a calm discussion with the student about what happened and how to handle similar situations better in the future.  Rebuild the Relationship: After an incident, it’s crucial to repair the relationship with the student. A positive interaction or simple gesture can help restore trust and respect.  **“Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”** — **John C. Maxwell** |

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| **REVIEW** |
| **Reflect on Classroom Management:**   * **Immediate Self-Reflection:** After the session, take a few minutes to reflect on your management strategies. Consider what worked well in this unfamiliar setting and what could be improved if you were to teach the same group again. * **Seek Feedback from Regular Staff:** Since you won’t have the opportunity to see the long-term impact of your session, ask the regular teacher or support staff for feedback on how the students responded and how your strategies aligned with their usual behaviour management. * **Learn for Future:** Use the insights gained to refine your approach for future one-off sessions. Consider how you can build rapport more quickly, manage behaviour effectively, and leave a positive impact even in a limited timeframe.   **Adapt and Improve Strategies for Future Sessions:**   * + **Tailor Approaches for Different Classrooms:** Recognize that each classroom will have different dynamics, especially when you are a new face. Be flexible and willing to adapt your strategies based on the specific needs and responses of the students.   + **Continuous Learning and Adaptation:** Stay informed about best practices in behaviour management, particularly those suited to short-term or one-off teaching scenarios. Engage in professional development and discussions with peers to continuously refine your approach.   + **Document and Share Strategies:** Keep a record of what works in different classroom environments and share these strategies with colleagues who may also deliver one-off lessons. Building a shared knowledge base can improve the effectiveness of all educators in similar situations.   *Principles adapted from Tom Bennett.*  [*Tom Bennett Training | Practical & Evidence-Informed Teacher Training*](https://tombennetttraining.co.uk/) |