Positive Classroom Management Strategies
Getting Started Guide

Contents

Introduction

The Positive Classroom Management Strategies (PCMS) describe a set of evidence-informed instructional practices that can be applied in any classroom setting to create safer, more purposeful learning environments, supporting student learning, wellbeing and engagement.

This guide describes how educators begin applying these in their daily work and how school leaders can guide the whole-school adoption of these strategies.

Traditional approaches for addressing inappropriate student behaviour have tended to focus on the 'problem' with the student. Although some learners may have complex behavioural needs, these strategies emphasise what educators can do to create environments where students are more likely to be learning, engaged and demonstrating appropriate behaviour.

By increasing classroom organisation, explicitly teaching the skills necessary for success, and maximising student participation and engagement during instruction, educators can prevent many behaviour challenges.

The Positive Classroom Management Strategies are summarised below:

Strategy	Increase instructional time	Increase classroom engagement
Description	Teachers maximise structure and predictability to ensure students understand what is required to be successful in the classroom. Students receive frequent acknowledgement and feedback for demonstrating appropriate skills. Teachers apply proactive strategies to prevent and respond to inappropriate behaviour discreetly and efficiently.	Teachers utilise instructional approaches to maximise students' active engagement. They plan learning activities to ensure students experience success and develop self-efficacy.
Practices	• Classroom Behaviour Expectations and Rules • Classroom Procedures and Routines • Encouraging Expected Classroom Behaviour • Discouraging Inappropriate Behaviour	• Active Supervision • Opportunities to Respond • Activity Choice and Sequence • Task Difficulty

Background

The Victorian Department of Education has simplified and streamlined the Framework for Improving Student Outcomes (FISO 2.0), to enable schools to focus on what matters most to improve every student's learning and wellbeing outcomes.

Academic success and wellbeing outcomes are related (WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, 2021). Research indicates that students with access to safe, orderly learning environments experience greater success (ANGUS, ET AL., 2009; SULLIVAN, ET AL., 2014) and are more likely to engage in appropriate behaviour (KONU & RIMPELA, 2002). Students who learn positive school behaviours are more likely to achieve academic success (MARZANO, ET AL., 2003).

Australian teachers report that low-level disruptive and disengaged student behaviours occur frequently and are the most difficult to manage. These include behaviours such as: avoiding doing schoolwork, disrupting the flow of a lesson, disengaging from classroom activities and talking out of turn (SULLIVAN, ET AL., 2014).

The approaches outlined in this guide aim to prevent or mitigate inappropriate behaviour by fostering environments conducive to positive learning and wellbeing outcomes for students. These evidence-based practices have been extensively researched and may be implemented in any classroom setting (MISSOURI SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT, 2019).

The PCMS are founded on these guiding principles:

- Behaviour (appropriate and inappropriate) is related to the environment in which it occurs. Supportive environments encourage appropriate behaviour.
- Behaviour serves a purpose. Individuals learn to use behaviour to have their needs met. When behaviour helps an individual meet their needs, it is more likely to continue. When it doesn't work, it is less likely to continue.
- Behaviour can be taught just like other skills such as reading. Students benefit from explicit instruction, opportunities for practice and feedback.

Functions of behaviour

Behaviour generally serves two primary functions: obtaining or seeking something, and escaping or avoiding something (ALBERTO & TROUTMAN, 2012). For instance, a student might exhibit inappropriate behaviour that results in gaining attention from an adult or avoiding a challenging task. When inappropriate behaviour successfully meets a student's needs, it is likely to persist. The accompanying diagram helps to analyse what the behaviour in question might be communicating or achieving for the student.

```
                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │     Problem      │
                        │    behaviour     │
                        └──────────────────┘
                    ┌──────────┴──────────┐
          ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
          │     Obtain /     │   │     Escape /     │
          │  Get something   │   │  Avoid something │
          └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
         ┌────────┼────────────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐  ┌──────────────┐
│ Stimulation /│  │    Social    │  │   Tangible / │
│    Sensory   │  │              │  │    Activity  │
└──────────────┘  └──────────────┘  └──────────────┘
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        │     Adult    │  │     Peer     │
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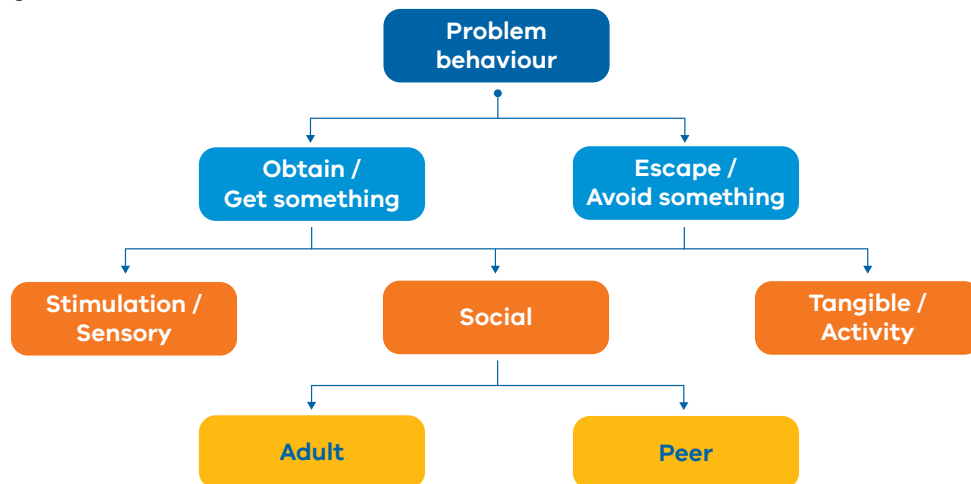
Antecedent-behaviour-consequence (ABCs)

To gain a deeper understanding of behaviour, it's essential to examine it within its specific context. In behavioural science, the events that precede behaviour are referred to as antecedents, and those that follow behaviour are known as consequences. By analysing these antecedents and consequences, we can gain valuable insights into the factors that influence behaviour.

What happened before the behaviour? What are the potential triggers? **A**	What specific action do we observe? **B**	What happens after the behaviour? What is the outcome? **C**
Antecedent	**Behaviour**	**Consequence**
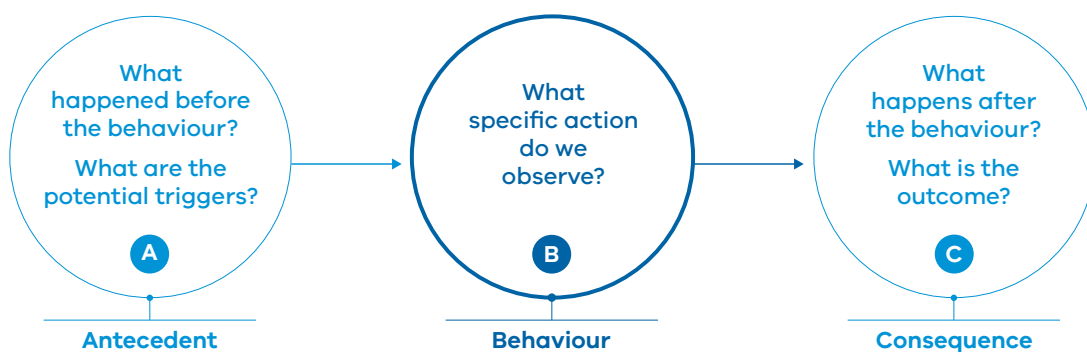
💡 **TIPS**

Setting events and consequences

- Triggers that occur well before the behaviour are called 'setting events.' For example, a student staying up late on a school night can be considered a setting event.
- Consequences can be either positive or negative and are the result of behaviour. Consequences that strengthen behaviour and make it more likely to occur in the future are called reinforcement.

Establishing possible function

To establish the possible function or reason for a student's behaviour, staff observe and review students' academic and behavioural records to identify patterns.

- **Examples 1 and 2** in the table below illustrate the ABC pattern (Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence) and the possible functions of inappropriate behaviour.
- **Example 3** demonstrates how using PCMS can increase the likelihood that students display appropriate behaviour.

A ANTECEDENT	B BEHAVIOUR	C CONSEQUENCE	POSSIBLE FUNCTION
What happened before the behaviour, making it more likely to occur?	**What behaviour did we observe?**	**What happened immediately after the behaviour?**	**What did the student obtain/seek or escape/avoid?**
EXAMPLE 1 **Several primary school students are playing in a group**	A child approaches the group and pushes some of the students	The students shout at the child	The student may have nobody to play with. This behaviour provides access to peer attention.
EXAMPLE 2 **A secondary school teacher asks a student to undertake an independent writing task**	The student swears at the teacher and refuses to start the task	The teacher sends the student to a 'buddy class'	The student may not have the skills to complete the work. This behaviour allows them to escape a difficult task.
EXAMPLE 3 **Before students leave the lesson, the teacher reminds them of the expected behaviour and why it is important not to disturb other classes.**	Students keep their voices quiet, their bodies to themselves and walk on the left (behaviours that have already been clarified and taught)	The teacher gives explicit verbal acknowledgement, thanking the students and naming the expected behaviour that was followed	The teacher provides positive social attention. Many students find this motivating, making expected behaviour more likely in future.

Punishment alone does not teach students what to do

Punishment is no substitute for teaching and encouraging expected behaviours and skills.

Highly effective classrooms use proactive strategies, where acceptable behaviours are taught, regularly practiced, and frequently reinforced.

While strong reprimands and punishments may effectively suppress undesirable behaviour in the short term, they do not address the underlying causes. Overly punitive approaches can inadvertently escalate or provoke inappropriate behaviour, ultimately making situations worse.

Individual behaviour planning

The goal of PCMS is to promote success and engagement for all students. However, students will sometimes have more complex behavioural needs requiring additional support. Individualised approaches like de-escalation techniques, behaviour assessments, and intensive interventions may be necessary in some cases. For more information, see Behaviour – Students: Advice | education.vic.gov.au

The PCMS and the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

By using PCMS, teachers can develop and demonstrate several professional standards, such as:

STANDARD 1 Know students and how they learn	1.2 Understand how students learn 1.3 Students with diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socioeconomic backgrounds 1.4 Differentiate teaching to meet the specific learning needs of students across the full range of abilities 1.5 Strategies to support full participation of students with disability
STANDARD 3 Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning	3.2 Plan, structure and sequence learning programs 3.3 Use teaching strategies 3.5 Use effective classroom communication
STANDARD 4 Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments	4.1 Support student participation 4.2 Manage classroom activities 4.3 Manage challenging behaviour 4.4 Maintain student safety
STANDARD 5 Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning	5.2 Provide feedback to students on their learning

Using this guide

There are two sections in this guide:

PART 1: POSITIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES (PCMS)

- This section introduces PCMS practices and tips to begin using them in any classroom.

PART 2: INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

- This section provides advice for leaders considering school-wide implementation of the PCMS.

Further reading

Missouri School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support, Tier 1 Effective Teaching and Learning Practices, https://pbismissouri.org/tier-1-effective-classroom-practices

PRACTICE 1:

Classroom behaviour expectations and rules

What are behaviour expectations?

Behaviour expectations are broad goals for behaviour, or the general ways we would like staff and students to act. They serve as guidelines for behaviour and apply to all members of the school community, across all settings.

Whenever possible, behaviour expectations should be developed for the entire school, providing a framework to help establish a positive school culture.

How behaviour expectations and rules are related

Behaviour expectations are often broad concepts and can be too abstract for many students to grasp effectively. That is why we create rules. Rules help clarify how behaviour expectations are applied in different situations. Rules define the specific skills or behaviours students will need to demonstrate. These behaviours should be concrete, observable, and measurable and may vary depending on the setting (e.g., classroom, canteen, sports field).

Teachers can use a matrix to plan and organise rules that reflect each behaviour expectation, demonstrating how it can look in different contexts. For example, being responsible might involve walking directly to a destination when entering and exiting the classroom. However, during independent work time and whole group instruction, being responsible will look different.

The example matrix below shows how rules can be anchored to broad behaviour expectations.

School expectations	All routines	Entering and leaving the classroom	Small group instruction	Whole group instruction	Independent work time
Be responsible	• Give your best effort • Ask for help when you need it	• Walk • Go directly to your destination	• Have a go • Bring the necessary materials to class	• Engage with the lesson • Take notes	• Make a plan • Read or listen to directions • Focus on your work
Respect others	• Keep your hands, feet and objects to self • Help others at appropriate times	• Use 'inside' voice • Enter through the door on the left	• Include others • Share equipment	• Raise your hand to share	• Limit noise • Focus only on your task
Care for the environment	• Recycle • Clean up after self • Leave the space better than you found it	• Put litter in the bin	• Leave group materials at the table • Use materials carefully	• Sit in your seat safely • Have necessary materials ready	• Return materials • to their proper place after use

The importance of behaviour expectations and rules

Clear expectations for behaviour are the foundation of effective classroom management. Rules provide clarity on the behaviours that align with our shared values. Research shows that clarifying and teaching rules can decrease problem behaviours and increase student engagement. Increased structure helps students engage with instructional tasks (BROPHY, 1998).

• Teaching rules and routines to students at the beginning of the year and enforcing them consistently increases student academic achievement and task engagement (EVERTSON & EMMER, 2008; JOHNSON, ET AL., 1996).
• Clearly stating expectations and consistently supporting them increases teacher credibility (BROPHY & GOOD, 2000).

By clarifying, teaching and encouraging expected behaviour, teachers assist all students to achieve academic success and social competence.

Getting Started

Step 1: Identify behaviour expectations

Connect classroom rules and expectations to school-wide expectations whenever possible. The example on the previous page demonstrates the expectations 'Be responsible', 'Respect others', and 'Care for the environment'. When students demonstrate appropriate behaviour, such as putting away equipment, you can express appreciation and point it out as an example of being responsible. This helps clarify to students what we mean when we ask them to be responsible.

If your school has not established behaviour expectations, you can select three to five class-wide expectations instead. Consider how you will involve student voice in the process. Expectations need to be meaningful and relevant for students. Expectations should be few in number, but broad enough to support teaching and discussion about any relevant behaviour – expected or otherwise. Below are some options to consider.

Some valued behaviours					
Accepting	Authenticity	Belonging	Caring	Commitment	Community
Compassion	Confident	Collaboration	Cooperation	Courage	Dedication
Effort	Excellence	Hardworking	Helpful	Honesty	Inclusivity
Integrity	Learning	Participation	Persistence	Polite	Productive
Respectful	Responsible	Safe	Supportive	Tolerance	Welcoming

Step 2: List contexts where behaviour problems are likely

Identify the classroom learning contexts where your students are most likely to need support. These will vary depending on age, the needs of the school community, individual students, and the subject you teach. The examples below are appropriate for many classrooms, but may need adjustments for your situation:

During transitions · Whole group · Small group · Independent work · Needing help · At all times
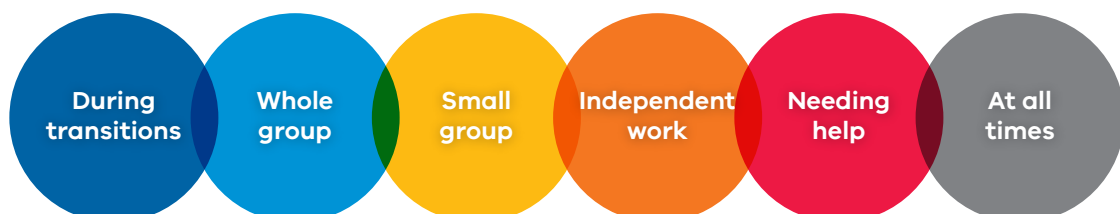
Step 3: Write positively-stated rules

- Develop a small number (between 2-5) of positively stated behaviours (rules) for each context (use OMPUA).
- Create rules collaboratively with students

Guideline	This means
Observable	I can see it
Measurable	I can count it
Positively stated	Focus on what students need to do
Understandable	The vocabulary is appropriate for the students I teach
Always applicable	Appropriate and inclusive of your students, can be applied at all times

The table below shows some examples and non-examples of rules written using the OMPUA guidelines.

Guideline	Meets OMPUA	Not OMPUA
Observable	Use positive self-talk when working	Think positively
Measurable	Bring book, pens, calculator and ruler to class	Be ready to learn
Positively stated	Move safely (e.g. walk)	No running
Understandable	Keep your body and materials to yourself	Maintain adequate personal space
Always applicable	Stay in your assigned area	Remain seated unless given permission to move

Step 4: Develop a matrix of expectations

Populate the matrix with the behaviours (rules) your students would demonstrate to be successful in the classroom. These are the skills you will teach explicitly.

School expectations	Always	Entering and leaving the classroom	Small group instruction	Whole group instruction	Independent work time
Be responsible					
Respect others					
Care for the environment					

Step 5: Display and teach expectations and rules

Once developed, expectations and rules should be prominently displayed. They should be visible to support staff and students throughout the day. You should plan to directly teach the rules described in your matrix. Consider the following questions:

- How will you make behaviour expectations and rules visible?
- How and when will the skills be taught?
- Which skills should be taught first?
- How will you revise and re-teach the skills throughout the year?
- How will you acknowledge students that perform the skills correctly?
- How will ensure all skills are taught? How will you monitor success (i.e., how will you know when at least 80% of students demonstrate mastery of the skill)?

Use the *Behaviour skills acquisition lesson template* in Appendix 1 to guide planning.

Classroom expectations and rules

TIPS

- Focus on what you want to see
- Relate to behaviours that can be seen or heard; counted or timed.
- Use developmentally appropriate language and visuals (where relevant).
- Display them for easy reference.
- Should be as inclusive as possible – consider all learners

Self-assessment:
Classroom Behaviour Expectations and Rules ⬆

Self-assessment feature	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
My classroom rules are anchored to a small number of expectations (three to five).			
My classroom rules are Observable, Measurable, Positively stated, Understandable and Always applicable (OMPUA).			
My classroom expectations/rules are visible throughout the space.			
I refer to rules regularly when interacting with students.			
I plan to ensure classroom rules are taught and revisited throughout the year (including for new students). This is reflected in my curriculum planning documentation.			
80% of my students can tell the classroom expectations and rules.			
Students receive high rates of specific positive feedback when they follow classroom procedures.			

PRACTICE 2:

Classroom procedures and routines

What are classroom procedures and routines?

Procedures describe the steps needed to successfully accomplish a classroom activity. They break down behaviour expectations and rules into smaller, teachable steps. Classroom procedures make it clear how things operate in specific classrooms. Examples include where and how to hand in work, where to get necessary materials, or how to store personal items.

When classroom procedures are well established, taught and practised, they become routines. The table below describes the relationship between procedures and routines.

Common examples of classroom procedures and routines include:

- handing out/collecting materials
- entering/exiting the classroom
- classroom attention signal
- whole class activities
- small group activities
- independent work

- use of electronics
- transitions
- lining up
- getting teacher assistance
- greeting visitors.

Procedures	Routines
• Procedures break down rules into teachable processes and routines; they are the steps we take to complete a task. • They explain the accepted process for carrying out a specific activity.	• Routines are the habits we form by repeating the same set of steps over and over. • Clear procedures form routines, the regular behaviours that help students meet expectations as stated in school-wide and classroom rules. • Routines develop from consistent teaching and practise of procedures.

Defining and teaching classroom procedures

Student learning is enhanced by basic classroom structures such as procedures and routines (BROPHY, 2006). When clear routines are in place and consistently used, students are more likely to be engaged with school learning and less likely to demonstrate problem behaviour.

Routines free up students' working memory and reduce cognitive load so that instead of dedicating their focus on day-to-day tasks like sitting or transitioning between activities, they can focus on the intended learning of the lesson (LEINHARDT, WEIDMAN, & HAMMOND, 1987).

There are many other benefits of establishing classroom procedures and routines:

Increased instructional time	Improved classroom climate	Shared ownership of the classroom	Improved student self-management
Procedures show students how to behave, minimising the amount of non-academic time and increasing time for academic instruction.	When we take time to explain how things are to be done, we appear fair and concerned. Students then experience higher success rates and satisfaction, ensuring a positive learning environment.	Students are empowered when we involve them in the management of the learning environment. It helps them to feel a partnership for their success and that of others.	Procedures provide students with productive work habits that lead to personal accountability and effectiveness later in life.

Establishing classroom routines and procedures early in the school year helps to create a structured and predictable environment for students.

Getting started

Step 1: List procedures to prioritise

Make a list of procedures that would help create predictability and structure in your classroom. Consider problem areas or problem times. Below are some common examples of classroom procedures and routines you can consider to get started.

Setting	Examples
Room areas/use	• Student desks, tables, storage areas • Learning centres, stations • Teacher's desk, storage • Drinking taps, sink, toilets, pencil sharpener
Small group activities	• Moving into and out of the group • Bringing materials to a group • Expected behaviour of students in the group • Anticipated behaviour of students not in the group
Whole class activities	• Participating • Listening to/responding to questions • Paying attention during the presentation • Handing out/collecting papers, books, supplies • Indicating when you understand • Asking a question
Seatwork	• Getting to work immediately • Talking among students • Getting help • Out-of-seat policy • Activities after completing work • Handing in work • Keeping your desk orderly • Placing name and headings on papers
Other procedures	• Beginning the day/class • Ending the day/class • Relief teachers • Office referrals • Student conduct during delays/interruption • Leaving/returning to the room • Handing out playground equipment • When visitors are in the classroom • Submitting homework
Consider the whole-school approach for the following	• Going to the office • Walking in the corridor during class time • Toilets • Being dismissed at end of class • Responding to emergencies • Entering the classroom • When you are late • When you are absent • Going to assemblies

(WONG & WONG, 2005; EVERTSON & EMMER, 2008).

Step 2: Write the steps to each procedure

These are the steps you will teach and practise. Make each step comply with the OMPUA guidelines (Observable, Measurable, Positively stated, Understandable and Always applicable).

Below are examples of and non-examples of procedures:

Example arrival routine (primary school)	Example session routine (secondary school)	Non-examples
• Hang up coat and backpack • Put notes and homework in the 'In' basket • Sharpen two pencils • Go to the desk and begin the warm-up activities listed on the board • If you finish early, read a book	• Complete warm-up activity with students • Review previous content • Provide instruction for new material • Provide opportunities for guided or independent practice • Participate in reflection / wrap up activities	• Assume students will automatically know your routines and procedures without instruction and feedback • Omit tasks • students are regularly expected to complete • Miss opportunities to provide (a) visual and auditory • reminders to students about your routines and procedures (e.g., signs, posters, pictures, hand signals, certain music playing, timers) and/or (b) feedback about student performance

Component skills

TIPS

- Consider the component skills needed. For example, the unpacking process requires the ability to zip and unzip a bag.
- Some students will need extra support and teaching to perform these tasks. For example, low vision learners may require adjustments to access warm-up activities written on the board.

Step 3: Teach classroom procedures directly

Procedures must be taught and practised to become routines. The best time to teach procedures is before they are needed. Teach at the beginning of the year and throughout year whenever a new procedure is needed.

When teaching a new skill, consider including the following elements:

Tell	Introduce the procedure and why it is important.
Show	Teacher or other student models the steps. Teachers may also demonstrate non-examples as appropriate.
Practise	Allow students to practise the procedure – preferably in the context where it is to be demonstrated.

Once the skill has been acquired, help students to make the behaviour into a habit:

Pre-correction/ reminding	Anticipate when the skill will be needed and remind students ahead of time.
Supervise	Move, scan and interact with students.
Feedback	Observe student performance and give positive specific feedback to students. Acknowledge students when they demonstrate the skills correctly.
Re-teach	Practise throughout the day and re-teach as needed.

TIPS

'Booster' lessons

- Booster lessons are taught periodically to help students maintain skills over time.
- Use the *Maintenance 'booster' lesson plan* in Appendix 2 to help your planning.

Step 4: Create visual reminders

Consider using posters with student-friendly language to provide both staff and students with a visual reminder of classroom procedures.

Lining up to exit the classroom

Lining up to exit the classroom

1 At the teacher's request, put materials away, clear your desk and organise your backpack.

2 When your row is called, push in your chair and move quietly, walking to the doorway.
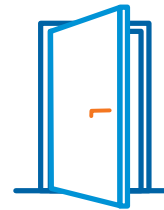
3 Line up facing the door, keeping one space between each person.

4 Keep hands and feet to self.

7 Listen to the teacher and wait for teacher's direction to depart.

Independent Seatwork

Independent Seatwork

1 When given the instruction to begin, get all materials out and begin your work.

2 Continue working until done.

3 Visit quietly with a neighbour if you need help; all conversation is related to work.

4 Raise your hand if you need help or to get permission to leave your seat.

5 When your work is finished, review and check.

6 Place finished work into the work box.

7 Quietly read or keep yourself occupied until others have finished and teacher transitions to next activity.

Step 5: Display procedures and routines alongside expected behaviour

Display expectations and rules prominently, so you can refer to them throughout the day as needed. You can also document the most important procedures and routines by adding them to the classroom matrix, as demonstrated in the example below:

School expectations	All routines	Entering and leaving the classroom	Small group instruction	Whole group instruction	Independent work time
Be responsible	• Follow classroom rules and procedures. • Complete tasks and assignments on time.	• Arrive on time • Have any necessary materials and equipment	• Stay on task and contribute to the group • Follow group norms and roles	• Pay attention and participate when appropriate. • Follow teacher directions the first time.	• Complete and submit work on time.
Respect others	• Listen actively when others are speaking. • Use polite language and gestures.	• Greet others politely and quietly. • Wait your turn and enter/exit quietly	• Use quiet voices to not disturb other groups.	• Raise your hand and wait to be called on. • Show appreciation for others' contributions.	• Work quietly and respect others' need for a quiet space.
Care for the environment	• Use resources wisely to avoid waste • Keep your area and the classroom clean	• Recycle any waste and pick up litter.	• Share materials and equipment and use them appropriately	• Dispose of rubbish and return property and equipment its place	• Use materials only as needed and avoid wasting resources. • Clean up your workspace after finishing tasks.

Classroom Routines and Procedures					
Classroom entry	Attention signal	Classroom interruptions	Asking for help	Classroom departure	Cleaning up
• Gather necessary materials • Find and take your seat • Begin warm up activity	• Teacher says " Class, class" • Students say "Yes, yes" • Put down equipment • Look at the teacher • Wait for instructions	• Stop and listen • Focus on teacher • Follow instructions	• Pause and asses • Use classroom resources • Ask a peer • Raise a hand • Prepare to explain • Listen and apply	• Return materials • Clear desk • Organise bag • Push in chair • Wait for directions	• Gather materials • Clear common areas • Dispose of waste properly • Check for forgotten items • Final inspection • Return to seats

Self-assessment:
Classroom Procedures and Routines

Self-assessment feature	Yes	No	In progress
I have identified essential classroom procedures, and all meet OMPUA.			
My classroom procedures are prominently posted.			
I directly teach classroom procedures.			
I review and practise classroom procedures regularly throughout the school year.			
Students receive high rates of specific positive feedback when they follow classroom procedures.			
At least 80% of my students can tell and demonstrate the classroom procedures.			

PRACTICE 3:

Encouraging expected classroom behaviour

Effective classrooms encourage expected behaviour

Effective classroom settings promote expected behaviour through:

- explicitly teaching expected behaviours, procedures, and routines
- preventative prompts or pre-correction
- explicit feedback on behaviour, including high rates of behaviour-specific praise
- tangible reinforcers and classroom acknowledgement systems

Feedback and praise

Specific, timely, and constructive feedback about academic learning is a well-established feature of good teaching practice (HATTIE, 2012). Feedback promotes learning and supports engagement and motivation. Feedback helps students to know what they are doing well, establish their next learning steps, and select the strategies that will help them to solve problems and achieve goals.

For most students, constructive feedback and acknowledgements serve as positive consequences. Positive consequences reinforce behaviour, making it more likely to occur in the future. However, decades of research have found that while students' academic behaviour often attracts positive teacher attention, appropriate social behaviour frequently goes unrecognised. Additionally, teachers tend to respond more frequently to inappropriate social behaviour than to appropriate behaviour.
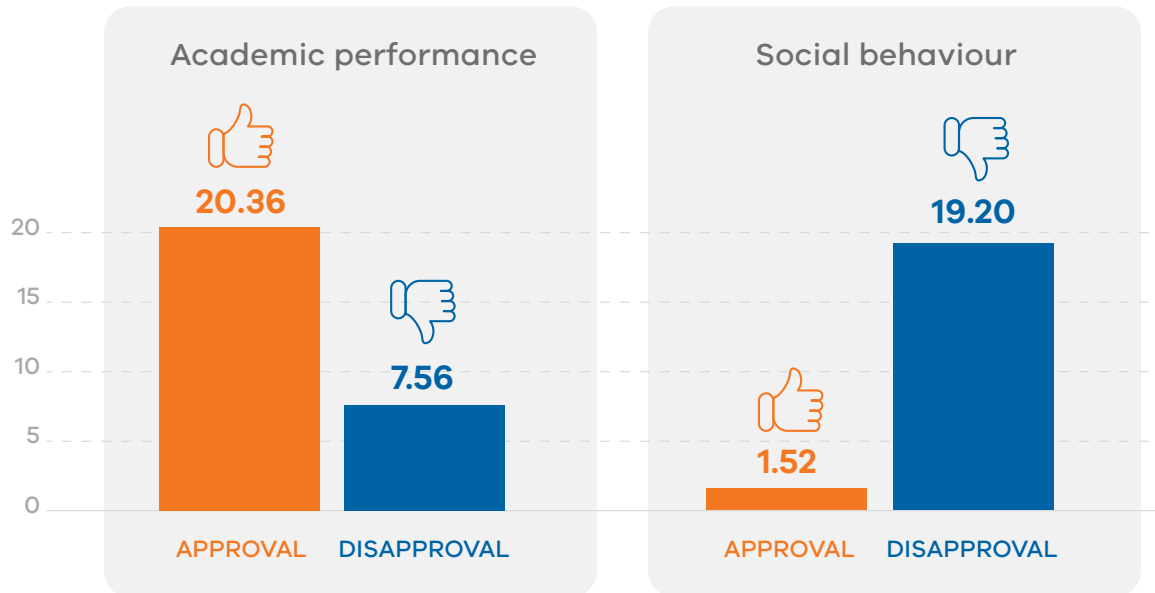
NUMBER OF TYPICAL TEACHER STATEMENTS PER HOUR (WHITE 1975)

The result of teachers giving more attention to misbehaviour is that they may be unknowingly maintaining or increasing the misbehaviour. Increasing the use of specific positive, feedback when students display expected behaviour helps to focus attention on the desired behaviour, provide performance feedback and strengthen teacher–student relationships (MAAG, 2001).

Getting started

Step 1: Teach behaviour expectations and routines

Ensure that you have taught the behaviour expectations and routines, providing sufficient time for all students to understand and practice the necessary skills.

Step 2: Preventative prompts/pre-correction

Anticipate times and situations where inappropriate behaviour is likely to occur. Remind students of the correct behaviour, procedures, or routines to increase the likelihood they will demonstrate the necessary skills.

TIPS

Pre-correction

- Pre-correction is a technique to prevent challenging behaviours from occurring. First, identify the context in which a problem behaviour is likely to occur. Then, provide prompts and reinforcement for expected social and academic behaviours.
- Inappropriate behaviour is more likely during transitions between activities and locations, or when undertaking unfamiliar tasks.

Step 3: Non-contingent positive attention

There are two types of positive attention; both positively impact school interactions:

- **Non-contingent attention** is attention we provide regardless of performance and includes such things as greetings, proximity, smiles, and conversations.
- **Contingent attention** is attention we provide based on student performance of an identified expectation or behaviour. Attention is contingent on the student performing a specific desirable behaviour. The most common example of this is providing specific positive feedback, also known as behaviour-specific praise.

When you regularly demonstrate interest and concern for your students, it tends to improve the quality of your relationship and increases the likelihood students will accept your positive and corrective feedback.

Examples of non-contingent positive attention

- Saying 'hello' students as they enter the classroom (verbal greeting, handshake, welcome gesture)
- Showing an interest students' progress during independent work periods
- Engaging in a brief conversation with a student
- Planning to greet or talk to a student soon after you have interacted with them about inappropriate behaviour, this shows what has happened is in the past
- Friendly gestures such as smiles, providing a "thumbs up" or "high-five"
- Friendly comments like "Cool new shoes!"

Step 4: Preferred adult behaviours

Research indicates that academic achievement and students' behaviour are influenced by the quality of teacher–student relationships (ALGOZZINE, ET AL., 2011). The diagram below outlines some adult behaviours that strengthen relationships:

Communicating privately, near the student	Listening	Eye contact	Pleasant voice tone	Smiles	Appropriate professional touch
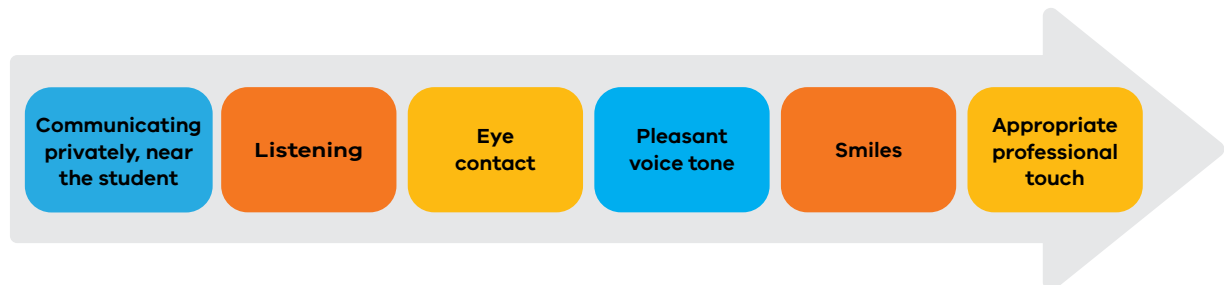
These behaviours share common traits: they express warmth, care, and concern for students while communicating respect. Such behaviours increase the likelihood that students will say they like school or their teacher, comply with requests, and enhance their learning experience (MISSOURI SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT, 2019).

Step 5: Specific positive feedback

Specific positive feedback is the process of recognising when students demonstrate the required skills or behaviour to complete difficult tasks. This is contingent attention – it is contingent on the demonstration of a skill. General praise or commonly used phrases such as 'good job', though important for a pleasant classroom, may not be enough to build and sustain expected behaviour.

Students benefit from clear, specific feedback on their use of appropriate school behaviours. To be effective, your feedback should include a clear description of the observed behaviour and a clear rationale for its value or importance.

Guidelines for providing specific positive feedback

- Be clear and specific by only describing the behaviour you have observed. In your description, use the language from the behaviour matrix and classroom procedures and routines. Provide a rationale or reason why the behaviour is important.
- Keep your words appropriate to the individual and the situation. For example, know your students well enough to be able to differentiate whether public or private recognition is more reinforcing for them.
- Be genuine by finding your own style to communicate sincere acknowledgment, especially when working with older students.

Students will also need corrective feedback. The key is to ensure that they don't have to wait until they make a mistake to receive feedback.

When to acknowledge:

- **Give feedback immediately** after the expected behaviour, rather than using it as a general motivator.
- **Give feedback frequently** during acquisition of the expected behaviour, that is, at a high enough rate to change or maintain behaviours.

What to acknowledge:

- **Expected behaviours** from your school-wide/class-wide expectations matrix and within identified school routines.

Example

- **Description:** 'When I said it was time to begin your assignment, you cleared off your desk, got your materials out immediately, and began working quickly.'
- **Rationale:** 'Getting started right away like that shows cooperation and will help you avoid having homework.'

TIPS

Not all students like public praise

- Public acknowledgement is not reinforcing for all students.
- Use your knowledge of student preferences to determine when it is appropriate to acknowledge them publicly or if the feedback would be better received discreetly.

TIPS

> 4:1 ratio

- When building positive classroom environments make sure expected behaviour receives much more attention (at a higher ratio) than inappropriate behaviour. We want students to experience mostly positive interactions across all school settings to support their sense of connection. Providing high rates of positive feedback aims to increase the student's ability to demonstrate expected behaviours.
- As a general guide, researchers recommend maintaining a ratio of at least 4:1 positive to negative/ corrective interactions. The exact ratio may differ for individual students and their learning histories. Some students may need less while others may need more.

(MISSOURI SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT, 2019)

Step 6: Consider implementing a classroom acknowledgment system

Consequences that strengthen behaviour are known as reinforcement. Tangible reinforcers are items that can be paired with specific positive feedback, for example, providing a ticket, card, or token. When used alongside specific positive feedback, tangible reinforcers can help motivate students to learn and practice valued behaviours.

While a ticket or tangible system for encouraging expected behaviour will cover many reinforcement needs, it is important to remember the following:

- Not all students are encouraged by the same things or in the same ways.
- As students are learning new skills, they benefit from immediate and frequent reinforcement.
- As students demonstrate mastery, they will respond to intermittent and long-term reinforcement to maintain their behavioural efforts.
- Many students seek social attention; others try to avoid it.
- Students who avoid social attention may be reinforced by solitary activities, privileges, or tangibles items.
- Many young students are motivated by adult attention while older students are typically more motivated by peer attention, activities, privileges or freedom.

Below are some examples of frequent, intermittent and occasional reinforcers.

Frequent	Intermittent	Occasional
• Specific positive feedback • Ticket/tangible item • Positive notes home	• Positive phone calls home • Post cards home • Special privileges • Extra time doing a preferred activity	• Special projects • Recognition from the principal • Student of the week

TIPS

Addressing staff concerns about tangible reinforcers

- Some staff may be concerned that offering a tangible item amounts to "bribing" students to behave. However, a bribe is offered to persuade an individual to act in one's favour, typically illegally or dishonestly, and is given before the expected behaviour occurs. In contrast, tangible reinforcers are offered as a consequence after the expected behaviour is demonstrated.
- Teachers sometimes worry that offering tangibles will negatively impacts students' internal motivation. Many studies, including Pierce and Cameron (2002), have shown no evidence of detrimental effects on intrinsic motivation.

Self-assessment:
Encouraging Expected Classroom Behaviour

Self-assessment feature	Yes	No	In progress
I give specific positive feedback that explicitly describes the behaviour and provides a rationale.			
I regularly monitor my rate of response to positive student behaviour, working toward the goal of >4:1.			
I provide a variety of social attention, activities and tangible reinforcers.			
Students receive high rates of specific positive feedback when they follow classroom procedures.			
My students know why they receive acknowledgement for expected behaviour.			
All my students state they have received social attention, activities or tangible acknowledgement for following the classroom expectations, rules and procedures.			
I know how my students like to receive feedback (i.e., public or private).			
I ask my students for feedback on the acknowledgments and reinforcers offered in my classroom to make sure they are motivating.			

PRACTICE 4:

Discouraging inappropriate classroom behaviour

Preventing and addressing inappropriate behaviour

When students make academic errors, it is important to respond by re-teaching, providing guided practice, and allowing them to practise with frequent monitoring. Similarly, viewing inappropriate behaviours as learning errors supports taking a supportive, educative approach. Effective responses to inappropriate behaviour in the classroom involve fair and consistent corrective actions. By explicitly teaching and providing constructive, specific feedback, students can learn and practise new behaviours. Discouraging inappropriate behaviour involves developing and using a range of techniques. Ideally, these should be established and agreed upon throughout the school. Teachers select and apply the least intrusive response necessary to prevent and address social behaviour errors.

Students should be expected to make social learning errors just as they make academic errors. When students do not demonstrate expected behaviours, it is usually due to one or both of the following reasons:

- They have yet to acquire the necessary skills to perform the expected behaviour (skill-related).
- Insufficient motivation to demonstrate the expected behaviour (performance-related).

Students may be less motivated to practice behaviours they find too difficult, irrelevant to their life experiences, or that do not help meet their needs. A lack of motivation may indicate a learner does not know the skill well enough to perform it effortlessly or does not experience enough benefit from performing it. For example, students may not be motivated to complete homework if there is no feedback or acknowledgement from the teacher.

Both issues can be addressed by teaching, providing opportunities to practice, and offering meaningful feedback.

Skill-related	Performance-related
Lack of skill or insufficient opportunity and practice of the expected behaviour	Student does not view the behaviour as relevant or important enough to invest the effort required

Getting started

Step 1: Define inappropriate behaviours

List the types of inappropriate behaviour that might occur in classrooms. Describe the behaviour in observable terms that leave little open to interpretation. This will help distinguish between major and minor inappropriate behaviours and establish a predictable continuum of effective responses. It is preferred to agree on these at a 'whole-school' level so that students learn to expect consistent responses from staff.

Distinguishing minor and major inappropriate behaviour

For a consistent response, staff must agree on which misbehaviours are minor and which are major. The severity of the behaviour will guide the level of response:

- **Minor inappropriate behaviours** are managed when and where they occur by the adult present at the time. Most commonly this is a teacher in the classroom, but it could also be, for example, a staff member working in the office or on the school grounds.

- **Major inappropriate behaviours** are managed beyond the context in which they occur, often by a senior leader within the school. Persistent minor inappropriate behaviour by the same student may require a major misbehaviour response, depending on the timespan in which the behaviours occur and their intensity. Major misbehaviour may require the student to be temporarily exited from the setting. Depending on school policy and severity, major behaviours may be managed by the principal, another senior manager, a senior teacher, a buddy teacher, or the teacher concerned (at a later time or outside the classroom). Major incidents should always be documented.

- **Critical incidents:** Certain major inappropriate behaviours may also be classified as critical incidents according to Department policy. For detailed guidance on these situations, please refer to the Department's Policy Advisory Library.

Below are some suggested definitions for major and minor inappropriate behaviours.

Suggested minor behaviour definitions

Behaviour	Definition
Inappropriate language	Communications, or use of words in an inappropriate way for the developmental age of the student (e.g., name calling, teasing).
Physical contact	Non-serious, but inappropriate physical contact (e.g., over-affectionate, patting, light tapping).
Non-compliance language	Mildly defiant/disrespectful behaviour. Low-intensity failure to respond to adult requests (e.g., yelling, 'No!' when asked to do something).
Mild disruption	Persistent talking while teacher is speaking. Loud voices or noises indoors.
Property misuse	Low-intensity damage of another student's equipment/possession or work in an inappropriate way (e.g., scribbling on another student's page, snapping another student's pencil through rough handling).
Dress code violation	Wearing clothing or shoes that do not fit within the school setting policies.
Late to class	Missing the beginning of class time.
Cheating/ Dishonesty	Acting dishonestly or unfairly to gain an advantage, especially in a game or examination.
Other	Other minor problem behaviour that cannot be categorised within the available definitions.

Suggested major behaviour definitions

Behaviour	Definition
Abusive language	Abusive language, inappropriate language or profanity. Communications that include swearing, name calling or use of words in an inappropriate way for the developmental age of the child.
Defiance	Disrespect or non-compliance; refusing to follow directions, talking back and/or socially rude interactions. In this case, the student refuses to follow directions after an initial request has been made directly to that student.
Non-compliance	Non-compliance or refusing to follow directions; talking back and/or socially rude interactions.
Disruption	Causing an interruption in a class or activity. This could include sustained loud talk, yelling or screaming; noise with materials; rough play, and/ or sustained out-of-seat behaviour (i.e., tantrums, excessive yelling or screaming).
Physical aggression	Actions involving serious physical contact where injury may occur (e.g., hitting, punching, hitting with an object, kicking, hair pulling, scratching).
Forgery or theft	Possessing, having passed on, or being responsible for removing someone else's property (i.e., taking someone else's personal belongings). This also includes identity theft.
Harassment	Harassing, teasing or taunting; delivering disrespectful messages (verbal or gestural) to another person that includes threats and intimidation, obscene gestures, pictures, or written notes. Disrespectful messages include negatives comments based on race, religion, gender, age, and/or national origin; sustained or intense verbal attacks based on ethnic origin, disabilities or other personal matters.
Property damage	Causing any form of injury or damage caused to property, due to negligence, or intentionally, by someone who is not the owner of the property.
Absconding	Trying to run away (either within or outside of school grounds); leaving suddenly; hiding from staff (fence, roof, gates), or other safety issues.
Technology Violation	Inappropriate use of an electronic device, such as texting in class, accessing social media, unauthorized games or unsafe material.
Unexcused partial absence	Missing whole lessons or part lessons.
Plagiarism/ Dishonesty	Intentionally using another person's work as their own, or engaging in unauthorised use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise.
Pattern of bullying	Repeated, unwanted interactions in which there is a power imbalance. Includes on-going teasing, repeated taunting, repeated name calling, leaving someone out, and spreading rumours.

Step 2: Techniques to address minor inappropriate behaviour

The PCMS provide guidance for direct and indirect techniques shown to discourage inappropriate behaviour. These approaches are described in more detail below.

Indirect strategies	Direct strategies
• Proximity • Signal or non-verbal cue • Ignore, attend, praise	• Re-direct • Re-teach • Corrective feedback • Provide choice • Student conference • Logical consequences

Indirect techniques

Indirect techniques do not involve explicitly discussing inappropriate behaviour. When staff actively supervise and identify potential problems early, these approaches can efficiently return students to the expected behaviour.

Technique	Explanation	Example
Proximity control	Strategic movement or placement can encourage expected behaviour.	When Ali is off task and talking, the teacher continues to teach the group while moving to stand next to him for a moment. Once Ali returns to the task, the teacher gives brief positive feedback to help maintain the expected behaviour.
Signal or non-verbal cue	There are various signals that communicate your expectations to students. These include eye contact, hand gestures, a handclap, clearing your throat, and so on. A simple non-verbal cue like this suggests you are aware of a student's inappropriate behaviour and prepared to intervene if it continues.	When Olivia begins to talk to her neighbour, the teacher glances in her direction and holds the look until she is quiet again and listening. The teacher then praises Olivia for her attention.
Ignore, attend, praise (proximity praise)	Praise an appropriately behaving student near a second student who is not. The praise indirectly reminds the misbehaving student of expectations (and reinforces the first student's behaviour). When the second student starts behaving appropriately, provide attention and praise.	Paulo is off task during independent work time. The teacher briefly ignores Paulo and specifically praises a nearby student: 'Good work, Tania. You're making great progress on your assignment'. When Paulo begins to get back to work, the teacher immediately praises him: 'Thanks, Paulo, for being on task.'

Direct techniques

Direct techniques involve providing students with corrective feedback, which consists of informative statements given after a behavioural error. These statements describe the observed behaviour and guide the student on what to do next time. While this technique is commonly used by teachers, there are ways to make redirection more effective. Corrective feedback should be:

- brief, concise, calm and respectful
- provided to individuals privately, or discreetly
- consistent with fair consequences
- instructional.

Technique	Explanation	Example
Prompt	Anticipating that one or more students may not follow expectations, prompt them about the expected behaviour. A prompt (or pre-correct) may also give you the opportunity to acknowledge students for following an expectation.	'Remember to move back to your desks safely and quietly.' (Soon after) 'Well done on returning to your desks without disturbing others.'
Re-direct	Provide a brief, clear restatement of the expected behaviour. This can link to a behaviour from the behaviour expectation matrix.	'Jason, please begin your writing assignment.' (Later) 'Nice job, Jason, you've begun your assignment.'
Re-teach	A re-teach builds on the re-direct above by reviewing the expected behaviour or routine more thoroughly. It briefly capitalises on the teachable moment. Describe the behaviour, unpack it, and give the student the immediate opportunity to practise by demonstrating it to you. Once the student behaves as expected, praise them.	'Leo, you need to stay on task. That means your desk is clear of everything but your book, you continue working until you're finished, and if you need help, raise your hand.' (Soon after) 'Excellent, Leo, it looks like you're ready to learn. Let me know if you need help.'
Provide choice	Providing choice can be used when re-directing or re-teaching have been unsuccessful. With this technique, direct the student to choose between the expected behaviour and a less preferred alternative. When options are paired in this way, students will often make the preferable choice. Pause after providing the choice, and when the student chooses wisely, give praise.	'Mai, you can get on task and work here with the group, or you can work by yourself in the quiet area.' (Soon after) 'Thanks, Mai, I'm glad to see you've chosen to stay working with your friends.'
Conversation	This provides a lengthier re-teaching or problem-solving opportunity when misbehaviour is more frequent or intense. Discuss the problem, teach the expected behaviour and explore the reasons for it, and make a plan to make sure the behaviour is used in future. A conversation with a student can include helping the student to practise the behaviour.	'Lauren, several times today I've had to remind you about being on task. When you're given an assignment, you need to work on it until it's finished. That way you'll learn what you need to and help your friends to learn too. Tell me what you'll do next time … OK, how can I help you to do that? … Let's practise it.'

Fair and logical consequences

Pairing consequences with teaching expected behaviour can enhance behaviour change. Effective consequences promote greater learning and often involve tasks or opportunities directly related to the inappropriate behaviour. Just as additional practice and activities support students struggling academically, similar strategies can help address behavioural issues. Some effective learning-based consequences include:

- role-play or practice
- reflecting on the behaviour and more appropriate alternatives
- arranging a situation for the student to demonstrate the skill
- making amends for behaviour that impacted others

Appropriate consequences maintain student dignity and invite the student to take responsibility for their behaviour and be a part of the solution.

It is not the size of the consequence that promotes behaviour change, but the certainty something will be done. For example, when students see all teachers consistently stopping and addressing the same infractions in the corridors, they are more likely to use the expected behaviour. However, increasingly harsh consequences may lead to antisocial behaviour. An overemphasis on punishment focuses the student's attention on the looming consequence, limiting their consideration of the impact of their behaviour on themselves or others (ALBERTO & TROUTMAN, 2012).

Consequences are most effective when tailored to fit the individual, the specific behaviour, the setting, the frequency, and the severity of the behaviour.

Step 3: Techniques to reduce and de-escalate major inappropriate behaviour

While it is always preferable to prevent inappropriate behaviour or address minor misbehaviour before it escalates, this is not always possible in practice. When such incidents do occur, it is crucial to manage them effectively to minimise their impact on individuals and the learning environment.

Well-planned responses to inappropriate behaviour can alleviate stress for teachers by providing clear guidelines for managing challenging situations. These responses also reassure the wider school community that problem behaviours are being handled based on sound evidence and are consistently applied across the school.

In addition to the above techniques, consider the following approaches for addressing instances of major inappropriate behaviour:

Technique	Explanation	Example
De-escalation	Largely preventative technique. It needs good knowledge of the student and the events that can trigger anxiety, anger, or other strong, hostile, emotional responses. De-escalation relies on an understanding of the optimum time to intervene, how to do this safely, and how to debrief with the student after the event (COLVIN & SUGAI, 1989).	Eric sometimes responds aggressively because of challenges in relating to others and accepting disappointment or perceived unfairness. Teachers who know Eric well are able to recognise the signs of imminent distress, anxiety, and aggression and intervene with prompts/reminders that help him to calm down. Eric is becoming better at using self-managing strategies, such as removing himself from the situation, taking deep breaths and counting to 10, and seeking help from a trusted adult or peer.
Conference	A conference takes place well after a behavioural incident, when the student is calm and more likely to respond positively. A conference aims to strengthen relationships, to support the student to make better future choices, and to plan strategies that will support ongoing positive behaviour. The conference should take place with an adult who is liked and trusted by the student. Involve members to work in partnership to support the student.	Fatima has been involved in a major incident in the playground involving verbal and physical abuse. While other staff have supported the victim of the abuse, the Assistant Principal has arranged to meet with Fatima and her mother to discuss the incident. During the discussion, she is reminded about playground behaviour expectations and the kinds of activities that are appropriate at lunchtime. The three participants also discuss other issues affecting Fatima's engagement and success at school and develop a plan to check in each day with the Assistant Principal.
Conference and consequence	It may be appropriate to apply a fair and logical consequence.	Inappropriate behaviour involving alcohol during a school sports trip has resulted in a conference with the Assistant Principal and Jon's mother. Concerns are shared, behaviour expectations reconfirmed, and plans for ongoing monitoring agreed. Jon agrees to miss the next football match, research the dangers of excessive drinking and write a letter of apology to his team, and coaches.

Step 4: Consider environmental triggers for inappropriate behaviour

As previously discussed, behaviour is functional, serving a purpose or addressing a need. A student's behaviour may be a way to obtain something desirable or to avoid something unpleasant.

Based on the likely function of the behaviour, consider adjusting environmental factors to either remove the trigger for the inappropriate behaviour or eliminate its rewarding consequences. For example, if the behaviour aims to gain teacher attention, using the 'ignore, attend, praise' technique can be effective. This approach reinforces expected behaviour while avoiding reinforcement of inappropriate behaviour through adult attention.

Alternatively, if the inappropriate behaviour is aimed at gaining peer attention, an effective response could include teaching the student appropriate ways to seek peer attention and positioning the student closer to the teacher, away from peers who reinforce the behaviour.
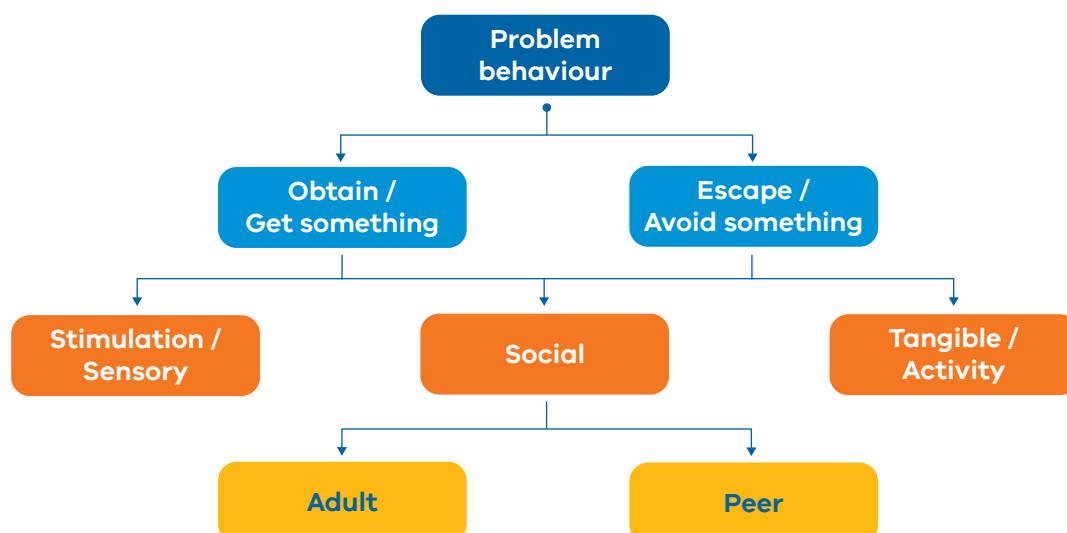
Self-assessment:
Discouraging Inappropriate Classroom Behaviour

Self-assessment feature	Yes	No	In progress
I respond to social errors in a respectful way that reduces the probability of escalating the behaviour and causing student embarrassment.			
I use a continuum, or 'menu', of strategies that focus on learning appropriate replacement behaviours.			
I use appropriate strategies to de-escalate or diffuse intense behaviour.			

PRACTICE 5:
Active supervision

What is active supervision?

Active supervision is the deliberate practice of moving, scanning and interacting with students while teaching.

The power of active supervision

Active supervision helps monitor learning and identify students who may have questions or need assistance. By closely monitoring students, teachers can ensure that expectations are being met.

Active supervision provides several benefits:

- Allows for immediate learning assistance
- Increases student engagement
- Reduces inappropriate behaviour and increases expected behaviour
- Provides insight into students' adherence to expectations
- Encourages those using expected behaviour
- Facilitates prompts, pre-corrections, and timely corrections of social/behavioural errors
- Helps pre-empt escalations
- Builds positive adult-student relationships

(MISSOURI SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT, 2019)

Getting started

Step 1: Practise the elements of Active Supervision

There are three main elements of active supervision:

Moving	Circulating among the students in the classroom
Scanning	Frequently and intentionally looking around at students in the classroom
Interacting	Providing contingent and non-contingent attention to students in the classroom

Moving

When circulating, keep moving and avoid spending too much time in one spot. Continuous movement and proximity to all students make your presence known and heighten their attention to tasks and expected behaviours. Move randomly and unpredictably so students are unsure when you will be nearby. Approach non-compliant students as needed and frequently check potential 'hot spot' areas (LAMPI ET AL., 2005).

Circulating allows you to be near students to show your interest in them, assist with learning tasks by answering questions, build relationships, and provide both positive and corrective feedback.

Moving – working with a group

Movement can be challenging when working with a small group or providing individual instruction while also needing to supervise other students. However, you can still incorporate ways to supervise the entire group periodically and unpredictably. For example, during small group writing instruction, assign a brief task to the students, then take a moment to move among the larger group before returning to the small group. This ensures that all students are being monitored and supported.

Scanning

Whether moving around the room, working with a small group or individual, or leading from the front, frequently and intentionally look around at the students. This visual scanning includes making eye contact. When circulating, visually sweep all areas of the room, paying attention to both the students nearby and those farther away.

Scanning – working with an individual

When working with an individual student, position to scan the entire room simultaneously, or stand up occasionally to look around the room before returning to the student.

Scanning – working with a group

When working with a group, look up and scan the room while also focusing on the group. This visual scanning helps identify instances of expected or inappropriate behaviour that need immediate response and helps identify students who may need assistance.

Interacting

Frequently interact with students while moving and scanning. A friendly, open, and helpful demeanour communicates care, trust, and respect, helping to build relationships. These interactions remain consistent whether teaching, encouraging, or addressing problem behaviour.

Step 2: Anticipate difficult times and plan

Many techniques that encourage expected behaviour can be intensified through active supervision to enhance expected behaviour and maximize student engagement. Active Supervision includes:

Reminders	Contingent and non-contingent attention
Frequent interactions can include reminders. Simply saying, "Please make sure your iPad is charged and ready for the morning," or "Remember to pause and wait for the prompt before you hold up your answer," will increase expected behaviour. Periodic prompts to the group will help keep students on track (LAMPI ET AL., 2005).	Frequent interactions should include both contingent and non-contingent attention. Non-contingent attention includes greetings, smiles, and conversations that provide time and attention unrelated to performance. After interacting with or assisting a student, take a moment to remind them of the expectations. This will increase the likelihood that they will demonstrate the expected behaviour or adjust their work accordingly.

Self-assessment: Active Supervision

Self-assessment feature	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
I have designed the classroom floor plan to allow for ease of movement for active supervision.			
I continually monitor all areas of the room by moving and interacting frequently and strategically.			
I continually monitor all areas of the room by scanning and interacting frequently and strategically.			
When designing a lesson, I consider student groupings, location and activity level.			
I provide positive contact, positive and corrective feedback while moving around the room.			

PRACTICE 6:
Opportunities to respond

What is an Opportunity to respond (OTR)?

An Opportunity to Respond (OTR) refers to teacher behaviours that prompt or solicit a student response, whether verbal, written, or gestural. OTRs involve instructional questions, statements, or gestures aimed at actively engaging students. They also address how often teachers provide requests requiring student participation (MILLER, 2009).

The use of OTRs includes strategies for:

- Presenting materials
- Asking questions
- Correcting students' answers as appropriate

Incorporating OTRs into classroom instruction enhances student engagement and learning.

Increasing Opportunities to respond

Maximizing Opportunities to respond (OTRs) in classroom instruction helps engage and actively involve students. When students spend more time actively engaged during instruction, they are more likely to learn and less likely to engage in off-task or inappropriate behaviour.

Optimal rates

Research into OTRs suggests they are most effective when:

- Each student has many opportunities to respond
- There is a high likelihood of success

The following guidelines (REINKE ET AL., 2013) are designed to maximise student engagement during instruction:

New material	Review material
During instruction, aim for four to six student responses per minute. Ensure students can respond accurately about 80% of the time.	When reviewing learned material, aim to increase the response rate to around eight to twelve responses per minute. Ensure students can respond accurately about 90% of the time.

When learning new material, learners should typically be able to respond correctly to about 80% of opportunities. When reviewing material, this increases to around 90%.

Getting started

Step 1: Plan a variety of verbal response opportunities

Verbal responses involve students orally answering questions, sharing ideas, reviewing or summarising prior learning, or repeating new concepts after the teacher.

There are two common types of verbal response strategies: individual and choral.

Individual responses

Individual response strategies involve the teacher inviting many students to answer instructional questions. These methods can include:

- Calling on students individually with increased frequency
- Using a round-robin approach for individual responses
- Pulling a random student's name out of a container

Choral responses

A choral response is when all students in the class respond in unison to a teacher's question. This technique is suitable for review, teaching new skills, drills, or lesson summaries. Choral responding can be effective at all levels—primary and secondary grades, for students with and without disabilities (MISSOURI SCHOOLWIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT, 2019). It is ideal for curriculum content that:

- Can be answered in short (one to three word) responses
- Has only a single correct answer to a question
- Can be presented in a fast-paced manner

To introduce choral responding, provide clear directions and model the procedure. Use a clear, consistent cue to signal to students when to respond to avoid confusion.

When using choral response, some students may offer incorrect answers; provide feedback to the group about the 'majority' response (the response called out or signalled by the largest number of students).

Step 2: Allow 'think time'

'Think time' is the pause between delivering a question and calling on a student or cueing a group response. It involves simply pausing after asking a question and counting for a set amount of time.

Some teachers may be concerned that students will lose focus or behave inappropriately if responses are not given quickly; however, the opposite is true. When only one or two seconds of think time is provided, only the quickest students remain engaged. Providing a longer think time of at least three seconds increases overall participation and decreases disruptions. Pausing for three to ten seconds, or more, after asking a question can reduce the need for redirects and minimise discipline problems (ROWE, 1974; 1987).

Step 3: Plan non-verbal responses

Non-verbal responses involve all students actively responding to the teacher's directions. These strategies offer the same benefits as verbal response strategies. Some of the most common approaches include:

Whiteboards

Give students personal whiteboards and erasable pens to write their responses to questions. These boards can be used for writing letters, words, and numbers, drawing symbols, or solving problems. When cued, students hold up their boards to display their answers. An eraser, sponge, or cloth can be used to clear the boards in preparation for the next question.

Response cards

Provide students with pre-printed cards with 'choice' words on each side. For example:

- 'Yes'/'No'.
- 'True'/'False'
- Odd'/'Even'
- Set of choices, (e.g., 'noun', 'pronoun', 'verb', 'adverb')

Signalling and movement responses

Use signalling or movement activities in addition to other non-verbal strategies. For example:

- thumbs up/thumbs down
- stand up/sit down
- move to four corners
- other creative signals.

It is critical to teach response procedures when using movement activities. Teach and practise the procedure in a game before transferring it to academic tasks.

Technology

There are many technology products and services that facilitate OTRs during instruction. Some of these tools also offer automated data collection, aiding in both pre and post-assessment.

Step 4: Collect baseline data

Calculate your current use of OTRs by asking a colleague to observe you for 10 minutes and keep a tally, or by recording a lesson and counting the OTRs yourself.

Step 5: Plan to increase OTRs

Decide how and when you will focus on increasing OTRs. Identify times during the week when inappropriate behaviour is likely. Plan how to collect baseline data and monitor progress. Reflect on how increasing OTRs impacts student behaviour and your teaching experience.

Self-assessment:
Opportunities to Respond

Self-assessment feature	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
I provide multiple opportunities to respond during instruction.			
I use a variety of strategies to increase student opportunities to respond.			
I use think time to increase student opportunity for thinking.			
I plan instructional questions and response methods before the lesson.			

PRACTICE 7:
Activity choice and sequence

How Activity choice and sequence support behaviour

The practices discussed so far involve increasing instructional time and student engagement. But what if students lack personal motivation? Activity sequencing and providing choice help to engage students who have the knowledge and skills to do their work but lack sufficient motivation.

Activity sequencing	Intentionally plan instructional tasks, activities, or requests that promote learning and encourage expected behaviour. Activity sequencing involves considering and altering the order of instructional tasks, activities, or requests.
Student choice	Intentionally plan to provide options for students, such as the method of response, choice of tools and supplies, working independently or with peers, order of tasks, or location for working.

For students who can complete the assigned instructional task but choose not to, activity sequencing and choice techniques may be helpful. Considering the impact of students' willingness to engage with tasks allows us to better engage them in their learning and adjust the classroom environment to improve motivation. Researchers have found that students are more likely to engage with tasks and less likely to misbehave when they perceive the assignments as doable and are given choices about their learning (KERN & CLEMENS, 2007; STORMONT ET AL., 2012).

Activity sequencing and choice are effective tools to:

- Increase student engagement with learning and task completion
- Decrease disruptive behaviour
- Improve student perceptions of assignments previously considered too difficult
- Enhance adult-student relationships

Student motivation

According to self-determination theory, three needs must be fulfilled for individuals to be internally motivated: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (DECI & RYAN, 1985).

Competence	Succeeding in what is to be done, belief in your ability to succeed, self-efficacy.
Relatedness	Connecting with others; belonging.
Autonomy	Being in control of your life; self-determination.

When students have opportunities to experience success, gain confidence, make choices, and have some autonomy in their learning, they are more likely to engage.

Techniques for sequencing

It's important to consider how daily activities are sequenced. Various methods can be used to arrange content to promote learning and appropriate behaviour. Task interspersal and behaviour momentum are two effective strategies for changing the order of academic tasks. Both techniques help increase student willingness to engage with tasks and improve task engagement.

Task interspersal	Task interspersal is a simple technique that involves "breaking up" tasks that have already been mastered with new and/or more challenging material.
Behaviour momentum	Behaviour momentum involves using the momentum gained from completing easier tasks or requests to build the energy and motivation needed to tackle more difficult activities.

Getting started

Step 1: Intersperse tasks strategically

For some students, presenting difficult tasks back-to-back often leads to frustration, failure, and problem behaviour. While varying the sequence of tasks may not be essential for all students, it can be beneficial for those at risk for learning or behaviour concerns (HULAC & BENSON, 2011).

Task interspersal can be used both when preparing materials for all students and as an individual intervention for a student experiencing frustration and poor task completion. This technique also:

- Allows for the review of previously learned content while reducing frustration
- Promotes greater confidence and motivation to start and finish activities
- Provides reinforcement for students, encouraging sustained work and task completion
- Positively impacts the overall perception of the assignment

TIPS

Task interspersal

- Only use tasks for interspersing once the student has truly mastered them.
- Most students prefer assignments with a mix of mastered tasks and current skill tasks.
- Most students prefer assignments where up to 30% of items are new.
- Intersperse mastered items in a 1:3 ratio with more challenging or new items.
- Slowly reduce the mastered items as fluency builds on the new content.
- Eventually, remove the already mastered items

(LOGAN & SKINNER, 1998).

Step 2: Utilise behaviour momentum

This technique can be used with individual students or the entire class and can be integrated into classroom schedules. Many teachers start by reviewing the previous day's work or assigning a simple task before moving on to more difficult tasks. Using behaviour momentum increases the likelihood that the more challenging tasks will be completed.

TIPS

Behaviour momentum

- Identify behaviours that have a higher likelihood of completion.
- Precede your more difficult request by giving three or more simple requests that the student can complete easily.
- After successfully completing each request, reinforce the student. This builds momentum and increases the likelihood that the more difficult task will be attempted and completed.
- Present the more challenging task and reinforce the student for attempting and completing it.
- Gradually reduce the number of easier requests over time.

(SCOTT, ET AL., 2012)

Step 3: Increase student choice

Student choice uses pre-planned methods to give students guided options in their learning. It can be used selectively with the entire class or with individuals. This technique is especially beneficial for students at risk of behavioural or academic challenges, as it allows them to choose the sequence of their day's work or which unfinished tasks to complete. Student choice helps with compliance, task completion, and fosters positive feelings towards school and the teacher. When used class-wide, it can have a positive effect on the entire group (KERN ET AL., 1998).type of activity or task mode (e.g., written, oral or project)

- Materials used to complete an assignment
- Order or sequence in which tasks are completed
- Method of completing the work (e.g., work in a group, pairs, or individually)
- Location for working
- Activity to do when the task is completed

TIPS

Offering choice

- Choice can be used class-wide, with groups or with individual students.
- Create a menu of choices you would be willing to provide to students.
- Decide what types of choice are appropriate and where they fit best in the lesson.
- Provide choices as planned, while teaching the lesson.
- Ask for student feedback and input.

Self-assessment:
Activity Choice and Sequence

Self-assessment feature	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
I plan lessons incorporating student choices in a variety of ways (order, materials, partners, location, type of task).			
When I plan lessons, I consider the pace and sequencing that are appropriate, practical and doable to promote each student's success.			
I sequence tasks by interspersing easy/brief tasks among longer or more difficult tasks.			

PRACTICE 8:
Task difficulty

Optimising Task Difficulty

Optimising task difficulty can increase motivation and academic success for students while reducing the likelihood of inappropriate behaviour. To select instructional materials or tasks at the appropriate level of difficulty, consider three aspects: the student, the materials, and the task.

Tasks can often be adjusted in three ways:

1. Length of the task or the time frame allotted
2. Mode of input or response
3. Extent of instruction or practice provided

A mismatch between a task and a student's current skill level can trigger inappropriate behaviour. Research shows that when work is too difficult or requires significant use of weak or developing skills, it often results in disengagement and increased problem behaviour (SCOTT ET AL., 2012). By adjusting task difficulty, more students are likely to attempt tasks and experience success.

Getting started

Step 1: Adjust task length or time

Sometimes, learning tasks match a student's ability, but the assignment length exceeds their motivation or ability to concentrate. By decreasing the overall task length and offering periodic breaks, problem behaviour may be reduced (DUNLAP ET AL., 1991). The table below outlines some options to help modify task length and time.

Time	Length
• Have shorter work periods with other tasks between • Provide physical breaks between challenging tasks • Provide alternative times for the work to be completed • Extend the due date	• Shorten the assignment, allowing the student to demonstrate mastery with fewer items • Highlight, in colour, the tasks/problems the student is to complete • Break the project into shorter tasks; put fewer tasks/problems on a page • Have the student cover all items except the one they are working on at the time

Step 2: Adjust response mode

Sometimes, the response mode required to complete a task can trigger inappropriate behaviour. For example, reading or fine motor challenges can make reading or writing tasks seem overwhelming. Providing an alternative mode (e.g., computer, voice memo, or paired student reading) can remove these triggers, allowing the student to experience success and develop skills. The table below outlines some options to help modify response modes.

Writing	Reading
• Provide a choice between written and oral answers • Let the student dictate responses to the teacher, an assistant or a peer • Create guided notes to minimise writing	• Include illustrations on worksheets that depict how to complete tasks • Highlight or underline important words in instructions and texts • Assign a partner to share the reading requirements and help the student with unfamiliar words

Step 3: Increase instruction and practise

Some students may use inappropriate behaviour to avoid tasks they perceive as too difficult. While adjusting tasks and instruction may be necessary, it is important to address the underlying skill requirements. This often involves providing opportunities for extra instruction and practice.

The most appropriate way to provide extra instruction and practice varies depending on the student's current stage of skill development. Different approaches may be suitable as students progress from skill acquisition to fluency building, and then to mastery or generalisation.

TIPS

Increasing instruction or practice

Acquisition

- Use different instructional strategies; represent concepts in different ways.
- Arrange extra, brief instructional sessions using modelling, guided practice and independent practice.

Fluency building

- Arrange for a peer tutor to help with guided opportunities to practise.
- Have students work with partners (e.g., the partner displays flash cards to increase reading fluency).

Mastery/Generalisation

- Use meaningful real-life examples to practise and apply skills.
- Look for opportunities to work with the student to identify real-life examples; this can be an effective way to connect with the student and validate their thoughts.

Self-assessment:
Task Difficulty

Self-assessment feature	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
I intentionally plan lessons to include strategies that address task difficulty and align with student(s) ability and needs: • time expectations or assignment length • mode of responding • increased instruction, guided practice, independent practice.			
When I plan lessons, I consider the pace and sequencing that are appropriate, practical and doable to promote each student's success.			

Implementing Positive Classroom Management Strategies at your school?

Positive Classroom Management Strategies (PCMS) have been found to enhance desirable school behaviour while reducing problem behaviour. These strategies can effectively support your school in achieving improvement goals across various areas.

Examples include:

- Effective teaching practices for cognitive engagement
- Improved teacher-student relations
- Increased school engagement
- Enhanced school safety

Getting started

Considerations for implementing PCMS

PCMS are most effective when implemented consistently throughout the school, creating a greater sense of predictability for students. To establish a common set of practices, consider the following questions:

- Will all the practices be adopted?
- What is the current practice at our school? What are our relative strengths and weaknesses? What data can be used to confirm this?

- Which staff can trial or pilot the practices ahead of time?
- What professional learning will staff experience? How? When?
- How and when will PCMS be included in curriculum planning?
- How will implementation of the practices be monitored?
- How will we identify staff that need extra assistance, and how will that assistance be provided?

Implementing these strategies school-wide ensures consistency and maximizes their effectiveness in improving student behaviour and achieving school improvement goals.

Translating new learning to classroom practice

Based on the research conducted by Joyce & Showers (2002), it is evident that training alone is insufficient for effectively transferring new learning into routine classroom practices.

Training component	OUTCOMES (% of participants who: demonstrate knowledge, demonstrate new skills in the training setting, and use new skills in the classroom)		
	Demonstrate knowledge	Demonstrate new skills in training	Use new skills in classroom
Theory and discussion	10	5	0
Plus, demonstration in training	30	20	0
Plus, practice and feedback in training	60	60	5
Plus, coaching in the classroom	95	95	95

The table above demonstrates that training involving only theory and discussion leads to a small percentage of participants acquiring new knowledge, with no transfer of this learning into classroom skills.

Adding demonstration, practice, and feedback to the training increases the number of participants who acquire knowledge, but still only a small proportion may demonstrate new skills in the classroom.

However, when classroom coaching is included alongside these training components, the demonstration of knowledge and skills in the classroom can increase to 95% of the participants.

3-minute self-reflection

Reflect on whether coaching is an integral part of your school's professional development culture. Is it common practice for staff to seek and receive coaching regularly?

Develop an action plan

If your school intends to implement PCMS developing an action plan is advisable.

An action plan can help you identify:

- Goals
- Steps needed
- Timings
- Responsible parties

The section below provides guiding questions to help you and your team develop an action plan for implementing the PCMS.

Use the *Classroom Assessment Template* in Appendix 3 to assist with this process.

Stage	Suggested steps	Action required	Who and when	Status
Evaluate and diagnose	**REVIEW OUTCOME DATA TO ASSESS STUDENT BEHAVIOUR** Do most students at the school demonstrate expected behaviours? Consider the following options: • Track the frequency and types of behaviour incidents reported over a specific period. • Proportion of Students Engaged in Inappropriate Behaviour. • Calculate the percentage of students involved in inappropriate behaviours compared to the total student population. • Student Attitude to School Responses.			
	ASSESS CURRENT PRACTICE Consider the following approaches to assess current staff practice. • **Teacher Self-Report:** Collect self-assessments and reflections from teachers regarding their confidence and consistency in applying PCMS. • **Direct Observation by Leadership Team:** Conduct classroom observations by members of the leadership team to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of PCMS. • **Peer Observation:** Implement a peer observation system where teachers observe and provide feedback to each other on the use of PCMS. • **Other Methods:** Utilise additional methods such as student feedback, analysis of student work, or video recordings of lessons for review and assessment.			

Stage	Suggested steps	Action required	Who and when	Status
Prioritise and set goals	**DECISION TO IMPLEMENT** Analyse current student outcomes and staff practices to identify areas for improvement. Consider whether PCMS address these needs effectively.			
	GOAL SETTING Define clear and specific objectives for PCMS implementation. Examples might include improved student engagement, enhanced academic performance, or better classroom behaviour management.			
Develop and Plan	**CORE TEAM** Identify a core team to drive implementation. Required Skills: Leadership, effective communication, collaboration, data analysis, problem-solving, and coaching.			
	PILOTING Consider piloting practices with members of the core team or volunteers. Capture learnings.			

Stage	Suggested steps	Action required	Who and when	Status

Implement and monitor	**INTRODUCE PRACTICES**
	
	Decide how and when each practice will be explored. Consider how professional learning can incorporate the elements described by Joyce & Showers (2002):
	
	• **Theory and Discussion:** Introduce the underlying principles and concepts of each practice through workshops, seminars, or professional development sessions.
	
	• **Demonstration in Training:** Provide opportunities for teachers to observe the new practices being implemented effectively, either through live demonstrations or video examples.
	
	• **Practice and Feedback in Training:** Allow teachers to engage in hands-on application of the new practices during training sessions, followed by constructive feedback from trainers or peers.
	
	• **Coaching in the Classroom or Alternatives:** Implement ongoing support and guidance to help teachers refine and sustain new practices. Alternatives to classroom coaching may include:
	
	  • **Practices and Self-Monitoring:** Encourage teachers to regularly practice new techniques and self-monitor their progress through reflective journals or video recordings.
	
	  • **Peer Coaching:** Foster a collaborative environment where teachers can coach each other, providing mutual support and feedback.			

Stage	Suggested steps	Action required	Who and when	Status
Implement and monitor (continued)	**DETERMINE IMPLEMENTATION ACCURACY** Once the practices have been introduced and staff have had the opportunity to practice them, determine the extent to which they are being accurately implemented. Consider the following options: • **Teacher Self-Report:** Encourage teachers to reflect on their implementation through surveys, journals, or self-assessment forms. • **Direct Observation by Leadership Team:** Have members of the leadership team conduct classroom observations or walkthroughs to assess the fidelity of practice implementation. • **Peer Observation:** Implement a system where teachers observe each other's classrooms, providing feedback and support. • **Other Methods:** Explore additional methods such as student feedback, analysis of student work, or the use of video recordings for review.			
	MEASURE OUTCOMES Measure student outcomes against the goals you set at the beginning of the implementation process. This can include academic performance, engagement levels, or other relevant metrics.			

APPENDIX 1:
Behaviour skills acquisition lesson template

Expectation/Rule	
SPECIFIC BEHAVIOUR(S) AND PROCEDURES List behaviour and steps to complete	
CONTEXT Identify the location(s) where behaviour is expected	
Teaching all students	
TELL Introduce the behaviour and why it is important	
SHOW Demonstrate or model the behaviour and non-examples	
PRACTICE Give students opportunities to role-play the behaviour across all relevant settings	
Generalisation	
PRE-CORRECT/REMIND Anticipate and give students a reminder	
SUPERVISE Move, scan, and interact with students	
FEEDBACK Observe student performance and give positive specific feedback to students	
RE-TEACH Practise throughout the day	

APPENDIX 2:

Maintenance 'booster' lesson plan

Expectation	
SPECIFIC BEHAVIOUR(S) AND PROCEDURES List behaviour and steps to complete	
CONTEXT Identify the locations(s) where behaviour is expected	
Teaching all students	
PRE-CORRECT/REMIND Anticipate and give students a reminder	
SUPERVISE Move, scan, and interact with students	
FEEDBACK Observe student performance and give positive, specific feedback	
RE-TEACH Practise throughout the day	

APPENDIX 3:
PCBS Classroom assessment

Assessment feature	In place	Partially in place	Not in place
Classroom rules are aligned with school-wide expectations, posted, and referred to regularly.			
Classroom procedures and routines are created, posted, taught, and referred to regularly.			
Positive specific performance feedback is provided using a variety of strategies and at a ratio of 4:1.			
A variety of strategies (re-direct, re-teach, provide choice, and conference with the student) are used consistently, immediately, respectfully in tone and demeanour in response to inappropriate behaviour.			
Supervision (scanning, moving and interacting) is consistently implemented.			
A variety of strategies to increase students' opportunities to respond (e.g., turn to talk, guided notes, response cards, etc.) are used.			
Activity sequencing and choice are offered in a variety of ways.			
A variety of strategies are used to address difficult academic tasks and to support academic success.			

Additional resources

Additional classroom management resources are available from the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO). These can be found at: Classroom management resources: User guide.

The AERO resources provide additional guidance on many skills and concepts outlined in this guide. The table below summarises connections relevant to each PCMS practice:

Increase instructional time	AERO Classroom Management Resources
Classroom Behaviour Expectations and Rules	Setting behaviour expectations for completing learning tasks High expectations for student behaviour Establishing and maintaining rules
Classroom Procedures and Routines	Teaching routines Establishing and maintaining an entrance routine Establishing and maintaining an exit routine Gaining all students' attention Students gaining teacher attention Students moving through the school
Encouraging Expected Classroom Behaviour	Positive student-teacher relationships Building positive connections with all students Acknowledgement and praise
Discouraging Inappropriate Behaviour	Responding to disengaged and disruptive behaviours Non-verbal correction

Increase Classroom Engagement	AERO Classroom Management Resources
Active supervision	Circulation Deliberate pause Scanning your class
Opportunities to respond	Deliberate pause
Activity sequence and choice	N/A
Task difficulty	N/A

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