

# BEST PRACTICES

## 8 Proactive Classroom Management Tips

Instead of handling disruptions after they've happened, it can be more effective to set up conditions in which they are less likely to occur. Here are some classroom management tips adapted from Youki Terada in [Edutopia](#) to get you started.

**1. Greet students at the door:** Starting the day by giving students a high-five, handshake, or hug is kind of like a pulse check to see where they are. In a study published last year, [greeting students at the door](#) helped teachers set a positive tone for the rest of the day and helped reduce disruptive behavior by 9 percentage points.

**2. Establish, maintain, and restore relationships:** Building relationships with students through strategies like greeting them at the door is a good start. "The stronger the relationship and the better we understand our students, the more knowledge and goodwill we have to draw on when the going gets tough," [writes](#) Marieke van Woerkom, a restorative practices coach at the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility in New York.

**3. Use reminders and cues:** Reminders are commonly verbal but can also be visual (flicking the lights), auditory (ringing a small bell), or physical (using a hand signal). For older students, give plenty of warning if you need them to follow instructions. Reminders and cues are helpful ways to encourage students to follow instructions.

**4. Optimize classroom seating:** Seating in physical education usually means the meeting spot where you organize students for the day. Giving students a sense of ownership in your teaching space, paired with clear expectations for behavior, can have surprisingly positive effects. A welcoming space can help reduce anxiety as well as maximize activity and instructional time.

**5. Give behavior-specific praise:** It may seem counterintuitive, but [acknowledging positive behavior and ignoring low-level disruptions](#) can be more effective than punishing or disciplining students. Instead of focusing on specific students, offer praise for the behavior you want to reinforce. For example, tell students, "Excellent work getting to your stations quickly."

**6. Set clear expectations:** Instead of just displaying rules for behavior, have a discussion with your students about why those rules matter. Bobby Shaddox, a seventh-grade social studies teacher in Portland, Maine, works with his students to create a list of norms to build a sense of community.

**7. Actively supervise:** Presence is crucial to maintaining classroom management and to effective delivery of instruction. Be active: move around the room, check in on student progress, and ask questions. It's not about policing your students, but about interacting with them.

**8. Be consistent in applying rules:** School and classroom expectations, rules, and routines should be followed and applied fairly to all students. Don't single out certain students—it's the behavior you should be focused on, not the student. Correct errors when you see them and provide additional instruction or reteaching when misbehavior occurs.