

TIPS ON HOW TO HANDLE DISRUPTIVE STUDENTS

- Make your expectations and consequences known as clearly and as early as possible, verbally and in writing, to students and to others working in the same setting. Consistency is very important.
- Use a calm voice but one that is firm.
- Do not raise your voice to match the student's (if they are speaking loudly)
- Post written signs in areas where students congregate that clearly spell out what is expected. This will reinforce your spoken words and alerts the students that the same behaviors are expected for everyone.
- Model the behavior you are trying to encourage. For example, whisper if you want the student to whisper.
- Convey the ground rules to your audience if they are in violation and the consequences for not following the ground rules. Those in charge need to be able to follow through on the consequences.
- Tell the student what behaviors are problematic and what they are permitted to do and what they are not permitted to do.
- Do not take what is said personally.
- Request that the behavior cease. Stay away from comments about personality and try not to use labels.
- Do not argue or struggle. Just address the behaviors that you are trying to reinforce.
- If you need to reprimand the student, do so privately.
- Follow-up with an individual meeting with the student once the situation has calmed down.
- Be prepared to hold the student and yourself to the limits you have previously announced.
- Talk to colleagues for support.
- A prerequisite for the successful effectiveness of these tips is that you and appropriate others have previously decided on what you and your setting can tolerate and what you cannot, making sure that everyone involved is aware of the rules and the consequences for their violation and is prepared to follow through on enforcing the rules and the consequences. This includes students, staff and faculty, when appropriate. The more we can all deliver the same message, the more effective it will be.