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## THE PROCEDURE

### Getting Students' Attention

Teaching students a predetermined signal for coming to attention saves time and prevents yelling, begging, and pleading at students to get their attention.

#### Getting Your Attention

1. The teacher will say, "**Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for listening,**" "**Listen up,**" or "**Are you ready?**"
2. In some cases, teacher will also raise a **finger**.
3. When you hear (or see) this signal, please **stop** what you are doing and **listen** for instructions.



The class noise level must be silent.



## THE SOLUTION

**A** consistent method of getting your students' attention minimizes classroom confusion and brings an elevated noise level down quickly. The students' dignity is kept intact because they are not demeaned into coming to attention. The teacher's dignity is kept intact because the cue is delivered in a professional, caring manner.

This procedure provides these opportunities:

1. Remaining calm while the class comes to attention
2. Using a consistent signal so anyone can bring the class to attention
3. Wasting little time while the class comes to attention

## THE BACKGROUND

Too often, getting the class' attention is a battle of wills. With your patience wearing thin, you raise your voice, hoping to drown out your students' noise in order to get their attention.

It makes no difference which signal you use to get your students' attention; just have a signal and teach the procedure to follow the signal. It can be as calm and simple as, "May I have your attention, please?"

Students respond well to simple verbal commands such as, "Please listen up," clapping, ringing chimes, or issuing a visual command such as a raised hand.

Teach students the signal to come to attention. **Give the signal with confidence and the expectation of quiet.** Wait for silence. Once the classroom is quiet, thank students, and then proceed with instruction.

Depending on your classroom environment, you may need more than one method for bringing the class to attention. Whatever the signal, use it exclusively for achieving this purpose.

Teach others who work with your students about your technique and encourage them to use it whenever they work with your students and require their undivided attention.

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

Select a signal that you can deliver with confidence and that students associate as a simple request to come to attention. This signal will vary according to students' grade level and subject area. A simple way to quiet a class and get students' attention is to announce, "May I have your attention, please," or "Everyone, (boys and girls, class), please listen up."

## TEACH

Introduce the attention signal. If you are using a verbal command, explain to students that when they hear the teacher announce, "Everyone, please listen up," they must do three things:

1. Immediately stop what they are doing.
2. Look at the teacher.
3. Listen for instruction.

If you are using a non-verbal command, show the students what the signal is and ask them to follow the same three steps.

### Deliver, Then Wait

*Once I saw my principal quiet an entire auditorium of students without a microphone. I was so impressed! The principal told me, 'When you want to get the students' attention, stand firmly, and ask for their attention in a strong, commanding voice—then wait.'*

*That was a revelation for me. It is a simple thing, but it took 12 years for me to really get it. I wouldn't ask for attention firmly enough, or I wouldn't wait long enough, so I would end up talking over them.*

*Once I chose to deliver the cue with firm conviction, and waited, I got it—and got results consistently.*

Karen Rogers ■ High School Teacher, Kansas



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"Give Me Five," made famous by Cindy Wong, is a classic technique used across grade levels.

## REHEARSE

Lead the class in practicing the procedure. Invite them to turn and talk to their neighbors. At an appropriate time, give the cue with a clear, assured tone, "Everyone, listen up." Verbally lead the class through the steps and ask them to stop what they are doing, get themselves into a position where they can see you, and then listen for your instruction.

When students are slow to respond, assist them with guidance on how to practice the procedure correctly.

Thank those students who follow the procedure.

Practice again, with some students out of their seats. Deliver the cue again, but this time, do not lead them through the steps. Monitor the students and correct those who need assistance. Wait for the students' attention. This is the key to the procedure's success. Do not speak again until the class is completely silent and all eyes are on you.

If students are taking too long to quiet down, remind them of the procedure and why it is important for everyone to follow it.

Rehearse again until you observe the students properly following the procedure.

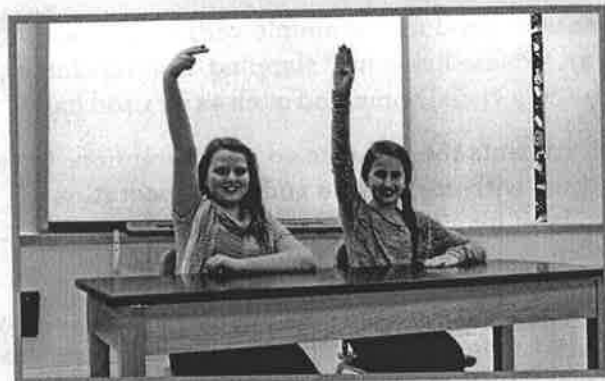
Use the next opportunity—when students are doing group work—to practice this procedure again.

## REINFORCE

Thank the class for coming to attention so quickly. At the end of the day, remind them how well they followed this procedure. Let them know this is the procedure you will use every day when you want their attention.

## Signing Quiet

Mike Reed of New Jersey teaches middle school and uses sign language to communicate with his students. Many teachers have discovered that the less they speak, the more the class gets done. Students sign to the teachers with letters for their basic needs—"B" for bathroom, "W" for water fountain, "H" for help, and "S" for pencil sharpener. The teacher responds with a simple nod, or a sign "Y" for yes or "N" for no.



Students flash their needs with a B and an H to communicate silently in the classroom.



— Index finger held in the air tells me that you have a question



— Two fingers held in the air mean you need to leave your seat



— Three fingers held in the air lets me know that you need my help



— Fingers crossed mean you need to use the bathroom, get a drink, go to your locker, or go to the nurse

The consistency in his classroom and in his school prompted his inclusion teacher to comment after his recent absence that she had never seen a class act that well in all her 25-plus years as a teacher.

How do you know when  
I need your attention?

- I will ring the bell on my desk once to let you know to look up at me because I need your attention.
- If the noise level is inappropriate, I will ring the bell two times.



## Your Attention, Please

There is no single "right" way to call a group to attention. Consider the environment, the setting, the group's age level, and your personality when selecting the procedure you will use.

### SALAME

When the teacher says, "SALAME," the students recognize what this word means and carry out the action.

**Stop And Look At ME.**



### School Mascot

At assemblies, the leader of the assembly holds up a stuffed animal of the school's mascot—in the story shared, it was a lion. The group looks at the lion and lets out one big roar. Then the mascot is taken away and the group is quiet and focused on the leader.



### Please and Thank You

The simplicity of a "please" and "thank you" are sometimes all it takes to bring the class to attention. Confidently say, in a questioning voice, "Please?" and wait for the students to respond by coming to attention. After the students have come to attention, reply, "Thank you," and continue explaining the purpose of calling the group to attention.

### Hand Signal

Beverly Woolery is director of an award-winning alternative certification program, the Educator Preparation Institute (EPI), at Polk State College in Winter Haven, Florida.

Beverly uses a procedure called "Yakety Yak," a call and response technique, for getting the participants' attention. She poses her hands in a yakking/talking gesture.

1. Beverly gives the hand signal for "Yakety Yak" and says "Yakety Yak" at the same time.
2. Participants turn and face her.
3. Participants give the hand signal for "Back on Track," extend both arms toward the teacher with pointer finger extended, and say "Back on track" at the same time.
4. When everyone is quiet and facing Beverly, she has everyone's attention.

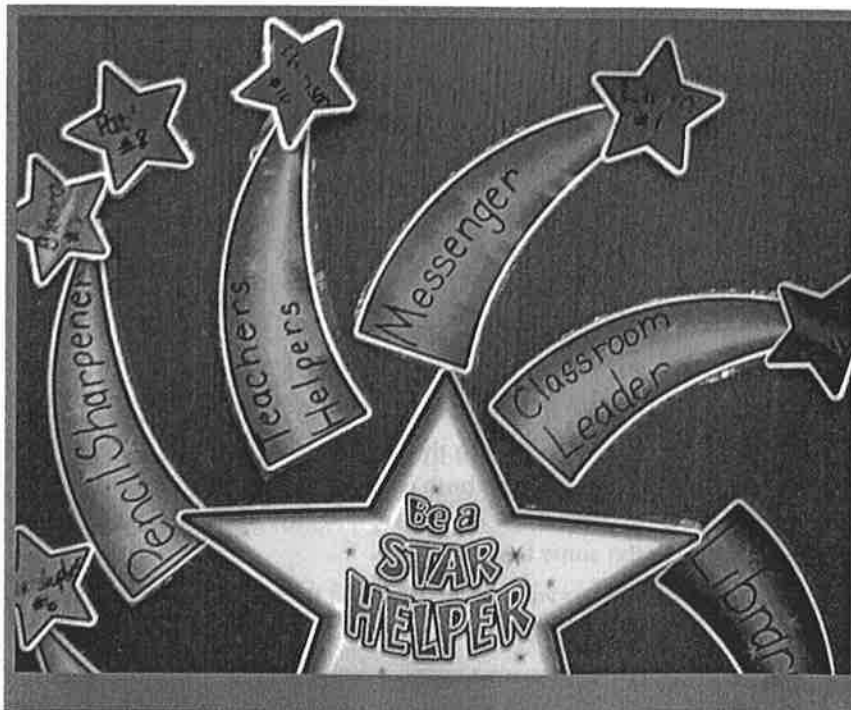


# 14

## THE PROCEDURE

### Classroom Jobs

Jobs give students a sense of responsibility and ownership of their home away from home—the classroom.



### THE SOLUTION

**W**hen each student is in charge of completing a job, everyone takes ownership of the classroom. This instills responsibility, discipline, teamwork, and a sense of pride in their class and contributes to establishing a positive learning environment.

**This procedure resolves these problems:**

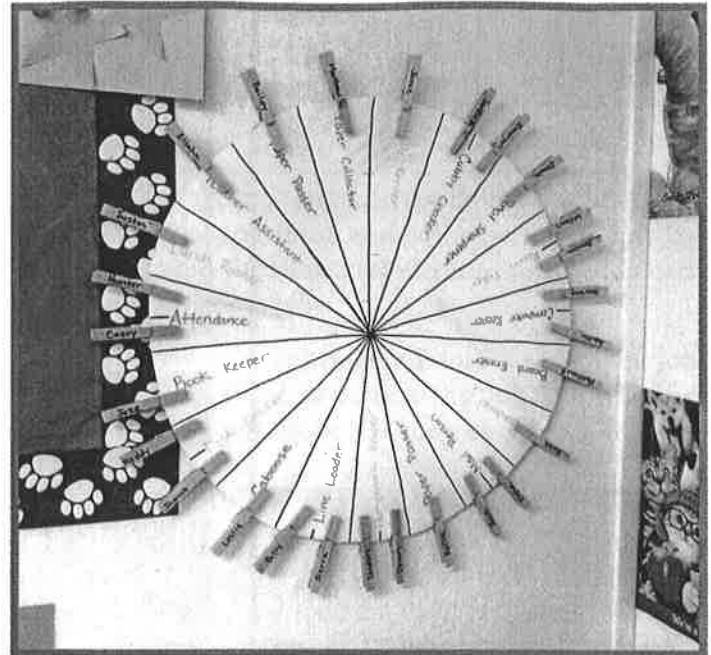
1. Doing the daily tasks necessary to keep the classroom clean
2. Ensuring that housekeeping is not done by the teacher
3. Encouraging responsibility and teamwork among students



## THE BACKGROUND

Introduce the class to the concept of classroom jobs by reading the book, *Miss Malarkey Doesn't Live in Room 10*. After reading the story, discuss with the class that you don't live in the classroom. You have a home outside of the classroom and will need everyone's help to get their classroom home ready for learning each day. Each member of the classroom will contribute to getting the classroom ready with a job. It will take teamwork, responsibility, and accountability to get daily tasks and jobs done, so the room will be ready—beginning with the very first week of school.

**A Job Wheel is a tool you can use as part of a fair and transparent method for assigning tasks.** The Job Wheel rotates jobs weekly, so students can take turns carrying out different tasks.



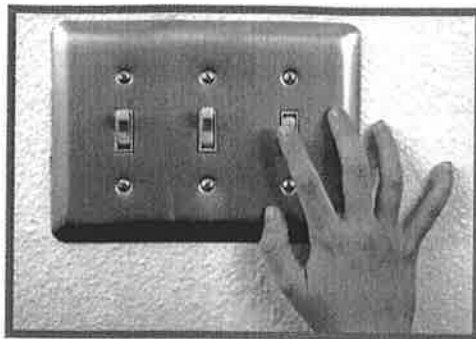
*The Job Wheel makes it easy to assign classroom tasks.*

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

Each classroom is unique. Your classroom job list will differ from your colleagues' lists. Some tasks are daily routines, and some tasks are done once a week. You will need to create the job list for your class.

In the primary classroom, there is ample opportunity to have a job for every student every week. In the secondary classroom, ensure that students have a job at least once a month. No job is too small for the list.

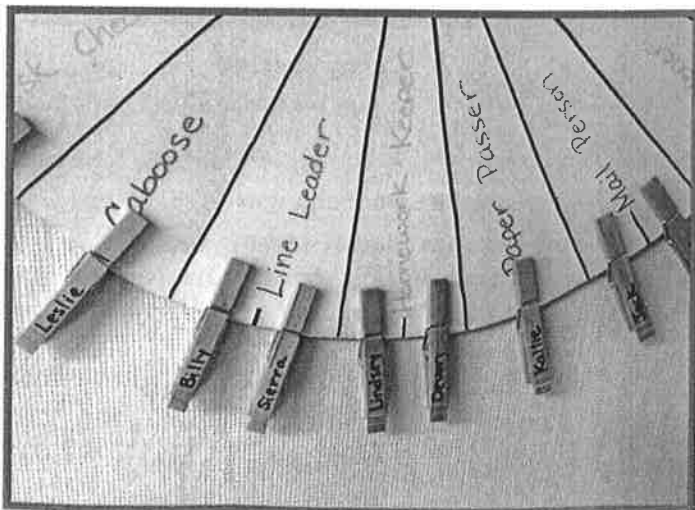
- Teacher assistant
- Homework keeper
- Substitute assistant
- Pledge leader
- Flag holder
- Attendance monitor
- Paper passer
- Paper collector
- Line leader
- Morning Meeting leader
- Lunch runner
- Gardener
- Pencil sharpener
- Window opener
- Window closer
- Book monitor
- Board washer
- Library books monitor
- Lights monitor
- Supplies monitor
- Tally keeper
- Desk checker
- Cubby checker
- Sweater monitor
- Tech assistant
- Date changer
- New student greeter
- Pet tender
- Trash monitor
- Playground equipment monitor



Every task is important to a smooth-running classroom.

Create a **Job Wheel** with all the classroom jobs listed:

1. Cut out a large circle on tag board.
2. Divide the circle as you would a giant pie, with a wedge for each job.
3. Label each wedge with a job title.
4. Write each student's name on a clothes pin and then clip each pin to a job wedge.



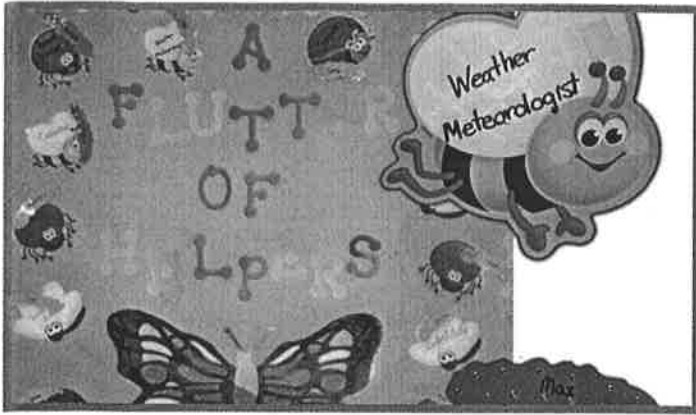
Students will locate their names to find out which jobs they are responsible for that week. At the end of each week, move the clothes pins clockwise to the next job.

Post a **Job List** on the class notice board where students can quickly and easily reference it.

- Name of the job
- Description of the job
- What time of day the job is done
- How often the job is done

## TEACH

1. Discuss with the class how a clean, inviting classroom is more welcoming and conducive to learning than a dirty, disorganized one. Tell them that everyone in the classroom will be working as a team to keep the classroom ready for learning.



*Danielle Blonar's student job chart is a "Flutter of Helpers." Her students are responsible for their specific job for one week. If a student is absent, the Substitute helper does the absent student's job for that day.*

2. Announce that each student will have a specific job for a certain length of time.
3. Introduce the Job List, describing what needs to be done and when it should be completed. Explain that every student plays an equal role in maintaining a clean and inviting classroom environment.
4. Show the class the Job Wheel. Explain how to read the Job Wheel and how the job responsibilities are rotated each week.
5. Read each student's name and the job that the student will be responsible for in the first week. Ask each student to verbalize the details of the job assignment. Clarify as needed.

## REHEARSE

Role play and have students practice their different jobs, one at a time. Ask the class if the job has been performed correctly. Remind them that one day, they will be doing the same job.

Tell students the Job Wheel and Job List are available for them to check their responsibilities.

Thank students for doing a good job during practice.

## REINFORCE

Build housekeeping time into the daily schedule. Most jobs are done at the end of the period or day. Be consistent with the time students are assigned to carry out their classroom jobs.

Students may need gentle reminders to start their jobs, check the Job Wheel, or refer to the Job List in the first week of school, but these will soon become routine.

### S.O.S. Time

S.O.S. or "Super Organized Students" time is typically held during the final 10 minutes of the school day. The entire class participates in the time, whether they are doing a classroom helper job or organizing themselves and getting ready to leave for the day.

S.O.S. time is recognized by students as a time to help the classroom, the teacher, and themselves. When the teacher announces it is S.O.S. time, the students spring into action by organizing their classroom and themselves.

## S.O.S.

Super Organized Students

- Take out your binder.
- Do your classroom job.
- Check to see that your homework is in your binder.
- Pack up your backpack.
- Sit at your desk quietly waiting for dismissal.

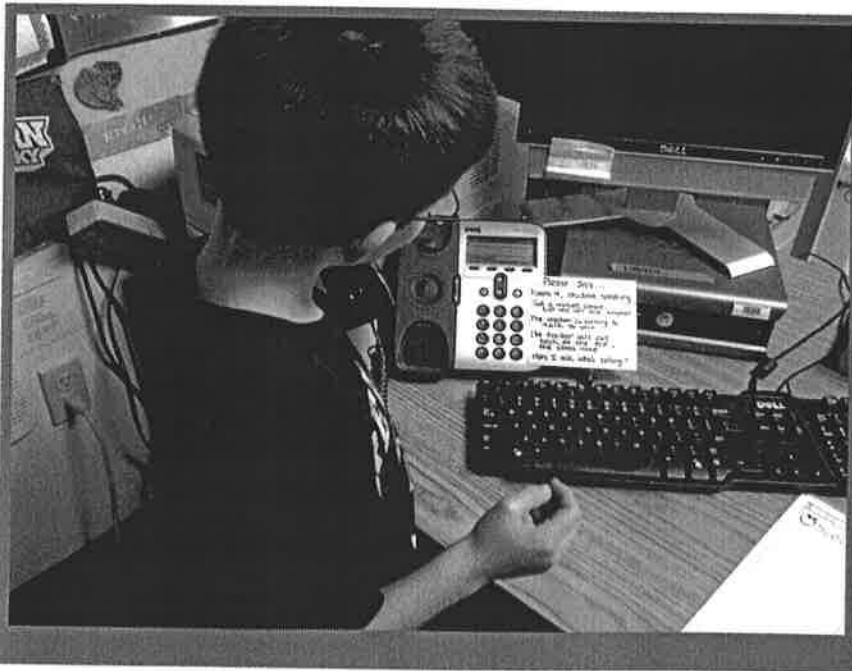


# 15

## THE PROCEDURE

### Classroom Phone Ringing

With a set procedure for answering the classroom telephone, the teacher can stay focused on working with students, rather than taking the call immediately and disrupting the flow of the lesson.



## THE SOLUTION

**T**he teacher is not always able to answer the classroom phone when it rings. **Establish a procedure so students know who should answer the phone, what to say to the caller, and the appropriate noise level in the classroom.**

This procedure minimizes disruptions to teaching and learning and resolves these issues:

1. Who should answer the phone if the teacher is busy
2. The need for reduced noise level in the classroom when there is a phone call

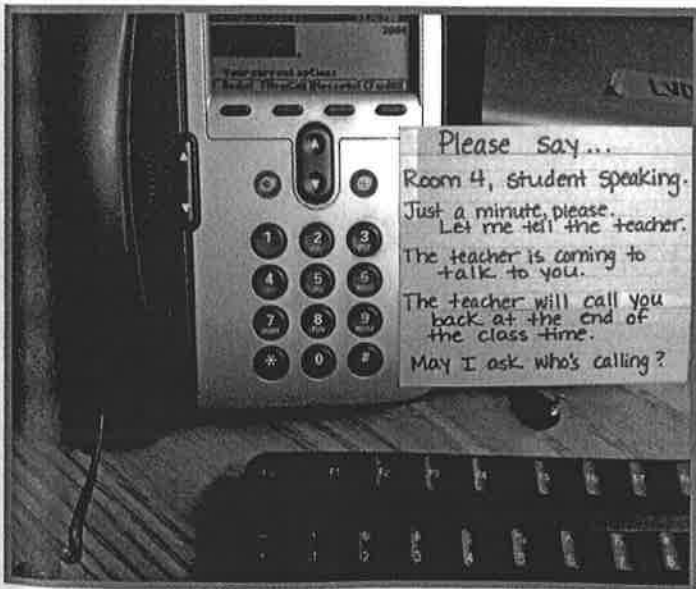
## THE BACKGROUND

When the phone rings in the middle of teaching a lesson or helping students, it is disruptive. Stopping to answer the phone is equally disruptive. Establishing a procedure lets students know how a phone call will be handled, so it will have little impact on the learning taking place in the classroom.

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

Keep a supply of paper and pencils by the classroom phone for anyone to use when taking a message. Put a small sign next to the phone, along with the appropriate voice prompt you want students to use.

- *Room \_\_\_\_, student speaking.*
- *Just a minute, please. Let me tell the teacher.*
- *The teacher is coming to talk to you.*
- *The teacher will call you back at the end of the class time. May I ask who is calling, please?*



Students are reminded how to respond to a call should the telephone ring during class time.

Let students know you will always answer the phone unless you are working with students. This procedure is for the times when you are not able to answer the phone.

## TEACH

1. Tell students that when the classroom phone rings, they are to lower their voices to a whisper if they are talking.
2. The student closest to the phone answers it. Students are not to race to the phone—it is not a competition.
3. Instruct the students to answer the phone with this prompt, “Room \_\_\_\_, student speaking.”
4. After the caller identifies himself or herself and gives the message, instruct the student to tell the caller, “Just a minute, please. Let me tell the teacher.”
5. The student goes to the teacher and passes the message forward.
6. Depending on the message, you can ask the student to tell the caller, “The teacher is coming to talk to you,” “The teacher will call you back at the end of the class time,” or, “May I ask who is calling, please?”
7. The student will write the number on the notepaper by the phone and deliver it to the teacher.

## REHEARSE

Write the voice prompts on the board for the students to follow along as they rehearse answering the phone with you.

Model the procedure for a student answering the classroom phone using the script.

## PROCEDURES ■ FOR THE CLASSROOM

Ask the class to read the voice prompts aloud as you pretend to be a caller.

Ask a few students to play “telephone” and practice the exchange.

Remind the class that when they hear the classroom phone ring, they should continue to work, but to lower their collective voices to a whisper.

### REINFORCE

When the first call comes through that you are unable to answer, stop what you are doing and focus your attention on the student answering the phone.

After the call is done, share with the entire class how the procedure was performed correctly or incorrectly. Reference what the student did well and highlight what needs to be improved the next time the classroom phone rings.

### Script for Entering a Classroom



Help students identify themselves before the classroom door is opened for them. A standard message posted outside of the classroom door, helps students relay the information you need to know before the student enters.

### Students Live Up to Expectations\*

*I teach classes of Pre-AP and regular English, and I love to display the work of my regular students with the work of my Pre-AP students. The difference in the quality of work cannot be distinguished because I have the same expectations for all my students.*

*My colleagues often ask, 'Is this the work of your Pre-AP students?'*

*I am so proud when I reply, 'No, this project was done by my regular English students.'*

*Students live up to your expectations. Set the same standards for all students.*

\*Read the classic research on expectations in *The First Days of School*.

Oretha F. Ferguson ■ Fort Smith, Arkansas



## Teaching Procedures Becomes Routine

If you are reading this story now, you are almost one-third through the heart of the book—the Procedures. However, *THE Classroom Management Book* is not a novel. You probably have not read it in sequence from beginning to end.

**T**HE *Classroom Management Book* was written with the same flow as its companion book, *The First Days of School*. It was not meant to be read in sequence from cover to cover. It is meant to be used more like a vehicle's owner's manual. You will be able to turn to a section to solve a problem, learn a new technique, or have an Aha.

Every recipe in a pressure cooker cookbook repeats the same warning: "Open the lid carefully, tilting the lid to release the steam away from your face."

Every hot beverage from a retail outlet carries the same warning: "This beverage is hot and can burn you."

Every procedure in this book repeats the same three steps to teaching a procedure:

- Teach
- Rehearse
- Reinforce

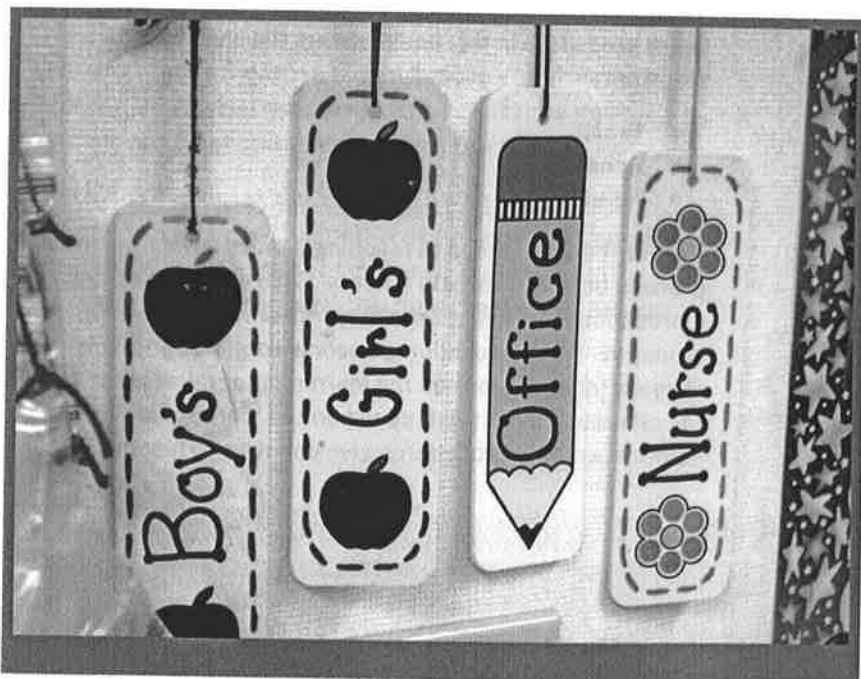
Master the three steps to teaching a procedure, until the process becomes routine for you. Each step to teaching a procedure helps to make that procedure a routine for students. When procedures become routines, your time is spent focused more on the learning that takes place in the classroom and less focused on the management of your classroom. Procedures give you time to teach.

# 16

## THE PROCEDURE

### Bathroom Breaks

Classroom time is reserved for learning. Recesses and breaks are reserved for taking care of personal needs. Because emergencies do occur, a procedure is needed to minimize classroom disruptions.



### THE SOLUTION

Constantly giving permission to students who need to use the bathroom during class time can interrupt the flow of your lesson. Keeping track of how often students leave class for the bathroom is also a waste of time. Make it a student responsibility. **Use a pass system to monitor bathroom use.**

This procedure provides these opportunities:

1. Manages students' use of the bathroom during class time
2. Prevents instructional time from being interrupted by students leaving the classroom
3. Encourages students to take care of personal needs during recess or breaks



## THE BACKGROUND

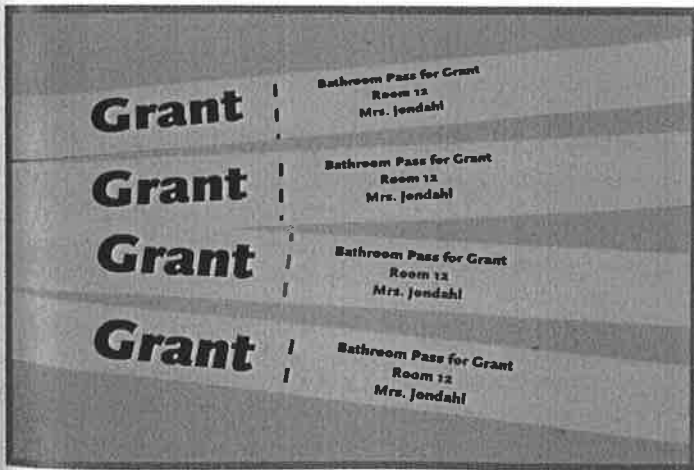
Attending to personal requests from students, like asking permission to use the bathroom, does not have to interrupt the flow of your lesson. Using a class pocket chart gives students the responsibility of managing their own needs.

The class pocket chart is hung in the classroom. Each student is assigned a pocket, labeled with the student's class number or name. Inside each pocket, place a set number of bathroom passes.

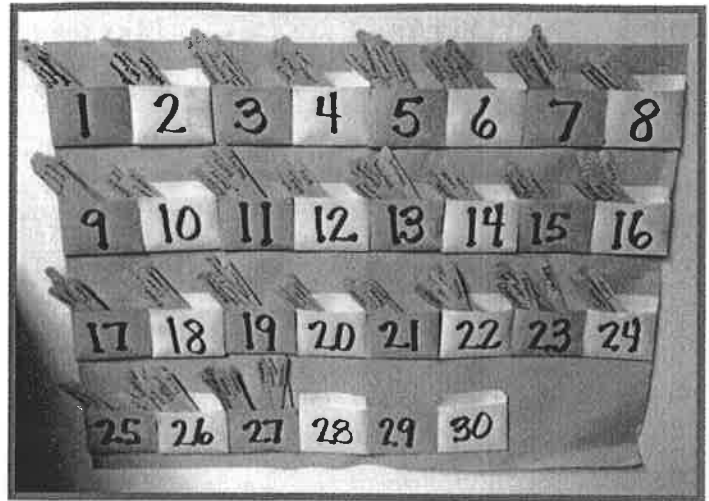
The number can be calculated based on students' ages and how many days of school exist in the month. For instance, in regular school months, a student may be given four bathroom passes.

However, for shorter school months due to holidays and vacations, a student may only receive two bathroom passes.

These passes are the students' temporary tickets out the door for brief bathroom breaks.



The bathroom pass has the student's name and your class information on it.



Students, identified by their class numbers, have their own pocket of bathroom passes for the month.

## THE PROCEDURE STEPS

Create a file of the bathroom passes using a table in Microsoft Word or a similar program. Once the file is created, it can be updated easily if necessary and printed each month.

Secure a chart with pockets. Label each pocket with the student's name or unique number.

Print, cut, and organize the month's supply of bathroom passes and place the appropriate number of passes for the month in the student's corresponding pocket. This monthly task can be assigned to an aide or classroom helper.

Ease students' minds on the first day of school by teaching them the procedure for bathroom breaks.

### Patience

*Have patience.*

*All things are difficult before they become easy.*

Saadi ■ Medieval poet

## TEACH

1. Show students the bathroom pass pocket chart. Explain that each student has a pocket labeled with the student's unique number or name.
2. Tell the class that at the beginning of each month, everyone will be given the same number of passes. These passes are their temporary tickets out the door if they need to use the bathroom during class time.
3. Remove a set of bathroom passes from a student's pocket. Point out that each of the passes has the student's name on one half, and that students can only use their own pass—not their classmate's.
4. Point out that they must keep the pass with them when they are excused to use the bathroom.
5. Teach students that when they need to use the bathroom, they should remove the pass from the wall pocket.
6. Quietly bring it to the teacher.
7. If it is a suitable moment during class for the student to leave and use the bathroom, you will tear the pass in half, keep the name portion, and then give the student the Bathroom Pass half. Tearing the pass signals that the student may leave the room.
8. If it is not a suitable time for the student to leave, you will hand the pass back to the student. The student then returns the pass to the pocket and waits until a suitable time arrives. Exceptions are made if the student has an emergency.
9. Explain that the procedure means there are minimal disruptions to the class learning time.
10. Students can go for bathroom breaks as long as they have passes left in their pockets.

11. Bathroom passes last for a month. If a student runs out of passes before the month is over, they must ask for permission to leave the classroom at an appropriate time during the lesson. Schedule a time to hold a conference with the student to check if there is a physical problem that needs attention and to make recommendations for better management of their bathroom needs.
12. If students have passes left over in the month, they can be saved toward earning a special activity. For instance, six passes could be rewarded with a ticket to a special movie shown during lunch time. Select an incentive that's appropriate for your students. Incentives encourage students to use the bathroom during recess, breaks, or lunch instead of during class time. Students are responsible for saving their unused passes.
13. Tell students that upon returning to class from the bathroom, they are to immediately go to their seats and resume the lesson. They are responsible for any missed learning.
14. The name portion of the bathroom pass you keep can be put on your desk as a reminder of who is not in the classroom if an emergency arises.
15. Limit the number of students to one boy and one girl leaving the classroom with bathroom passes at any given time.

## REHEARSE

Model how students are to use the bathroom pass to request a bathroom break. Go to a pocket and retrieve a pass. Talk aloud as you demonstrate the steps of getting the pass, taking it to the teacher, and waiting to see if permission has been granted to leave the classroom for the bathroom.

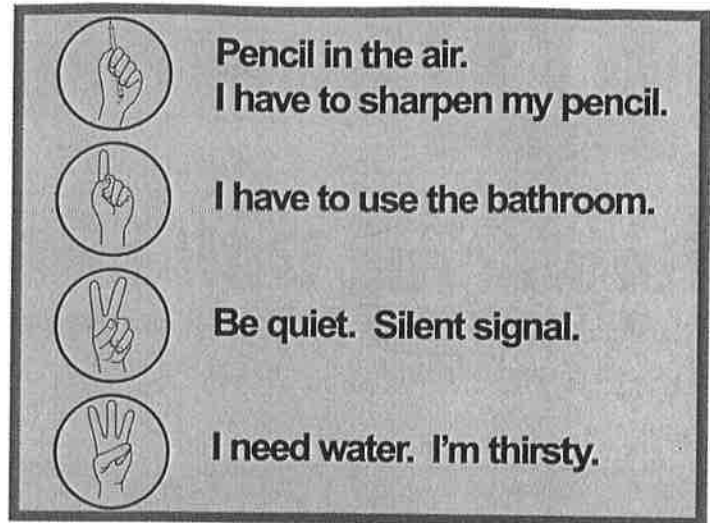
Select a student to demonstrate the steps. Remind the class that when approaching the teacher with a pass, they should be quiet and careful not to interrupt the lesson or their classmates.

Students quickly get the idea of how the bathroom pass procedure works and when it is considered a suitable time to use the pass. They dislike having their passes handed back to them and will avoid approaching the teacher in the middle of a lesson or while the teacher is helping another student.

Students also grasp how important it is to use the bathroom during recess, breaks, or lunch. Having an incentive motivates everyone to try and save their passes.

## REINFORCE

Some students will need to practice this procedure before they learn to be sufficiently quiet and discrete about seeking permission to go to the bathroom. Thank each student for remembering the procedure and following it properly.



*At Alain L. Locke Elementary School in New York City, the entire school uses the same procedure for asking to use the bathroom. There are signs posted throughout the school that serve as reminders to the students.*

If a student forgets the procedure, select a student to assist in helping the student recall the correct procedure.

## The Best One So Far

*Over many years of teaching, I tried different procedures for managing bathroom breaks in my classroom. I tried wall passes—one for the girls' bathroom and one for the boys' bathroom. I tried a log-out and log-in sheet by the door, where students had to record the time they left the room and the time they returned. I tried individual bathroom pages, which students kept in their desks and brought to me to initial before leaving the room.*

*All of these methods worked to some degree, but were never very effective at encouraging students to use the bathroom during recess.*

*However, using the wall pocket with the passes in the pockets ready to use has encouraged students to use the bathroom during recess because they know that unused passes can be saved for classroom incentives. In nine years of experimentation, this procedure has worked best of all the ones I have tried. It has been so successful in my classroom.*

Sarah Jondahl ■ Brentwood, California