Classroom Behavior Incident: Teacher Response Plan

Teachers who can draw on a range of responses when dealing with classroom misbehaviors are more likely to keep those students in the classroom, resulting in fewer disruptions to instruction and better learning outcomes for struggling students. A good organizing tool for teachers is to create a matrix outlining their response options for classroom behavior management and discipline. This document organizes potential teacher responses to classroom behavior incidents into 8 categories: Behavior reminder, academic adjustment, environmental adjustment, warning, time-out, response cost, behavior conference, defusing strategies.

1. Behavioral Reminder

Description: An behavioral reminder is a brief, neutral prompt to help the student to remember and follow classroom behavioral expectations.

When to Use: This strategy is used when the student appears to be distracted or otherwise requires a simple reminder of expected behaviors.

Examples: Here are examples of behavioral reminders:

- The teacher makes eye contact with the student who is misbehaving and points to a classroom rules chart.
- The teacher approaches the off-task student to remind him/her of the specific academic task the student should be doing.
- The teacher proactively provides behavioral reminders just when the student needs to use them.

2. Academic Adjustment

Description: An academic adjustment is a change made to the student's academic task(s) to improve behaviors. Such changes could include the amount of work assigned, provision of support to the student during the work, giving additional time to complete the work, etc.

When to Use: Academic adjustments can be useful when the teacher judges that the student's problem behaviors are triggered or exacerbated by the required academic task(s).

Examples: Here are examples of academic adjustments:

- The teacher pre-teaches challenging vocabulary to the student prior to a large-group discussion.
- The teacher adjusts the difficulty of the assigned academic work to match the student's abilities ('instructional match').
- The teacher allows the student additional time to complete an academic task.
3. Environmental Adjustment

**Description:** An environmental adjustment is a change made to some aspect of the student's environment to improve behaviors.

**When to Use:** This strategy is used when the teacher judges that an environmental element (e.g., distracting activities, proximity of another student) is contributing to the student's problem behavior.

**Examples:** Here are examples of environmental adjustments:

- The teacher moves the student's seat away from distracting peers.
- The teacher collects distracting objects from a student (e.g., small toys, paperclips) during a work session.
- The student is given a schedule of the day to prepare her for upcoming academic activities.

4. Warning

**Description:** A warning is a teacher statement informing the student that continued misbehavior will be followed by a specific disciplinary consequence.

**When to Use:** A warning is appropriate when the teacher judges (a) that the student has control over his or her behavior and (b) that a pointed reminder of impending behavioral consequences may improve the student's behavior. Whenever possible, it is recommended that proactive strategies such as providing behavioral reminders or eliminating environmental/academic triggers be tried before using warnings.

**Examples:** Here are examples of warnings:

- The teacher tells the student that if the problem behavior continues, the student will lose the opportunity for free time later that day.
- The student is warned that continued misbehavior will result in the teacher's calling the parent.

5. Time-Out

**Description:** Time-out (from reinforcement) is a brief removal of the student from the setting due to problem behaviors.

**When to Use:** Time-out from reinforcement can be effective in situations when the student would prefer to be in the classroom setting rather than in the time-out setting. Time-out sessions should typically be brief (e.g., 3-10 minutes). Because time-out is a punishment procedure, the teacher should first ensure that appropriate, less intrusive efforts to improve student behavior (e.g., behavior reminders, warnings, elimination of behavioral triggers) have been attempted before using it. If a teacher finds that a student does not improve behaviors despite frequent use of time-out, other behavior management strategies should be tried instead.
**Preparation:** If the time-out location is within the classroom, the teacher should identify the time-out location in advance and ensure that students placed there can be easily observed but are sufficiently removed from the current classroom activity. If the time-out location is out of the classroom, the teacher should arrange with other adults in advance (e.g., participating teachers whose classrooms may be time-out locations) to work out details for entering and exiting time-out and for supervising students during time-out.

**Examples:** Here are examples of time-out from reinforcement:

- The teacher sends a student to a study carrel in the corner of the classroom for 5 minutes for misbehavior.
- The teacher sends the student to a neighboring classroom for 10 minutes, where the student is to sit alone and complete classwork.

6. **Response Cost**

**Description:** Response cost is the taking away of privileges or other valued elements ('cost') in response to student misbehavior.

**When to Use:** Response cost can be an effective response to misbehavior, provided that the student actually values the privilege or element being taken away. Because response cost is a punishment procedure, the teacher should first ensure that appropriate, less intrusive efforts to improve student behavior (e.g., behavior reminders, warnings, elimination of behavioral triggers) have been attempted before using it.

**Preparation:** Before using response cost, the teacher can create a series of ‘privileges’ in the classroom that students find motivating and do not want to lose (e.g., point systems for good behavior; free time).

**Examples:** Here are examples of response-cost:

- Because of misbehavior, a student loses access to classroom free time at the end of the day.
- A student is given 5 good-behavior points at the start of class but then has one deducted for misbehavior.

7. **Behavior Conference**

**Description:** A behavior conference is a brief meeting between teacher and student to discuss the student's problem behavior(s). While the structure and content of a behavior conference will vary based on circumstances, it will typically include some or all of the following elements:

1. *Description of the problem behavior.* The teacher describes the student's behavior and explains why it is presenting a problem in the classroom.

2. *Open-ended questions and student input.* The teacher asks open-ended questions to fully understand what factors are contributing to the problem behavior.

3. *Problem-solving.* Teacher and student discuss solutions to the problem behavior and agree to a plan.
4. **Disciplinary reminder.** If appropriate, the teacher concludes the conference by informing the student of the disciplinary consequence that will occur if the problem behavior continues.

**When to Use:** The behavior conference is a useful tool for the teacher who:

- wishes to better understand reasons of the student problem behavior before acting.
- wants to model that it is better for the student to communicate his or her needs to the teacher through discussion than by engaging in acting-out behaviors.

## 8. Defusing Techniques

**Description:** Defusing techniques are any teacher actions taken to calm a student or otherwise defuse a situation with the potential for confrontation or emotional escalation.

**When to Use:** When the teacher judges that the student's negative emotions are a significant contributor to the problem behaviors, defusing techniques are appropriate to stabilize the situation.

**Examples:** Here are examples of defusing techniques:

- The teacher temporarily removes academic work from a student who is reacting negatively to the assignment.
- The teacher encourages a student to sit in a quiet corner of the room for a few minutes to collect herself before conferencing with the teacher.
- The teacher sends a student to the guidance counselor to discuss the issue(s) causing him anger.
# Classroom Behavior Incident: Teacher Response Plan

**Directions:** Complete this form to document strategies used to manage individual students' problem classroom behaviors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Management Strategy</th>
<th>Details. Include a description of each strategy used.</th>
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**Narrative of Incident [Optional]:**

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