

Classroom Management in the Orchestra Classroom

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Classroom management is really the art of teaching. It encompasses more than just rules and consequences. When you approach classroom management you need to consider routines and procedures, building relationships with your students, creating a safe classroom climate, and appropriate curriculum and lesson planning. Respect and consistency are key components to a well-managed classroom.

Establishing Routines and Procedures:

Take the time to develop routines at the beginning of the year and consistently reinforce them throughout the year as necessary.

Create a way to do even the most simple everyday tasks:

How to come into the classroom

How to unpack instruments & set-up for class/rehearsal

Where backpacks, cases, and phones should be during class

Tuning procedures

How to move from one activity to another

Bathroom/Office/Nurse passes

Procedures for when to speak

Process for packing up and wrapping up

*Make sure to consider traffic patterns and classroom set-up

Rehearse Transitions: Every time you change gears in class, it is an opportunity to lose student engagement. A good strategy for managing transitions is to:

1. Signal students for their attention
2. Say "In a moment"
3. Give instructions
4. Say "Go"
5. Observe

If the transition is still a little chaotic or takes too long, you can intervene with simple interventions:

For time: give a specific time & use a countdown to keep students on task

Redirect students who are not on the task

Move closer to students who are distracted, or taking too long, to encourage them to keep moving.

First Step Compliance – Super simple instructions that alert students that class has started, you are about to have a class transition, or you are about to give very important instructions.

Minimize Complexity & Emphasize Action

Consider how you close class, the final moments of class can be reflective or chaotic.

Building Positive Relationships: Modeling Positive Behaviors

“They don’t care what you know, until they know that you care!”

Relationships are built on Trust & Respect.

Get to know your students.

You can be firm, while still being kind and compassionate.

Acknowledge your mistakes, and apologize when you are wrong.

Forgive students, and make sure they know that they are welcome in your class.

Creating a Safe & Inviting Classroom Climate

Be Positive & Enthusiastic.

Growth Mindset: Encourage your students to take chances and not be afraid of making mistakes. Mistakes are a vital component to the learning process. Teach your students to respect and encourage each other, so they feel safe trying something new or difficult. Praise your students for their efforts, even if they did not accomplish the end goal yet!

Offer Praise: Always celebrate your student’s hard work! Sincere praise and references to specific examples of effort or accomplishment will inspire students, improve their self-esteem, and ultimately, it reinforces the behaviors and values you want to see in your students.

Stress Management in the Classroom:

1. Joke/Laughter
2. Foster Creativity
3. Encourage the Learning Process
4. Stay Positive

Positive parent communication: send home a note or call a parent

Curriculum & Planning

Appropriate curriculum is a classroom management strategy!

Students who are involved in the learning process are less likely to cause disruptions. Work to increase student engagement.

Engaging Students vs. Empowering Students

Plan everything (even contingencies) when creating lesson plans.

How are you going to move from rehearsing a specific phrase, to working on the next piece?

How do you get materials to students for a learning activity?

How do you keep students engaged when working with one section?

How do you connect the knowledge of a specific concept to the use in a specific passage in the concert repertoire?

How do you get students into group learning situations?

How do you teach students to work together?

Plan pacing of learning activities and make sure to use differentiated instruction to reach the many different learning styles of your students.

Use formative assessment to determine if curriculum is appropriate.

Rules, Consequences & Behavior Interventions

Establish clear and concise expectations, procedures, and rules.

Establish appropriate consequences

Use the least severe consequence

Avoid punishing the entire class

Practice follow through

Be consistent

Address unwanted behavior quickly and in a respectful manner

Always model desired behaviors

Utilize your presence, direct verbal cues, and non-verbal cues to prevent behavior problems.

Redirect distracted students before it disrupts the entire class.

Remind yourself that behaviors are often symptoms. Understanding the student's circumstances or situation will help you determine how to address the behavior.

Consider your language use when addressing behaviors. Try to be positive and proactive, rather than negative and reactive.