

# SCHOOL SAFETY FRAMEWORK

# Positive Discipline and Classroom Management



**basic education**  
Department  
Basic Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



**WORKBOOK**

Published by the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention

PO Box 44702, Claremont, 7735, Cape Town

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[www.cjcp.org.za](http://www.cjcp.org.za)

[www.education.gov.za](http://www.education.gov.za)

First published August 2012

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# Table of contents

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Introduction.....	2
The purpose of the workbook.....	2
The whole-school approach to safety.....	3
Implementing a whole-school approach.....	5
Understanding positive discipline.....	6
Implementing a whole-school approach to positive discipline.....	10
Tips for involving parents .....	11
Implementing positive discipline in the classroom .....	12
Avoiding negative discipline .....	14
Creating an environment conducive to learning .....	15
Dealing with misbehaviour .....	19
Understanding children’s behaviour .....	19
Dealing with conflict in the classroom .....	20
Disciplining learners.....	21
Dealing with serious misconduct .....	23
Glossary .....	24
Appendix 1: Example of a learner-parent commitment form .....	25
Appendix 2: Example of a written warning form.....	26
Appendix 3: Example of a behaviour contract.....	27
Appendix 4: Requirements for disciplinary processes.....	28
References .....	29

# Introduction

Education policy in South Africa emphasises the importance of creating safe schools that encourage respect for human rights (see *School Safety Framework Early Warning System* Book 1). The National Education Policy Act requires schools and school authorities to create an enabling education system that supports the full personal development of each learner, and contributes to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large. It emphasises the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes, and bans corporal punishment. Following its lead, a key goal of the Department's School Safety Policy is to develop and maintain a safe, welcoming, violence-free learning environment.

The positive discipline approach can play a key role in creating safer schools, where children's rights and dignity are respected and they are equipped to achieve their full potential. The positive discipline approach rejects the use of violence as a teaching tool. It focuses instead on guiding children's behaviour; rather than enforcing good behaviour through fear, the teacher plays the role of mentor and guide, and the school makes long-term investment in a child's development. In so doing the approach not only supports children's full development, but also improves the school environment by eliminating fear, teaching children self-discipline and encouraging greater pleasure and engagement in learning.

## The purpose of the workbook

Schools in South Africa have relied heavily on corporal punishment or physical punishment to maintain discipline, and many educators report finding it difficult to find other ways of influencing learners' behaviour. This workbook aims to empower principals, educators, school governing bodies (SGBs) and other concerned actors with the information and tools to begin implementing a positive discipline approach that supports a disciplined learning environment while at the same time respecting the rights of both learners and educators.

It forms part of the *School Safety Framework* training modules on Bullying and Positive Discipline and Classroom Management. The specific objectives of the workbook are to:

- Introduce the positive discipline approach, its main principles and what it entails
- Explore the reasons for misbehaviour and how to respond and discipline positively rather than negatively.
- Provide guidance on implementing a whole-school positive discipline approach
- Provide guidance, tips and resources for educators to implement the positive discipline approach in the classroom.

The Reader includes a Glossary that explains the meaning of key terms. These terms are coloured in blue in the text for easy reference.

This workbook is designed to provide you with the guidance and tools to adopt a positive discipline approach in your school and classroom. The procedures and steps are not meant to constitute an additional burden, but to serve as management tools to help you to incorporate positive discipline issues into your

school's existing management framework, processes and activities.

They are designed to work alongside other aspects of the *School Safety Framework*, as well as the Positive Discipline Course Reader.

This workbook takes a whole-school approach to addressing bullying in schools. As with the other *School Safety Framework* materials, it recognises that schools are embedded in larger communities; addressing bullying requires a multi-pronged, holistic approach that establishes an enabling policy environment, encourages respect for human rights and involves diverse actors within and outside of the school.

## The whole-school approach to safety

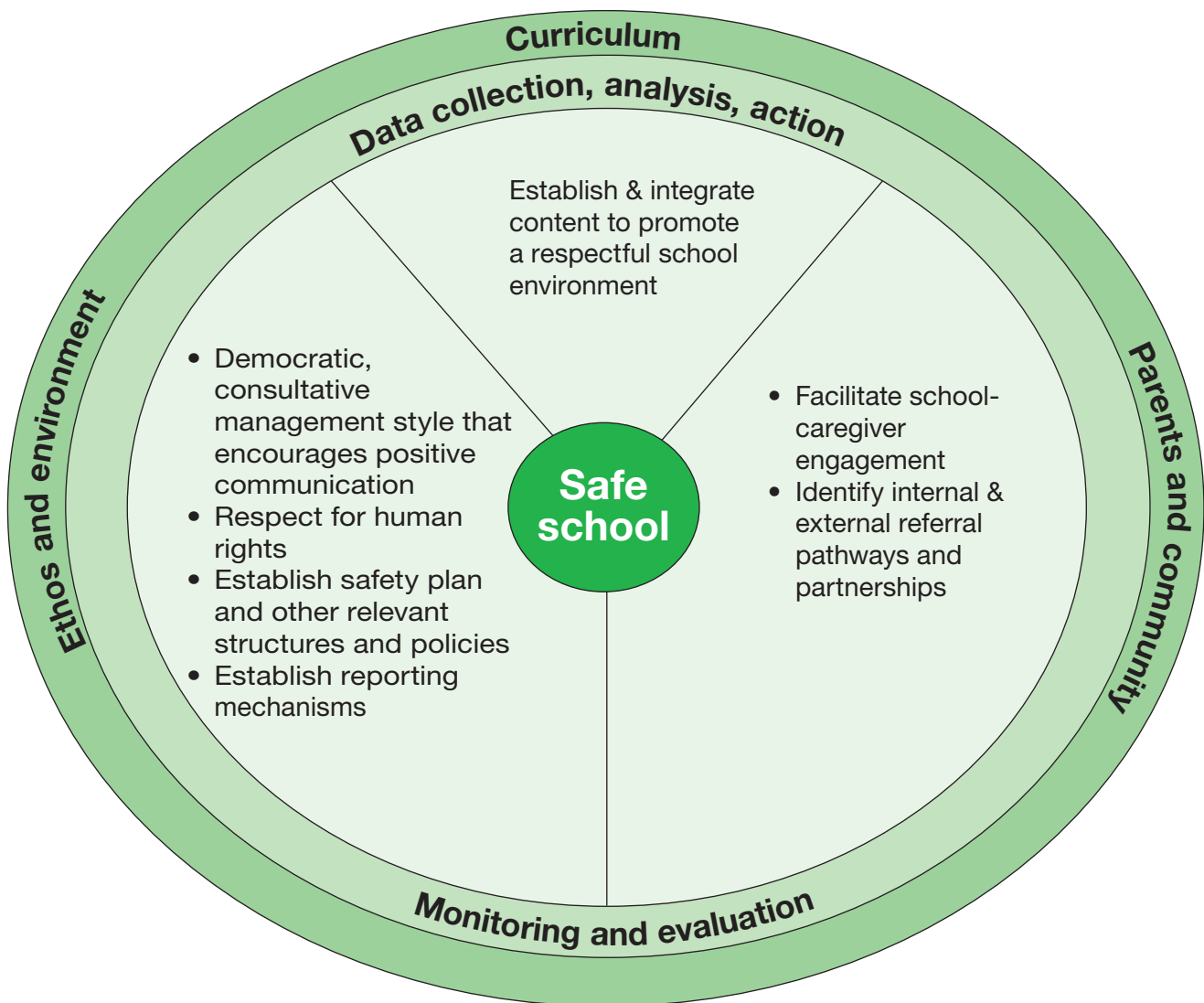
Creating safer schools requires a whole-school approach. The school is made up of several 'components', namely, learners, educators, principals, school management teams, school governing bodies (SGBs), and parents or caregivers. Together, these components interact and exist within the greater system of the home and community. Only by dealing with all aspects of the system will violence ultimately be reduced and eradicated. This calls for a carefully targeted, coherent system of programmes and interventions that complement rather than duplicate each other. This requires the continuous support and dedication of school administrators, principals, educators, support staff, learners and caregivers.

**There are three main components to a whole school approach:**

- **Establishing a positive ethos and environment:** Schools need to create an inclusive, respectful culture that promotes and protects respect for human rights. School management teams need to promote democratic management and decision-making at all levels. They also need to create a policy framework that is in line with South Africa's constitution and legislation, and protects and promotes safety and respect for human rights.
- **Involving caregivers and communities:** Schools need to work with caregivers to understand and address safety issues. Schools can also tap into and support activities within the broader community. Identifying and establishing linkages with relevant community stakeholders can help schools to provide specific and specialised interventions and support. It can also help to ensure that activities within schools and communities complement one another.
- **Curriculum development:** Schools need to develop and integrate teaching materials into existing curricula to support the achievement of a safe and respectful environment. Respect for human rights needs to be incorporated into all relevant curricula and equip children with the information and skills to help create a safer school.

Underlying all three of these components is evidence-based decision-making and monitoring and evaluation. It is important that strategies are informed by high-quality information to ensure responsive interventions. The collection and analysis of data on changes in the safety of educators and learners can also help schools to assess how well interventions are working and if and where changes need to be made. A well-functioning monitoring and evaluation system can help schools to feel confident about their progress in achieving a safer school environment.

The *School Safety Framework* takes a whole-school approach to assessing and improving school safety. The materials start from the premise that well-managed schools that have clear rules and consequences, fair procedures and involve all members of the school community (educators, caregivers, principals, administrators) and other actors experience lower levels of violence. They also create an environment that supports better teaching and learning. The four building blocks of the School Safety Framework Toolkit: be prepared, be aware, take action and take care – all emphasise a clear policy framework, the creation of a human rights culture, building relationships between all members of the school community, and nurturing partnerships to support learners and build school safety (see *School Safety Framework*, Book 1).



# Implementing a whole-school approach

The materials in this Manual are designed to dovetail with the broader *School Safety Framework* approach to creating safer schools, and are designed to work alongside *School Safety Framework's* other tools and activities. Implementing *School Safety Framework's* whole-school approach to school safety involves:

- **Assessing.** Developing a needs-based programme creates a sense of ownership and commitment. Use the information collected in the *School Safety Framework* Educator and Learner Surveys to assess the use of negative discipline techniques in the school (See Book 2 and 3 of the *School Safety Framework*) to assess what is happening in your school and how best to respond. Conduct skills needs assessments with principals and educators and other relevant actors to identify areas where they feel support is needed.
- **Planning.** Use the information gathered in the assessment to develop an implementation plan, identify key issues, prospective strategies and responsibilities.
- **Involving multiple stakeholders.** Successful partnerships are built on a shared vision, commitment, values, resources and understanding of the need to work together. Engage and include the different actors in the school community, including school management teams, principals, educators, support staff, learners and caregivers. Include learners in the development and implementation of the programmes.
- **Being realistic and inclusive.** Provide children with age appropriate materials, discussions and time limits; adopt a **gender-sensitive** approach.
- **Action.** Link plans, policies and information to action. Intervene fairly, transparently, quickly and decisively where problems and problem-behaviour occur.
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** Establish an ongoing monitoring and evaluation framework. Use the *School Safety Framework* Incident Assessment and Monitoring tools (see Book 4 of the *School Safety Framework*) to assess the effectiveness of interventions and identify areas that need to be strengthened.

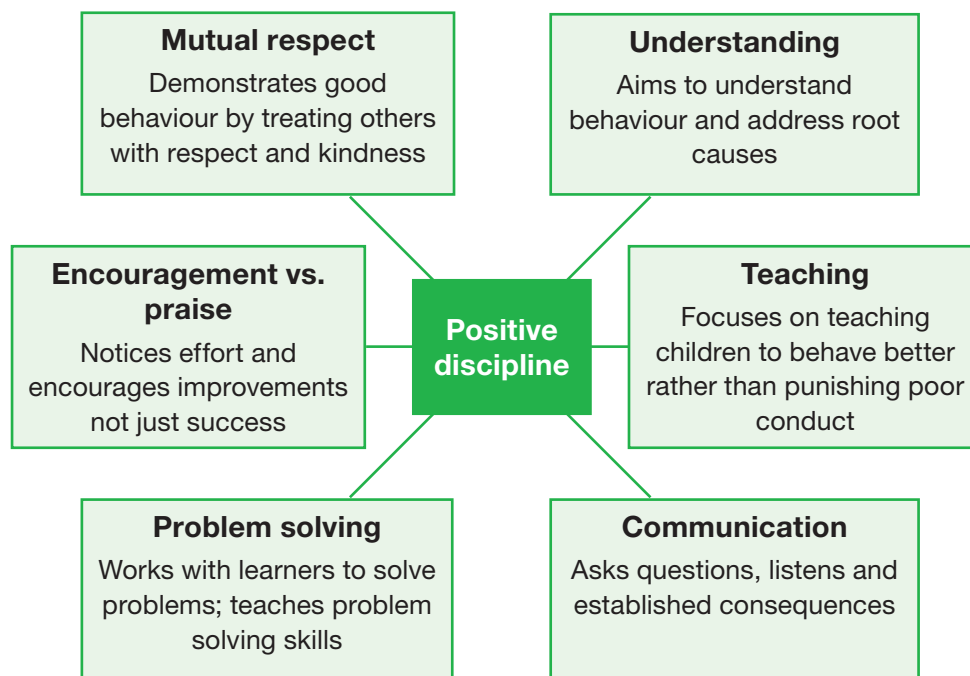


The National Education Policy Act and the South African School's Act prohibits:

- Physical punishment
- Cruel or demeaning treatment
- Psychological abuse
- Solitary confinement
- Lock-outs

## Understanding positive discipline

The positive discipline approach has several different aspects. All prioritise the best interests of the child and seek to create environment in which children is supported to learn and explore. Key elements include:



The positive discipline approach is based on several education principles. It is:

- **Holistic.** It recognises the links between individual development, learning, behaviour, academic achievement, family relationships and community health
- **Strengths based.** It aims to build on children's abilities, efforts and improvements. Mistakes are opportunities to learn and improve. Takes children's developmental stage into account
- **Constructive:** Rather than punishing misbehaviour or mistakes, educators explain, demonstrate and model the concepts and behaviours to be learned
- **Inclusive:** The emphasis is on teaching to children's individual needs, strengths, social skills and learning styles within an integrated classroom – to the best of the school's ability
- **Proactive:** It aims to help children succeed in the long-term. The focus is on understanding the root of the problem and putting in place strategies that will help to address them
- **Participatory:** Rather than force and control, this approach seeks out learners' opinions and perspectives, and involves them in creating a classroom environment that supports learning.



When necessary, positive discipline includes non-violent consequences for poor behaviour. It uses consequences that replace the experience of humiliation with measures to:

- Help children understand the effects of their behaviour
- Help children identify alternative and preferred behaviours
- Help children understand why a preferred behaviour is important
- Ensure that children make amends for harm done to others or the environment.

This approach may require learners to engage in writing essays, making apologies or performing chores in the classroom – any activities that make them stop, think and demonstrate their intention to act differently in the future.



Positive discipline is not:	Positive discipline is:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permissiveness</li> <li>• Letting learners do whatever they want</li> <li>• About having no rules, limits or expectations</li> <li>• About short-term reactions</li> <li>• Alternative punishments to slapping, hitting and shaming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term solutions that develop learners' own self-discipline</li> <li>• Clear and consistent communication</li> <li>• Consistent reinforcement of your expectations, rules and limits</li> <li>• Based on getting to know learners and being fair</li> <li>• Building a mutually respectful relationship with learners</li> <li>• Teaching learners life-long skills and fostering their love of learning</li> <li>• Teaching courtesy, non-violence, empathy, self-respect and respect for others and their rights</li> </ul>



### **Rights and discipline**

Human rights at school are often regarded as the reason that children misbehave or that educators are unable to exercise 'control' over the learning environment. This view completely misses what human rights are all about. For there to be a true culture of rights at school, responsibilities are very important. A rights-based culture at school is based on respect, responsibility, self-discipline and dignity. This requires respect for others, hard work, the pursuit of excellence, and participation and commitment to the well being of others, both inside and outside the school community.

For more on human rights in education see LEADSA, 2010. *Building a Culture of Responsibility and Humanity in Our Schools: A guide for educators*. Department of Basic Education. Available at [www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7sgDgKbLtJA%3D&tabid=93&mid=1722](http://www.education.gov.za/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=7sgDgKbLtJA%3D&tabid=93&mid=1722)



## Activity for educators: How do I know if I am using positive discipline?

The following table will help you analyse your current approach to teaching. Read through the table and compare the two columns. Consider how you would rate yourself based on the guide provided. Assess yourself by circling a number for each row (rows A to F). Be as honest as possible, since this activity is entirely for your own learning.

### Choosing a number

- 1: Your approach is completely described by the positive discipline column.
- 2: the positive discipline column mostly describes your approach, although you have some doubts.
- 3: You are not sure. You agree with parts of the descriptions in both columns.
- 4: the corporal punishment column mostly describes your approach, although you have some doubts.
- 5: Your approach is completely described by the corporal punishment column.

### Interpreting your score

Once you have circled a number for each row, add up the circled numbers to determine your score.

A total score of 6 to 14 means you are already practicing the ideas of positive discipline. You could be a valuable role model for other educators in your school and could take a leadership role in creating a good school for your community.

A total score of 15 to 21 means you agree with some ideas of positive discipline and would also gain from building your understanding and skills. Review the contents of this handbook and meet with your colleagues to discuss the ideas presented. Through discussions with colleagues you can advance your skills and knowledge with greater ease and support.

A total score of 22 to 30 means you approach education using the ideas of corporal punishment. We hope you will choose to engage with some of the ideas in this handbook and begin to think about the effectiveness of using a positive discipline approach.

As you improve your knowledge and skills for using positive discipline, continue to re-evaluate yourself. Aim to decrease the difference between the two scores.

Positive discipline		Negative disciplinary methods				
Motivates. You never use violence and instead role model values and behaviours that children aspire to acquire. While doing so, you provide a clear indication of rewards and consequences for choices.	Punishes. You use fear or shame to ensure that children think or behave in a prescribed way. You use such punishments as beating, insulting and humiliating					
<b>A</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
Aims to empower children. You help children take responsibility for making good decisions by providing them with the skills and environment to freely explore ideas.	Aims to create obedient children. You create a classroom environment in which children learn to obey what they are told instead of think for themselves.					
Child-centric. You consider all issues from a child's perspective and calculate all your responses based on how they will help children learn from their mistakes.	Teacher-centric. Your priorities prevail in all considerations and your point of view determines the right course of action.					
<b>B</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
Democratic. You tolerate different ideas and even mistakes if they may lead to constructive learning. Your aim is to create workable rules that are mutually beneficial.	Authoritarian. You tell children what to do and punish them if they choose another course of action.					
<b>C</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
Values and respects individuality. You accept that all of us are individuals with a variety of views and priorities. You welcome these differences.	Values conformity. You reward those who behave and think like you do and punish those who do not.					
<b>D</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
Long-term development. Your approach is based on nurturing the development of the whole child over a long period of time.	Short-term compliance. Your approach aims to create obedience in a specific situation. It only gives secondary and indirect consideration to the long-term development of the child.					
<b>E</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	

Source: Naker and Sekitoleko, 2009

# Implementing a whole-school approach to positive discipline

Implementing a whole-school approach to positive discipline requires that all members of the school community work together to review policies and procedures, create a supportive environment, and learn and apply new skills and methods. Steps involved in implementing a positive discipline approach:

- **Step 1:**  
**Assess, educate and learn.** Read further on positive discipline and what it entails. Identify areas where staff require support and provide training and resources for educators and administrators on how to use positive discipline.
- **Step 2:**  
**Create a shared vision.** Create or review a shared vision for the school that is child-centred and empowering, and supports a positive discipline approach.
- **Step 3:**  
**Raise awareness about the school's approach.** Meet with SGBs, principals and other school staff to present and explain the school's approach and how the school plans to implement it. Discuss changes and plans with learners. Arrange open-days or caregiver-teacher meetings to discuss the issues with caregivers.
- **Step 4:**  
**Ensure that the school's code of conduct reflects a positive discipline approach.** The code of conduct should provide a framework for creating a positive culture of behaviour. All members of the school community should have an opportunity to contribute and provide feedback.
- **Step 5:**  
**Keep actors engaged.** Establish a coordinating team to drive the process of integrating positive discipline into the school's approach, or ensure that existing bodies are empowered to incorporate positive discipline. The coordinating team should draw on all members of the school community, including learners from different grades, educators from different grades, non-teaching staff, governing bodies and caregivers.
- **Step 6:**  
**Incorporate material aimed at developing children's social skills into the curriculum.** Types of skills include survival skills aimed at helping children to operate effectively in the classroom, interpersonal, problem solving and conflict-resolution skills.
- **Step 7:**  
**Evaluate and monitor.** Communicate regularly with staff, learners and caregivers to assess the implementation of positive discipline principles, problems, issues and gaps to monitor progress and ensure that principals and educators receive the support they need.

## Tips for involving parents

The positive discipline approach is most effective where there is communication between parents and educators, and consistency in discipline style between the school and home environments.

There are many different ways of engaging parents. Some useful strategies include:

- **Tip 1:**  
**Share codes of conduct.** Send copies of the school and classroom code of conduct home with learners and/or review and discuss the code at parent-teacher meetings. Encourage parents to discuss both the school and classroom code of conduct with their children and to sign and return copies of the codes.
- **Tip 2:**  
**Get to know the child.** Show an interest in the child. Caregivers are more likely to hear a range of feedback about a child if they feel the educator knows what is special about their child.
- **Tip 3:**  
**Meet caregivers.** Arrange parent-teacher meetings and open days. Set up home visits or school visits when you need the caregiver's support. Try to find a solution together with the caregiver and the learner and set up follow-up meetings to review progress.
- **Tip 3:**  
**Share good news.** Do not just focus on bad news; make an effort to share good news with parents and caregivers. Phone parents or write a note telling them about the child's achievements or progress.
- **Tip 4:**  
**Homework.** Show caregivers how they can help their child with homework. Check with learners and caregivers about how they are coping with assigned work. Think carefully about what kind of homework tasks you are setting and whether these skills are best taught at school or at home.



### Commitment forms

It is important that the code of conduct is disseminated to and read by all relevant role-players. It is a good idea to get learners and their parents to sign a commitment form to show that they have read the code of conduct and agree to abide by its rules. This process should be repeated at the beginning of each school year and when changes are made.



See Appendix 1 for an example of Caregiver-Learner Commitment Form

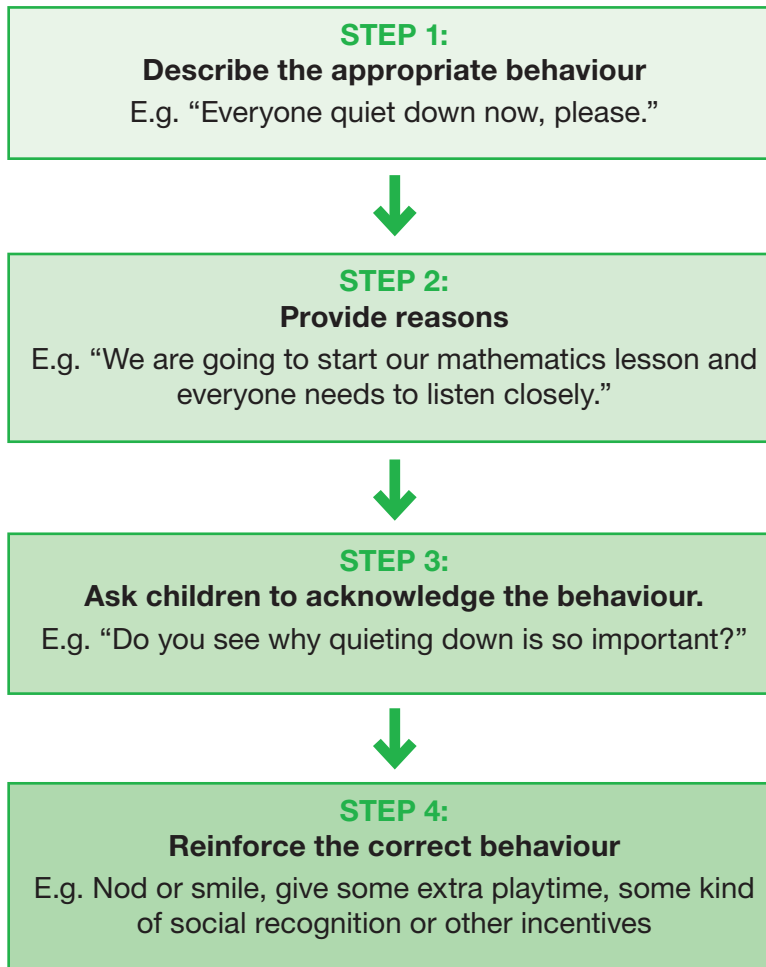
# Implementing positive discipline in the classroom

There are many practices that can help principals, educators and caregivers to implement positive discipline effectively. These include:

- **Focusing on the positives.**  
Build children's self-confidence by recognising and supporting positive behaviour.
- **Showing interest and pay attention.**  
Create opportunities to talk and listen, so that you get to know each child. Asking children about their personal interests and hobbies can also build self-esteem and a sense of belonging.
- **Setting a good example.**  
Children learn by observing the adults around them. Model the positive behaviour that is expected from children such as kindness, patience and tolerance.
- **Shared decision-making.**  
Involve children in drawing up a classroom code of conduct. When children are involved in making the rules, they are more likely to follow them and to take responsibility for their actions.
- **Listening before judging.**  
Ask questions to find out why children misbehaved or did not complete their homework. Listen to children's explanations; they may have good reasons for not doing their homework, such as conditions at home.
- **Being consistent.**  
Be fair and consistent and avoid showing any favouritism. Apply the same rules to everyone.
- **Separating the behaviour from the child.**  
If a child does something wrong or makes a mistake, don't judge them. Focus on the behaviour and what needs to be done to make it right. Children often make poor decisions and they must be given the chance to learn from their mistakes.
- **Respecting diversity.**  
Create opportunities to discuss, acknowledge and value the differences among learners including their culture, language, religion, gender and age. Encourage them to listen to and respect other points of view.
- **Cultivating mutual respect for rights.**  
Children are more likely to respect the rights of others if their own rights are being respected. Schools should always respect the human dignity and physical integrity of both adults and children.

Providing structured information on how learners should behave can help to prevent problem-behaviour. Establishing classroom rules or a classroom code of conduct is helpful as it establishes what is expected of both learners and educators (see the *School Safety Framework* module on Classroom Management for more information on creating a classroom code of conduct). Illustrating and reinforcing the positive behaviour is also important. For example:

## Implementing positive discipline in the classroom



### The Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa

The Department of Basic Education has developed a Bill of Responsibilities for the Youth of South Africa. This outlines the role that youth should play in building South Africa and their responsibilities with respect to achieving the rights established in South Africa’s constitution. Key responsibilities with particular bearing on positive discipline include their:

- Responsibility in ensuring the right to human dignity: To treat people with reverence, respect and dignity. To be kind, compassionate and sensitive to every human being, including greeting them warmly and speaking to them courteously
- Responsibility with respect to education: To attend school regularly, to learn, and to work hard. To cooperate respectfully with educators and fellow learners and to adhere to the rules and the Code of Conduct of the school
- Responsibility in ensuring the right to own property: To respect the property of others. To take pride in and protect both private and public property, and not to take what belongs to others
- Responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of expression: To respect other people’s right to freedom of expression. To acknowledge too that there are limits to this freedom, and to never express views that advocate hatred, or are based on prejudices with regard to race, ethnicity, gender or religion
- Responsibility in ensuring the right to freedom of religion, belief and opinion: To allow others to choose and practice the religion of their choice, and to hold their own beliefs and opinions, without fear or prejudice. To respect the beliefs and opinions of others, and their right to express these, even when we may strongly disagree with these beliefs and opinions.

The Bill of Responsibilities provides a useful platform for educators to discuss with learners their rights and responsibilities, particularly with regard to how to treat others and their responsibilities as learners. A poster of the full Bill can be accessed at [www.pod945.co.za/podcast/other/BOR/files/POSTER%20FINAL.pdf](http://www.pod945.co.za/podcast/other/BOR/files/POSTER%20FINAL.pdf).



## TIP

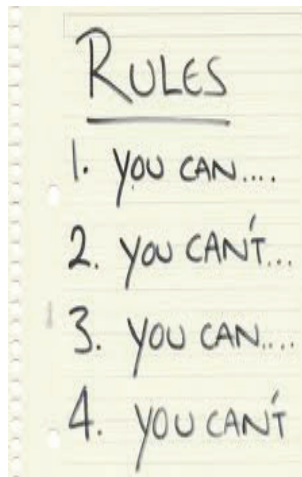
When using positive discipline, follow a 4:1 ratio. Catch a student, or a class, doing something correctly four times for every one time you find them doing something incorrectly. Be consistent. By using this four to one ratio consistently, you show your learners that you really are serious about catching them doing something correctly and rewarding them immediately.

## Avoiding negative discipline

It is important to avoid criticizing, discouraging, creating obstacles and barriers, blaming, shaming, or being sarcastic. Examples of negative discipline responses include:

- **Commanding:** "Go over there and sit down!"
- **Forbidding:** "Stop that!" "Don't touch that!" "Don't do it like that!"
- **Criticising:** "You are going to break that"
- **Belittling:** "When are you going to get it right?" "When are you going to learn to do what I say?"
- **Threatening:** "I will send you to the Principal's office!" "You are going to be in so much trouble"
- **Unreasonable punishments:** "You are going to stand in the corner for the whole day!" "I am giving you detention for the whole month!"

Removing children from the group, or isolation in a time-out chair or a corner may have negative consequences, as it can shame and embarrass the child and may encourage teasing. It is better to correct the behaviour verbally and then to move on with the lesson.



### Activity for educators: How negative am I?

Most educators give "don't" commands to learners from time-to-time: "Don't talk in class". "Don't run around the room." In many cases we do not realise how often we give these commands. They just come naturally.

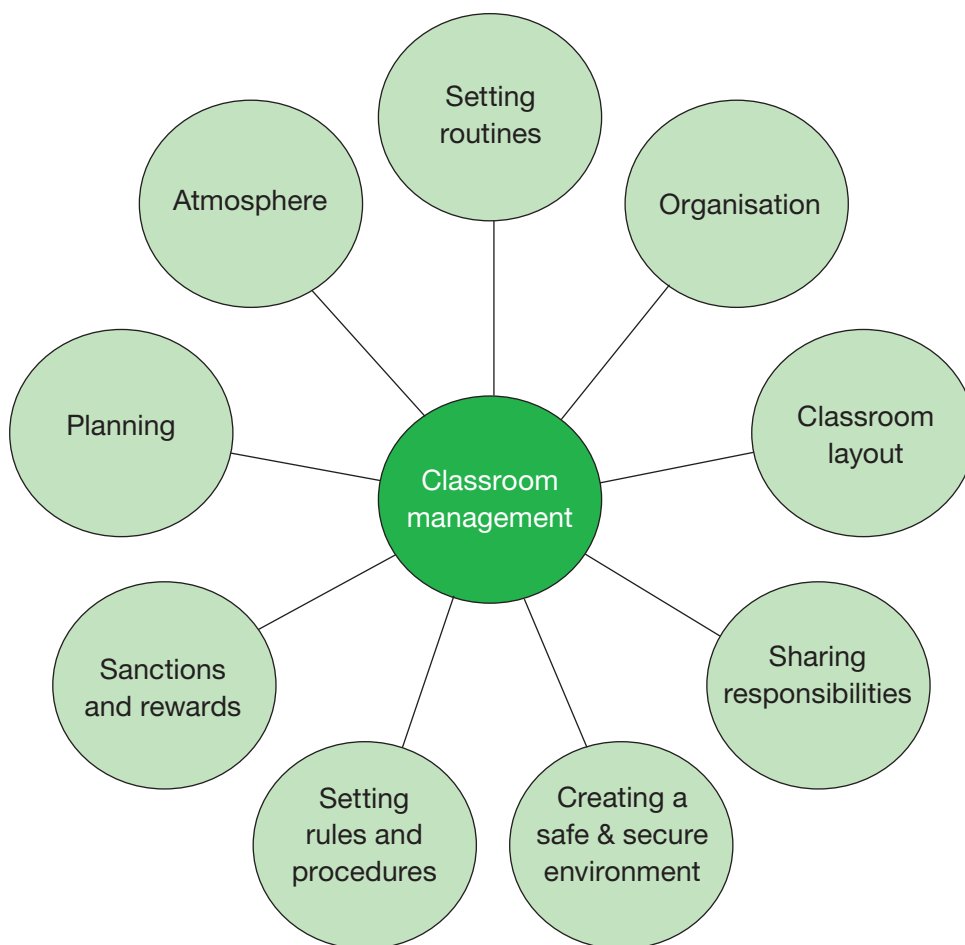
If you want to find out how often you give "don't" commands, select a learner in your class (or ask a teacher's aide for help) and give them a box of small stones or shells and a cloth or plastic bag, or some cardboard and a marker. Ask them to listen to you for one week. Whenever the student hears you give a "don't" command, ask them to take one of the stones or shells out of the box and put it in the bag, or to make a mark on the cardboard. At the end of the week, count how many stones or shells are in the bag.

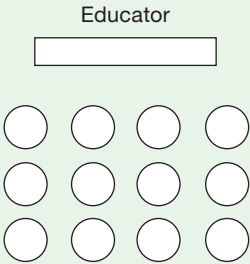
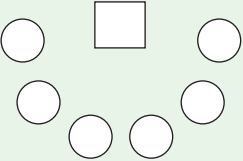
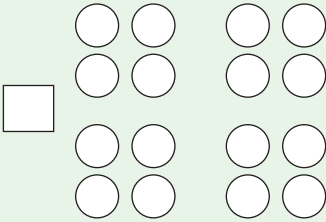
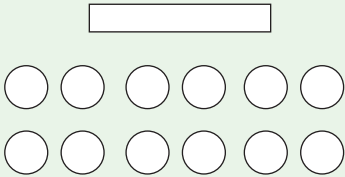
Adapted from Durant, 2006



# Creating an environment conducive to learning

The first step in implementing a positive discipline approach is to create a classroom environment that is conducive to positive discipline. Effective classroom management can help to create an environment and space that is conducive to a positive discipline approach. It also makes teaching easier and less stressful. Classroom management involves:



<p><b>Rows</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Educator</p> 	<p><b>Advantage:</b> Greater privacy and fewer distractions</p> <p><b>Works best:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amongst older learners in middle and secondary school who require less direct instruction</li> <li>• Where children need to work on tasks independently</li> <li>• For tests and examinations</li> </ul>
<p><b>U-shape</b></p> 	<p><b>Advantage:</b> Promotes discussion and debate</p> <p><b>Works best:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the educator wants to instruct the class, as learners have a clear view of the educator</li> <li>• Where the educator wants to encourage participation</li> <li>• Where the educators wants children to work together as a class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Clusters</b></p> 	<p><b>Advantage:</b> Educators are able to circulate more easily around the classroom and assist learners</p> <p><b>Works best:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amongst younger children and groups that require greater instruction</li> <li>• Where educators want to encourage collaborative learning</li> <li>• Where educators want to mix children with varying academic abilities</li> <li>• For hands-on tasks that require practicing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Two at a desk</b></p> 	<p><b>Advantage:</b> Allows both collaborative work and independent work</p> <p><b>Works best:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where the educator wants children to work in pairs</li> </ul>

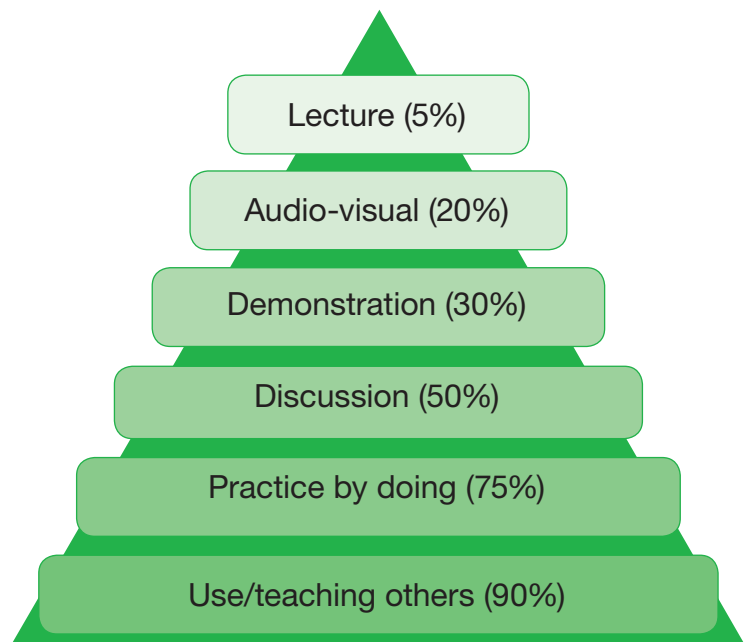
## Classroom environment checklist

- Will the learners feel comfortable?
- Is the classroom arrangement conducive to learning?
- Is the classroom safe?
- Can I monitor all the learners at once?
- Can my learners hear me?
- Do the learners know what is expected of them?
- Is my classroom free of traffic jams?
- Is there flexibility in my seating?
- Are there enough workstations and special interest sites?
- Are the classroom rules posted where the class can see them?

Using different seating arrangements to support learning

The best way to deal with undesirable behaviour is to prevent it happening in the first place. There are several things that educators can do to better maintain control in the classroom:

- **Tip 1:**  
**Clearly communicate expectations.** Learners should know exactly what is expected of them, and exactly what kinds of behaviour is and is not permitted.
- **Tip 2:**  
**Make lessons interesting.** Develop activities that both match the subject matter well and keep learners interested and busy.
- **Tip 3:**  
**Allocate and use time effectively.** Always keep learners occupied constructively. Have some additional activities planned in case you or they finish content quicker than expected. Keep time between tasks or lessons as short as possible.
- **Tip 4:**  
**Keep lessons flowing:** Deal with disruptions immediately and with as little interruption as possible.
- **Tip 5:**  
**Start fresh every day.** Start teaching your class each day with the expectation that learners will behave. Do not hold a grudge or assume that a particular learner will misbehave.



**Engaging children:  
How we remember information delivered in different ways**



## Activity for educators: Create a classroom procedures plan

Planning your approach in the classroom establishes a framework for more effective classroom management. Think about and write down how you will handle these issues in your classroom:

<b>Talk?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What should learners do when they want to ask a question or contribute?</li><li>• When can learners talk and to whom?</li><li>• When I need to leave the classroom?</li></ul>
<b>Movement?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When can learners get out of their seats?</li><li>• When children arrive at the beginning of the class?</li><li>• Leaving the room during class and at the end of class?</li><li>• Seating arrangements?</li><li>• Group activities?</li></ul>
<b>Time?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learner tardiness and absences?</li><li>• Starting the class?</li><li>• Incomplete homework or poor preparation?</li><li>• Learners who are slower to understand?</li><li>• Learners who finish early?</li></ul>
<b>Teacher/ student relationships?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do learners speak to me and when?</li><li>• Rewards and consequences and for what?</li><li>• Teaching learners the processes and procedures I want in the class?</li></ul>
<b>Student/student relationships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How are learners expected to behave towards each other?</li><li>• Group work?</li><li>• Whether learners help each other?</li></ul>

Adapted from Peace Corps, no date

# Dealing with misbehaviour

The first challenge involved in addressing misbehaviour is to understand the reasons for the child's behaviour and to evaluate whether it deserves a disciplinary response.

Often poor behaviour results from factors outside a child's control and will not eliminate the behaviour. Punishing a child for being late because they experienced transport problems, for example, is inappropriate.

Poor choices, based on attitudes, beliefs or knowledge, are more amenable to discipline. For example, sometimes children make no effort to arrive on time for school because they do not believe that being on time is important. These beliefs can and should be corrected.

## Understanding children's behaviour

Behaviour is understandable and purposeful. Learners do what they do for a reason, even if we don't understand what it is. It is important to try and see the world through their eyes, and to understand the issues that may be affecting how they act in class.

### A behaviour checklist:

- Is there a problem with the subject material or approach?
- Is the child trying to get attention or are they otherwise emotionally motivated?
- Does the behaviour reflect difficulties at school?
- Does the behaviour reflect personal problems or problems at home?
- Does the behaviour reflect socio-economic issues?
- Could it reflect medical or biological issues?

It is important to talk to learners to understand their backgrounds and the issues and challenges they face; it is important to get to the bottom of what is behind the behaviour rather than focusing on only what someone has done wrong. Understanding the context and circumstances that shape learners' behaviour will not only point to solutions, it can also prevent unfair punishments, which often feeds an on-going cycle of anger, resentment and disruptive behaviour.



### If learners are talking or messing around:

- Stand near them to let them know that you are aware of their behaviour, give them a stern look or tap them on the shoulder
- Say the student's name in a natural way and get their attention; for example "as you can see John, much of the Earth is covered by oceans."
- Ask them if they have something to share with the class
- Separate them
- Give them a job to do, such as handing out materials or stationery



## TIPS

### Dealing with parent-child conflicts

**Tip 1: Cool off before dealing with a conflict.** Conflicts are harder to solve when you are emotional.

**Tip 2: Communicate.** Explain calmly what the problem is for you and ask your child to do the same.

**Tip 3: Do not dig up the past.** Focus on what is making you angry right now. Once something has been dealt with previously, leave it and move on.

**Tip 4: Listen.** Be careful not to excuse the child's feelings or explain them away. Try to see things from their perspective.

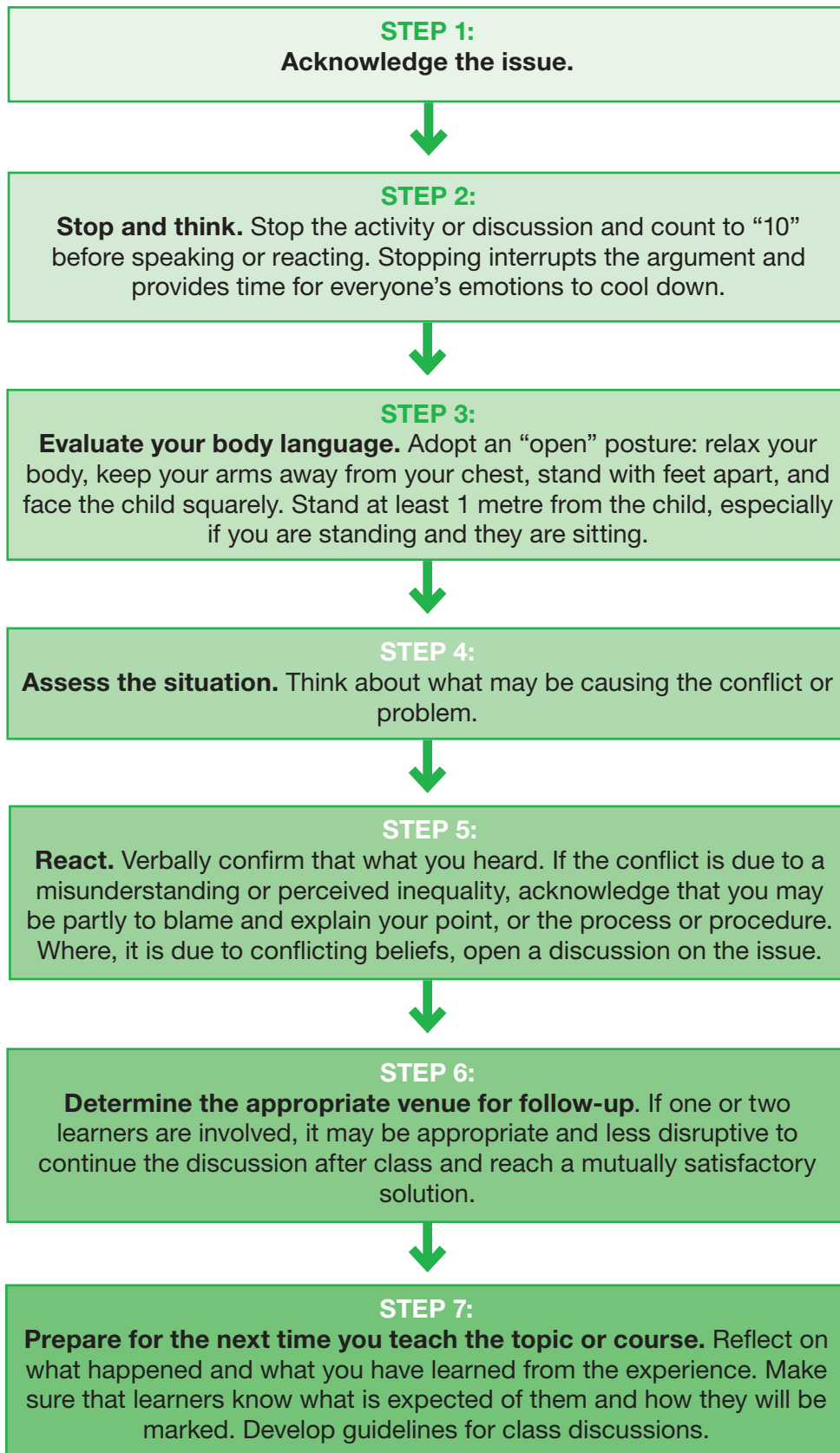
**Tip 5: Ensure you understand each other.** Restate what you heard them say and get them to do the same.

**Tip 6: Take responsibility.** It is important to acknowledge where you may have contributed to the conflict. This helps your child to feel listened to and serves as a basis for finding solutions.

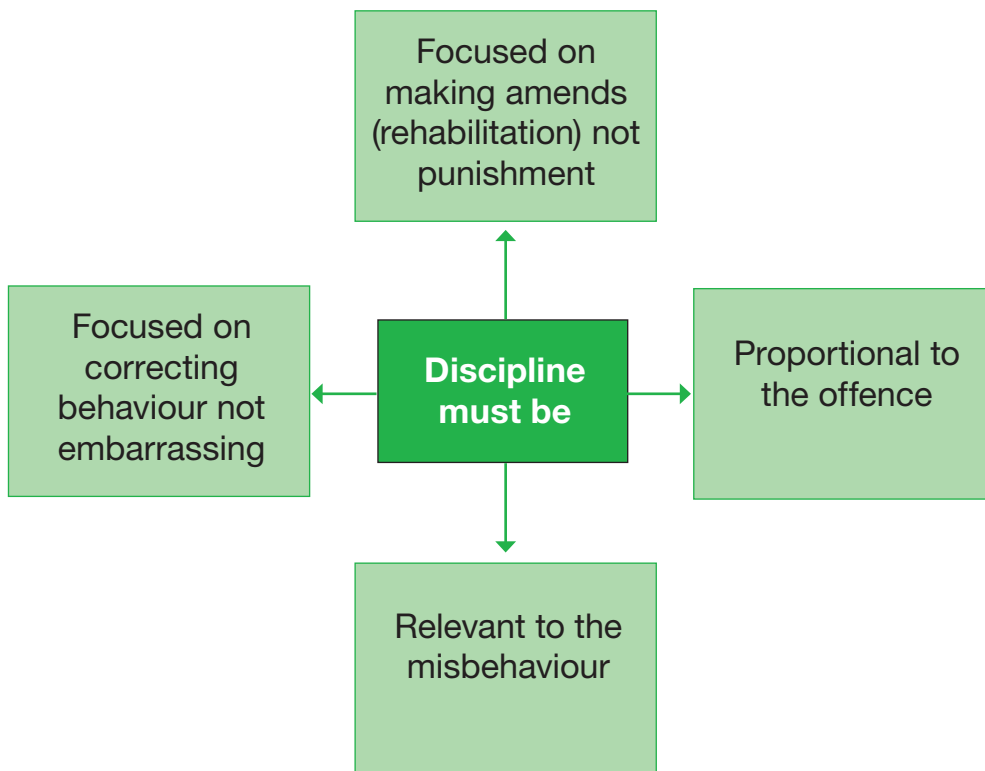
**Tip 7: Be consistent and follow through.** Find consistent consequences and make sure that they are implemented every time and equally for all children.

## Dealing with conflict in the classroom

Preventing and dealing with conflict is an important skill. The following process can help educators deal with conflict:



# Disciplining learners



There are many kinds of **misconduct**, some more serious than others. The South African Education Department identifies five levels of misconduct, ranging from minor misbehaviour to serious, criminal behaviour.



## TIPS

### Resolving conflicts between learners

**Step 1: Listen To Both Sides.** Calm down the learners to avoid any more flair-ups. Once things have settled down, ask them, one at a time, to give their version of the events that led up to the conflict.

**Step 2: Remain Neutral.** Repeat each learner's version of the events. Ask those involved if you are correctly telling their viewpoint.

**Step 3: Find Ways to Resolve the Conflict.** After everyone has had a chance to speak, move forward to determine how to resolve the conflict. If learners are still angry or refuse to see another's viewpoint, you may have to offer ideas of your own to get them to join in the conversation of coming up with solutions.

**Step 4: Follow Up.** Follow up to make sure that learners carry out the ideas that were agreed upon. The experience can also be used as a lesson for the entire class on how to handle conflicts.



See Appendix 2  
for an example of  
a written warning  
form

See Appendix 3 for  
an example of a  
commitment form

Levels	Examples of misbehaviour	Examples of consequences
<p><b>Level 1: Misbehaviour inside the classroom</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: The class teacher</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lateness/bunking</li> <li>• incomplete homework</li> <li>• not responding to instructions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• verbal warnings</li> <li>• extra work related to offence</li> <li>• stay in class to complete work after school</li> <li>• making amends</li> <li>• community service</li> <li>• classroom chores, e.g. sweeping</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 2: Misbehaviour by breaking rules</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Senior staff member</p> <p>Parental involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• smoking</li> <li>• graffiti</li> <li>• dishonesty</li> <li>• abusive language</li> <li>• disrupting class work</li> <li>• leaving school without permission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written warnings</li> <li>• disciplinary talk with learner</li> <li>• signing a behaviour contract with learner</li> <li>• talking with their caregivers</li> <li>• daily behaviour report signed by teacher and learner</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 3: Serious misbehaviour or violation of school codes</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Principal</p> <p>Parental involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inflicting minor injury on others</li> <li>• being racist, sexist or discriminatory</li> <li>• vandalism, stealing or cheating</li> <li>• possessing dangerous weapons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• written warning of noting that the learner could be suspended</li> <li>• referral to social worker or counsellor</li> <li>• community service</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 4: Very serious misbehaviour or violation of school rules</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Principal and school governing body (SGB)</p> <p>Involvement of parents, social work services and the South African Police Service (SAPS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• threats using dangerous weapon/s</li> <li>• causing intentional limited injury to others</li> <li>• engaging in sexual activities</li> <li>• possessing, selling or using alcohol/drugs</li> <li>• forging documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• refer learner for counselling</li> <li>• apply to education department for limited suspension from all school activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Level 5: Criminal acts which violate school codes and breach the law</b></p> <p>Dealt with by: Principal, SGB and provincial education department</p> <p>Involvement of parents, social work services and the SAPS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sexual harassment, abuse, rape or assault</li> <li>• robbery, stealing or burglary</li> <li>• using a dangerous weapon</li> <li>• murder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apply to education department for expulsion or transfer of learner</li> <li>• allow for civil or criminal prosecution</li> </ul>



Schools need to make a list of the kinds of misconduct they recognise, decide how seriously they are viewed and decided how to deal with the learners involved. This information needs to be incorporated into the school's code of conduct.

Schools' responses to misconduct must be in line with the South African Schools Act. The Department of Basic Education provides suggestions on how to respond to misbehaviour, particularly more serious incidents: These include:

- Providing verbal warning or written reprimands
- Supervised school work that will contribute to the learner's progress at school
- Demerits
- Performing tasks that compensate or benefit the injured party
- Replacement of damaged property
- Detention in which learners use their time constructively but within the confines of the classroom
- Suspension from school activities, including sports and cultural activities.

## Dealing with serious misconduct

A learner suspected or accused of serious misconduct should be referred to the principal. If the principal believes that the misconduct is serious enough, it should be referred to the SGB, who will oversee a disciplinary process. Formal disciplinary processes must be in line with the South African Schools Act. See Appendix 4 for more on the requirements for a disciplinary process

An independent tribunal conducts the disciplinary process. The tribunal is appointed by the SGB, and must contain at least two people. These cannot be people involved either directly or indirectly in the case. It can include people from outside the school, with the written approval of the governing body.

There are several steps involved in a disciplinary process:

- **Step 1:**  
The first step is to conduct a thorough investigation to determine what happened.
- **Step 2:**  
The second is the disciplinary hearing where the evidence is considered and the parties involved are able to address the members of the tribunal. Both parties must have an equal opportunity to make their case, the process must be fair and just and the evidence must be considered consistently.
- **Step 3:**  
The SGB makes recommendations on how to proceed.

Under the South African School's Act, a learner can be suspended or expelled if found guilty of serious misconduct following a fair hearing. Suspensions last one week or less, while learners are expelled permanently from the school. A learner can appeal against a suspension or expulsion.



See Appendix 4 for more on the requirements for a disciplinary process



**Note: Formal disciplinary processes should not be taken lightly.**

While schools have a responsibility to act against serious misconduct, it is important to remember that the outcome of a disciplinary process can have a lasting impact on the learner. Expulsion, in particular, can impact on a learner's prospects of future study and work. Formal disciplinary processes should always be a last resort, and should only be used in very serious cases. The primary goal should always be to correct behaviour and keep children within the education system.

# Glossary

Belittle	To put down and devalue; to make a person feel small
Gender	Gender norms refer to the socially prescribed attitudes and behaviour and roles given to men and women. Gender is not the same as sex; while 'sex' refers to the biological differences between males and females, 'gender' is about what society expects from males and females
Humane	Characterised by kindness, mercy, or compassion
Humiliate	To cause someone a painful loss of pride, self-respect or dignity; or to seriously embarrass him or her.
Imbue	To inspire or influence thoroughly.
Inclusivity	Embracing everyone regardless of his or her race, gender, age, sexual orientation, where they come from or any other characteristic.
Misconduct	Improper behaviour; behaviour that does not meet with rules and what is considered acceptable behaviour in a particular group or institution.
Modelling	Acting in the way that you want the children to act.
Oversight	Watchful care or management; supervision.
Permissiveness	Involves yielding completely to another person's wishes; allowing people to do whatever they want.
Self-discipline	Involves disciplining or developing the power to discipline one's own acts, feelings and desires, usually with the intention of improving oneself.
Self-esteem	A feeling of pride in yourself
Self-efficacy	Feeling in control of your life; that you can influence the events that affect your life. It also refers to a sense that one is capable and can achieve what you are asked or want to do.
Stifle	To keep in, hold back or limit.
Vision	In the school context, a common vision refers to a common set of ideas about what the school community feels to be important and the goals it hopes to achieve.

# Appendix 1: Example of a learner-parent commitment form

## Commitment Form

I, .....a learner at..... School,  
understand the rules and their implications and hereby commit to:

- Abide by the Code of Conduct and Disciplinary System.
- Behave in a courteous and considerate manner and respect other learners, the Learners' Representative Council, all members of staff and visitors to the School.
- Treat everyone with respect regardless of differences in culture, religion, ability, race, gender, age, sexual orientation or social class.
- Take responsibility for my learning by attending regularly and punctually and completing all my assessment tasks on time.
- Cooperate with my educators and other School staff.
- Assist in making the School a safe place for all.
- Seek help if I need it.
- Let the School know if I feel my rights have been infringed, or if I experience any other difficulty

.....

Learner

.....

Parent/Guardian

.....

Date

# Appendix 2: Example of a written warning form

## Written Warning

Name of learner: ..... Learner ID number:.....

Subject:.....

Teacher:.....

The above learner has breached the disciplinary code.

Date of offence: ..... Grade of offence:.....

Nature of offence: .....

.....

.....

.....

Learner's statement:.....

.....

.....

.....

Learner:..... Teacher:.....

Witness:..... Grade Head:.....

Date:.....

One (1) copy to learner, original to be kept by GRADE HEAD. Learner's signature does not signify admission of guilt, but that charges and action taken have been explained.

## Appendix 3: Example of a behaviour contract

This is a contract between

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
(Teacher's name) (Learner's name)

I, (learner) agree that I will

by (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

I, (teacher) agree that if  
(learner) follows what has been agreed  
in this contract, then I will

\_\_\_\_\_                      \_\_\_\_\_  
(Learner's signature)                      (Teacher's signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## Appendix 4:

# Requirements for disciplinary processes

The South African Schools Act outlines aspects and procedures to be followed in the case of formal disciplinary processes. Key provisions include:

### The School Code of Conduct

- Schools' Code of Conducts must establish rules on due process that safeguard the interests of the learner and any other party involved in disciplinary proceedings
- The code of conduct must provide for support measures or structures for counselling a learner involved in disciplinary proceedings.
- A learner must be accompanied by his or her parent or a person designated by the parent at disciplinary proceedings, unless good cause is shown by the governing body as to why the process should proceed with a caregiver
- Schools need to protect witnesses. If it appears that testifying in person could expose witnesses under the age of 18 to undue mental stress or suffering, the governing body may appoint a competent person as an intermediary. All cross-examination or re-examination of the witness statements must occur through this intermediary

### Suspension and expulsion

- The governing body may, on reasonable grounds and as a precautionary measure, suspend a learner who is suspected of serious misconduct from attending school, but may only enforce such suspension after the learner has been granted a reasonable opportunity to represent their case regarding the suspension
- A governing body must conduct disciplinary proceedings within seven school days after the suspension
- A governing body may, if a learner is found guilty of serious misconduct suspend a learner for a maximum of seven school days, impose other sanction outlined in the code of conduct, or recommend that they be expelled
- A Head of Department must decide whether or not to expel a learner within 14 days of receiving such a recommendation
- A learner may be expelled only by the Head of Department; and if found guilty of serious misconduct after disciplinary proceedings
- A learner or the parent of a learner who has been expelled may appeal against the decision of the Head of Department to the Member of the Executive Council within 14 days of receiving a notice of expulsion. Pending the outcome of the appeal, the learner must be given access to education
- The Head of Department must make an alternative arrangement for the expelled learner to continue schooling

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