**The Best Strategies to Handle a Disruptive Student**

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**Updated March 06, 2017**

Time is precious. Every wasted second is a missed opportunity. Teachers understand that the time they have with their students is limited. [Good teachers](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-most-essential-qualities-of-a-good-teacher-3194340) maximize their instructional time and minimize distractions. They are experts at handling adversity. They deal with problems quickly and efficiently minimizing the disruptions.  
  
The most common distraction in a classroom is a disruptive student. This presents itself in many forms and a teacher must be adequately prepared to address every situation.

They must react quickly and appropriately while maintaining the dignity of the student.  
  
Teachers should always have a plan or certain strategies they rely on to handle a disruptive student. It is important to realize that every situation will be different. A strategy that works well for one student may set another one off. Individualize the situation and make your decisions based on what you feel will minimize the distraction with that particular student the fastest.

**1. Prevention First**

Prevention is the best way to handle a disruptive student. The first few days of the school year are arguably the most important. They set the tone for the whole school year. Students are feeling out teachers. They will push to see exactly what they are allowed to get away with doing. It is important for teachers to establish those boundaries quickly. Doing so will help deter problems later on down the road.

It is also important to start building rapport with your students immediately. Fostering a [trusting relationship](https://www.thoughtco.com/develop-positive-relationships-with-students-3194339) can go a long ways in disruption prevention simply out of mutual respect for one another.

**2. Stay Calm and Emotion Free**

A teacher should never yell at a student or tell a student to “shut up." While it may temporarily diffuse the situation, it will do more harm than good.

Teachers must stay calm when addressing a disruptive student. In many cases, a student is trying to get the teacher to react foolishly. If you stay calm and keep your wits, it can diffuse the situation rather quickly. If you become combative and confrontational, it can escalate the situation making it a potentially dangerous situation. Getting emotional and taking it personal will only be detrimental and ultimately hurts your credibility as a teacher.

**3. Be Firm and Direct**

The worst thing a teacher can do is to ignore a situation that they hope will go away. Do not allow your students to get away with the little things. Immediately confront them about their behavior. Have them tell you what they are doing wrong, why it is a problem, and what the proper behavior is. Educate them on how their behavior impacts others. Students may resist structure early on, but they ultimately embrace it because they feel safe in a [structured learning environment](https://www.thoughtco.com/keys-to-providing-structure-in-the-classroom-3194338).

**4. Listen Carefully to Student**

Do not jump to conclusions. If a student has something to say, then listen to their side. Sometimes, there are things that led to the disruption that you may not have seen. Sometimes there are things going on outside of the classroom that led to the behavior.

Sometimes their behavior may be a cry for help and listening to them may allow you to get them some help. Repeat their concerns to them so that they know you have been listening. It may not make a difference in how you handle the situation, but listening may build some trust or provide you with insights into other issues that are more important.

**5. Remove the Audience**

Never intentionally embarrass a student or call them out in front of their classmates. It will do more harm than it will good. Addressing a student individually in the hallway or after class will ultimately be more productive than addressing them in front of their peers. They will be more receptive to what you have to say. They are probably likely to be more open and honest with you. It is important to maintain the dignity of all of your students.

No one wants to be called out in front of his or her peers. Doing so ultimately damages your credibility and undermines your authority as a teacher.

**6. Give Student Ownership**

Student ownership offers individual empowerment and potentially has the greatest impact on behavior change. It is easy for teachers to say it is my way or the highway, but allowing students to develop an autonomous plan for behavior correction may be more effective. Give them the opportunity for self-correction. Encourage them to establish individual goals, rewards for meeting those goals, and consequences when they do not. Have the student create and sign a contract detailing these things. Encourage the student to keep a copy in a place that they often see such as their locker, mirror, notebook, etc.

***If none of the things discussed above seem to be working, then it is time to move in a different direction.***

**7. Conduct a Parent Meeting**

Most parents expect their children to behave while they are at school. There are exceptions, but most will be cooperative and helpful in improving the situation. Teachers should have documentation detailing every issue and how it was addressed. You will likely see more positive results if you request the student to sit in on the [meeting with you](https://www.thoughtco.com/tips-for-successful-parent-teacher-conferences-p2-8419). This also prevents a he/she said – teacher said issue. Ask the parents for suggestions from their perspective on how to deal with these issues. They may be able to provide you with strategies that work for them at home. It is important to work together to create a potential solution.

**8. Create a Student Behavior Plan**

A [student behavior plan](https://www.thoughtco.com/behavior-contracts-support-good-behavior-3110683) is a written agreement between the student, their parents, and teachers. The plan outlines expected behaviors, provides incentives for behaving appropriately, and consequences for poor behavior. A behavior plan provides a direct plan of action for a teacher if the student continues to be disruptive. This contract should be specifically written to address the issues the teacher sees in class. The plan can also include outside resources for help such as counseling. The plan may be modified or revisited at any time.

**9. Get an Administrator Involved**

Good teachers are able to handle the majority of their own discipline issues. They rarely refer a student to an administrator. In some cases, it becomes a necessity. [A student should be sent to the office](https://www.thoughtco.com/the-ultimate-teachers-guide-to-discipline-referrals-3194620) when a teacher has exhausted every other avenue and/or a student has become such as distraction that it is detrimental to the learning environment. Sometimes, getting an administrator involved may be the only effective deterrent for poor student behavior.  They have a different set of options that may get a student’s attention and help correct the problem.

***No matter what steps you take, always………***

**10. Follow Up**

Following up can prevent recurrences in the future. If the student has corrected their behavior, then periodically tell them that you are proud of them. Encourage them to keep working hard. Even a little improvement should be recognized. If parents and administrators become involved then let them know how things are going from time to time as well.

As a teacher, you are the one in the trenches seeing first hand what is going on. Providing positive updates and feedback can help ensure a good working relationship in the future.