

Consequences, rewards and sanctions

Schools develop rules to help foster and maintain desirable social behaviours which create a positive learning environment. Rules make expectations clear to all and ensure that rights are respected. Rules need to be taught and the consequences for either following or breaking the rules must be understood.

It is important to acknowledge when students are behaving appropriately and respectfully. The use of rewards is an essential component of the school discipline policy. Rewards should be appropriate for the age and developmental level of students and be consistently and fairly applied, avoiding any gender or cultural bias.

In most instances, strategies and practices to recognise and reinforce student achievement and positive behaviour are more effective than negative comments or punishments to ensure that students adhere to rules.

Sanctions should relate directly to a specific behaviour. They are learning experiences which are perceived to be fair, are not a moral judgement and are effective in the short and long term.

Punishment is unrelated to specific behaviour, may be perceived as unfair and sometimes includes a moral judgment. While it could be effective in the short term, punishment generally requires maintenance which is potentially damaging to teacher-student relationships and student engagement in the long term.

Consequences and Behaviour

Natural Consequences

These are consequences, which occur without being organised.

- if you play with fire, you may get burnt
- if you are considerate, others will be considerate to you
- if you break equipment, there will not be any to play with.

Sometimes natural consequences can be:

- too dangerous to let occur
- not strong enough to reinforce desirable behaviour
- not strong enough to reduce undesirable behaviour

Logical Consequences

These are consequences, which are organised, and relate directly to the behaviour.

- if you push to the front of the line, you go to the back
- if you graffiti, you will scrub it off
- if you try hard, you earn rewards.

Punishment is imposing consequences that are unrelated to the behaviour.

Logical consequences differ from punishment in the following ways:

<i>Logical Consequences</i>	<i>Punishment</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relate to specific behaviour• Requires intervention• Not a moral judgement• Learning experience eg: you make a mess, you clean it up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unrelated to specific behaviour• Requires intervention• May include moral judgement• May give the wrong message eg: you are stopping a student from working; you're on clean up duty – cleaning is seen as a punishment, not a responsibility.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Perceived as fair• Allows teacher to step away from anger• Effective short and long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not perceived as fair• Makes the teacher feel better if they are angry• May be effective short term, requires further threats to maintain, damages teacher / student relationship.

Teaching Rules - Applying Consequences

How do I teach the rules?

1. Explain why each rule exists. Relate this back to the idea of rights and responsibilities.
2. Refer to the rules throughout the lesson - not only when a student breaks a rule. Acknowledge when students are following the rules –eg. "Thanks for putting your hand up". Catch students being good.
3. Ensure students are aware of the consequences for breaking the rules. Each rule is set with the expectation that it will be followed and there must be a consequence if it is broken.

Some steps to consider are:

- a. Decide upon appropriate logical consequences for breaking rules.
- b. Explain the consequences when teaching or explaining the rules.
- c. Consequences are applied to the behaviour and not the student. It must be clear that a consequence is condemning the behaviour and not the student.
- d. Never warn of consequences that cannot be enforced.
- e. Do not use logical consequences where you cannot, eg when danger is involved.
- f. Apply the consequences consistently. Don't be talked out of applying a consequence. This approach only works if you are consistent.
- g. Don't show anger or frustration when applying consequences.
- h. Don't give up. If there is no change after a period of time however, it is time to try another strategy.
- i. Remember that being overprotective with a student can deny the student opportunities to learn self-discipline.

Consequences

Natural Consequences

- If you do not put your materials back where they belong then you may not be able to find them again.
- If you consistently lie to others they won't trust or believe you even when you tell the truth.
- If you use a straight chair as a rocker, you may fall on the floor.
- If you act as a know all, others will stop listening to you.
- If you develop a reputation for stealing, no one will trust you and you may be the first one blamed.
- If you don't read the exam questions properly, you will probably get the answers wrong.

Logical Consequences

- If you push or shove in line, you will go to the end of the line.
- If class work is unfinished, you will complete it at lunch time.
- If you graffiti, you must clean it off or pay restitution.
- If you do messy work due to carelessness, you must do it again.
- If you don't bring your permission slip, you cannot go on the excursion.
- If you have overdue library books, you will not be able to borrow any more.
- If you run in the hallway, you will go back and walk properly.
- If you talk out of turn in class, you lose your turn to talk.
- If you fail to throw rubbish in the bin, you will become the rubbish collector for the day.

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