

Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

Provide corrective feedback



When providing corrective feedback, respond promptly when the first signs of defiance becomes evident, by speaking calmly, in a neutral tone, providing respectful reminders or redirections.

Provide reminders in a consistent way

1. Say the student's name and wait until they are looking at you.
2. Be brief.
3. Speak calmly and matter-of-factly.
4. Use short, direct statements.
5. Use clarifying statements, say what not to do and then what to do.
6. Avoid questions, unless you will accept any answer.
7. Keep your body language neutral.
8. Allow a brief interval for the student to stop the behaviour and follow the direction specified.
9. If the student complies, praise the student specifically referring to the improved behaviour.
10. If the student does not comply or complains, calmly and firmly repeat the request.
11. If the student complies, praise the student specifically referring to the improved behaviour.
12. If the student escalates, remain calm, limit set and support the student to problem solve; '(student name) I can see that you are feeling really frustrated right now, but it is not ok to (behaviour). Perhaps you need some space, and then we can talk about what's happened'.

Avoid negotiating in the moment

Negotiating during an incident frequently invites further testing, once a decision, redirection, or consequence has been provided to the student, all adults should remain firm in the decision.

Offer a choice between one of two consequences

Rather than giving a "do this" order allow the student to hold on to their sense of significance and dignity. Teach the student and class that the student is still being held accountable for their behaviour. Use this when a student is reluctant to do something or cannot make a decision.

De-escalate defiance

By providing the student an opportunity and support to re-appraise the situation that caused them offense. Explain why a certain decision was made or why somebody took a course of action. If this 'mitigating information' is of high quality it can cue a re-appraisal process in the student and potentially change aggressive behaviour.

Avoid power struggles

If a teacher recognises that they have already entered a power struggle, they should take a deep breath and disengage, informing the student (and class if watching) that you are finished talking for now and will address the issue with the student at a later time (once the student has de-escalated).

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Be consistent

By providing consistency in these approaches the student will learn to regulate themselves and reduce their need to control the situation and express their emotion through escalated behaviour.

If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>