

**The Ideal Classroom Community Member:
Establishing Expectations for Classroom Behavior**

“Collaborative rule-making promotes mutual respect, cooperation, self-discipline and personal responsibility while also providing the structure and security students need.”

David Schimmel, Collaborative Rule-Making and Citizenship Education

Overview

In order to create a safe and effective classroom community, firm expectations must be established that are followed and reinforced each day. In this activity, the foundation for a respectful classroom community will be set as students are introduced to predetermined classroom expectations and are given the opportunity to explore and add to them. Through the creation of an “ideal classroom community member” brainstorm, students will feel more responsibility to follow expectations they themselves have shared in detailing. The process of establishing expectations for classroom behavior must begin on the first day of school, with revisiting and reflection of such throughout the first weeks of school and beyond.

Grades

Any

Activity Type

Whole class

Materials

- Predetermined expectations should be clearly written out and prominently displayed in the classroom prior to student arrival for the first day of classes (example expectations can be found under the “Teacher Preparation” section below.)
- Chart paper or bulletin board paper with human outline drawn on it (example human outline attached)
- Markers
- Completed “Ideal Classmate” brainstorm example, attached
- Self-Reflection worksheet, attached (may need to be altered for younger students)

Duration

30+ minutes, with additional time for review and practice during the following two weeks (and beyond) of class meetings

Teacher Preparation

- This activity should be started the first time class meets.
- Prior to student arrival, draw an outline of a body on a large piece of bulletin board paper or chart paper (example outline shape attached.)
- Post a few general, predetermined expectations in a visible spot in the classroom. Teachers may want to creatively title the expectations based on the course. For example: “A Formula for

Working Together” (Math); “The Elements of Our Classroom Community” (Science); “Readers’ and Writers’ Rules of Order” (Language Arts); “Our Community Expectations” (any); School “RULES!” (any); etc. Leave wall space underneath for adding student input, signatures, illustrations, etc.

- This activity will refer to use of the following “Our Community Expectations”. Teachers should feel free to tailor or revise expectations to meet their own needs and preferences:

Remember to listen when others are speaking.
Everyone has the right to their own opinion.
Strive to form a safe, caring classroom community.
Participate, come to class prepared and have fun!
Encourage one another and be a positive leader.
Challenge yourself and try new things.
Take responsibility for your actions.

Procedure

Establishing General Positive Expectations

1. Have students respond to the following question in writing:
 - How do you want to be treated in this classroom, by the teacher and by fellow classmates?
2. Next, tell students that it is very important to you that each of them not only learn a lot throughout the year, but also that they have a positive experience while in your class. Introduce the concept and importance of rules/expectations by speaking firmly and professionally, but from the heart. For example, a teacher might say something like:

I am here to ensure that each of you is not only successful academically in this class, but that you also feel welcome and safe. Our classroom will be a place where you not only learn about <insert subject>, but you will also learn and practice the mature life skills –such as respect, tolerance, and courtesy - that you will need when beginning your college studies and/or your career. I want each of you to know that this classroom community is and will always be a safe place, where you can enter and know that you will not be physically hurt, teased, bullied, or threatened. You will be valued and heard in this classroom and together we will not let anyone interfere with our learning.

I am incredibly excited to be teaching you all this year and I can’t wait to begin the exciting lessons and activities I have planned for you. But first, so that we are all on the same page, and to ensure we have a great year, I want to spend some time today talking about what I expect of you in this classroom. I also want to hear from you in terms of what you expect - from each other, as well as me as the teacher. I have a general set of Community Expectations that you see posted on the wall here, as well as on the syllabus I have given each of you. You’ll see that the foundation of our Community Expectations is the word RESPECT. We are going to spend some time going over each expectation, discussing exactly what is meant by each, and you will also have the opportunity to add to these expectations in a moment.

Let’s first begin by reading through the expectations. Could I have a volunteer to read “R”?

3. Have a different volunteer read each letter. (Compliment the students who volunteer; since it’s the first day of class, it can be challenging to overcome nerves and speak up.)

Brainstorming an Ideal Classroom Community Member

4. Next, tell students you want to hear their input regarding the Community Expectations as well, since it's important everyone is on the same page and in agreement. Prior to class, on a piece of chart paper or bulletin board paper, draw the outline of a body. Tell students they are going to envision the "ideal classmate" by considering how they want to be treated and how they want to feel while in class. Tell students to think about this and then raise their hands to provide their thoughts. (Some of these responses may be based on thoughts from their opening writing assignment.) As students share, write down the positive behaviors and emotions they note on the inside of the human shape to create the "ideal classroom community member." Ensure students state their answers in positives. For example, if a student says, "I hate it when people pick on me," encourage him/her to rephrase that to say what they prefer instead: "I want to be respected and feel safe from bullying." Continue to ask questions to facilitate further thinking and details:
- How do you think you should treat others?
 - What makes you have a positive experience in a class? What makes you enjoy a subject?
 - How do you want to feel when you are here?
 - When someone visits our classroom, what should they see, hear, feel, etc.?

When appropriate, ask follow-up questions based on a student's response to glean additional, specific details. For example, if a student says they want to feel welcome, ask them what that means, looks like, sounds like, etc., noting all of this within the human shape. Take a few moments throughout this process to step back and have students examine what they have mentioned thus far. Congratulate them on their work and offer reinforcing comments: "I think these are great ideas. I am glad that you will all encompass these attributes and behaviors."

What Can We Do Without?

5. Once there are extensive positive behaviors, traits, emotions, etc. written on the inside of the shape, tell students that you would like them to switch their thinking and consider all of the behaviors, attitudes, traits, emotions, etc. that are not inclusive of being an ideal classmate. As students offer these thoughts, write them on the outside of the human outline, pointing out that as a class they are agreeing to "keep that behavior or attitude out of the classroom." Again, continue to ask questions that spur student thinking:
- What hurts your feelings or makes you angry?
 - What types of behavior disrupt your learning?
 - What can make you have a bad day in school?
 - What other attitudes, behaviors, actions, etc. do we want to agree to "leave outside" our classroom?
6. As students offer their thoughts, write negative behaviors, attitudes, actions, etc. on the outside of the shape, reminding students that they are agreeing to do away with that behavior, action, etc. If there are areas that is appears students have left out, teachers can also ask questions to prompt students to focus on the missing area (i.e., "I don't see anything about gossiping. How do you feel about gossip?" Teachers should also feel free to add a few of their own thoughts, since teachers are also part of the classroom community. However, ensure that as the teacher, you do NOT dominate this process. Teachers should also state explicitly that racist, sexist, and homophobic comments will not be tolerated.

Teacher Note: Student participation may be light on the first day, since many students may still be feeling nervous. Teachers may want to provide students with the attached handout of a human shape and instruct students to spend some time first individually writing down their thoughts to spur thinking. After a few minutes of individual completion of the human outline, students can offer their thoughts to the whole class for compilation on a larger outline posted in front of the class.

Connections

7. Once student responses have lessened, thank the class for sharing their wonderful thoughts. Lead students in a culminating discussion in which you illustrate the connections between what they have said and what is noted under Community Expectations. Also discuss why expectations are important and necessary to ensure a successful class experience. This will begin the foundations of student ownership of the classroom rules. Ask:
 - Does it seem like what you have noted inside of our ideal classmate and what is noted under Community Expectations are in agreement?
 - Take a few minutes to pull out particular comments students offered and illustrate how they fit under the Community Expectations. For example, if a student noted that they should stand up for one another, or be mindful of personal space, point out how that fits right under “Strive to form a safe, caring classroom community.”
 - Why is it important that we spend time creating and agreeing to follow expectations such as the ones you have noted here on our community member? What’s in it for you?
 - Will these expectations help us work together? Do our best work? Stay positive and safe? How so?
 - Do you think similar things will be expected of you as a mature college student? As a successful employee?
 - Discuss how the expectations discussed today are not only important for success as a student, but also in life. Point out to students how college students need to be able to actively listen and take responsibility for their actions; doctors have to know how to relate to patients and be very respectful; professional basket ball players must be able to cooperate; etc. Share with students that consistently Census Bureau surveys of hiring, training, and management practices in American business note that the two qualities employers most value are **attitude** and **communication skills**. Tell your students that you know that they are another year older - they have progressed to a very important grade this year – and their following these expectations is part of being mature, responsible students who are preparing for a successful high school and college career.
 - Imagine if we had no expectations or rules for this classroom. What might this classroom be like in this case? Would we be able to sufficiently prepare for promotion to the next grade, to high school, to college, etc.?
8. Let students know that they will have a chance throughout the next days to continue adding to their “ideal classmate” as they think of additional behaviors to add within the idea classmate, or to “throw out.”

9. At the very end of class, ensure time for review/reflection on this part of the day's activities. For example, ask students: "What did we do today? Why did we do it?" This will reinforce the expectations and their importance.
10. Teachers may want to give a homework assignment that allows students to reflect on the expectations and their ability to follow them. See the attached "Self Reflection Sheet" as an option.

Additional Activities

- Teachers should revisit, review, and allow students to reflect upon classroom expectations each day though out the first weeks of school.
 - Continue to allow students to add to their classroom community member brainstorm throughout the first week of school. At the end of the first week, when students seem to have exhausted things to add, teachers may want to have each student sign their names to the brainstorm, signifying agreement with what they have determined. (Teachers can alternatively type up student thoughts and have the class sign the typed page.) Keep this posted by the Community Expectations as a visual reminder of the entire class' contributions to determining expectations and agreement to follow them.
 - Throughout the first two weeks of school, at the very least, call students' attention to the posted expectations (i.e. "Our Classroom Community Expectations") and have a volunteer read each predetermined expectation or read various comments added by the class within and outside of the ideal community member brainstorm.
 - Assign each student a particular expectation to illustrate (i.e. drawing a picture representative of being on time, helping classmates, etc.) and hang these around the classroom expectations.
 - Ideally, time will also be allotted to explore, discuss, and visualize each expectation. See activities such as the Consortium's "Respect or Disrespect" or Education World's "Activities for Establishing Classroom Rules," for follow-up activities.

Teacher Tips

- Teachers who are leading this activity with multiple class periods throughout the day should not leave completed "ideal classroom community members" hanging yet. It is important each period comes up with their own thoughts and ideas. Leaving the last period's work hanging may lead to students taking ideas from that rather than considering their own. Once all classes are done with the brainstorming process however, teachers can hang all of the final brainstorms.
- In considering expectations/rules for the class, teachers should also determine what to do when students fail to meet an expectation. While a student might be disciplined with choice (i.e. "Unfortunately, this is your third tardy. You have a choice to either serve after school detention or take a silent lunch."), or even allowed input on his her consequence ("What do you think an appropriate punishment is?"), teachers should have a discipline plan, including predetermined consequences to ensure fairness should one have to be delivered.
- While a teacher should have a plan for how to address students misbehaving or failing to meet community expectations, there are different thoughts and theories regarding how much to initially discuss this plan and the concept of consequences with students.
 - One popular belief is that teachers should spend time discussing what the consequences will be with students should they break a particular rule/expectation, letting them know up front what will occur should they misbehave or break a rule. Many teachers also choose to post

these consequences in the room as a reminder and also send a copy home to parents/guardians.

- Others believe consequences should not be mentioned until after a rule has broken. Dr. Marvin Marshall explains, “Announcing consequences ahead of time is counterproductive when dealing with young people. Uncertainty is much more effective. Knowing the consequence focuses on the consequence. It is better to have students focus and think about what is appropriate.”

Name: _____

Date: _____

Self Reflection Sheet

Rate your behavior on the following between 1 and 5, 5 being always and 1 being never. **BE HONEST!**

How often do you exhibit positive behaviors such as...	Never				Always
Compliment someone	1	2	3	4	5
Say thank you	1	2	3	4	5
Truly accept other people who are different than you	1	2	3	4	5
Feel good about yourself	1	2	3	4	5
Include others who appear to be on the "outside"	1	2	3	4	5
Ask an adult for help with personal matters	1	2	3	4	5
Challenge your friends when they are mean to others	1	2	3	4	5
Defend people being picked on	1	2	3	4	5
Donate your time or money to charity	1	2	3	4	5
Sit with people you don't know well at lunch to get to know them	1	2	3	4	5
Choose to work with people that you don't normally work with	1	2	3	4	5
Act as a positive leader to others/ set a positive example	1	2	3	4	5

POSTIVE BEHAVIOR SCORE: _____

How often do you exhibit negative behaviors such as...	Never				Always
Snap at others	1	2	3	4	5
Talk about a friend behind his/her back	1	2	3	4	5
Interrupt someone when they are making a point	1	2	3	4	5
Instigate fights or teasing by laughing or participating	1	2	3	4	5
Tease (i.e. insult someone's clothing or appearance)	1	2	3	4	5
Make racist jokes or comments	1	2	3	4	5
Say "shut up" to others	1	2	3	4	5
Disrespect a n adult (talk back, refuse to take responsibility, etc.)	2	3	4	5	
Judge others for their appearance or popularity level	1	2	3	4	5

NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR SCORE: _____

1. What are your best personality qualities?

2. What has your behavior been like in school in the past? BE HONEST! 😊 Why do you think you behaved this way?

3. What do you most need to improve about your personality, behavior, or attitude?

4. What is your goal for improving yourself this year? What type of person do you want to be? How close are you to being this person today? Explain:

5. What makes you have a bad day?

6. When you are having a bad day, or you are misbehaving, what do I need to know about communicating with you?