



Dr Bill Rogers was the keynote speaker at the ABN/SSEN conference 'Positive Ethos, Positive Discipline, Effective Learning' held in Edinburgh in March 2004. The copyright is held by Bill Rogers.

School _____

*OUR
CLASSROOM
BEHAVIOUR PLAN*

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Grade : Reception*

February, 2004

Behaviour agreements (or plans) for infant and lower primary age children

A note to colleagues –

This ‘behaviour-plan’ is a composite of examples of behaviour-agreements in use in schools. They are used with the respective permission of the teachers, and schools, concerned; with the provision that they be seen as framework examples.

(Bill Rogers and colleagues)

A behaviour-agreement/plan is – fundamentally – a shared understanding between teachers and students about fair, reasonable, safe, expected behaviour ‘in our class group’. While its *formal* outcome is a published and shared ‘plan’ or ‘agreement’ it is the *process* and *practice* of what the document expresses and expects that will determine its meaning, its value and its utility.

A behaviour-agreement – at this age level in school (4 – 5 years) – is as much for the parents as it is for the students and their teacher. It is crucial that the class teacher discusses behaviour and learning with her class group – *in the setting of a classroom context*. Essentially the teacher is seeking to build a *learning community*

based on a clear, shared, awareness and understanding of ‘rights’ (as right and fair behaviours), responsibilities, rules and consequences. Of course at this age, and level of development, we would not use those *terms*, though children will be familiar with the concept, meaning, use and experience of *rules* and *responsibilities*.

In building a learning community the teacher will :

- Discuss with the class group *why* we need to think about what behaviours are right, proper and fair (the basis of *rights* are those values held as proper, appropriate, and fair regarding our behaviour ...)

This process gives a sense of collective ownership about ‘the plan’ or ‘behaviour agreement’.

- Discussion should engage students from day one on issues such as how we can **learn well**; how we can **support one another here** (in *our* classroom); how we can **feel safe here**; how we **show respect, fairness and co-operation**.

This sort of *guided discussion* helps clarify and consolidate *common* understandings and expectations about learning and behaviour.

Teachers will also discuss the concept of behaviour consequences as they relate to personal responsibility and one’s behaviour as it affects others in the class.

- When making rules with infant age children it is important to keep the rules simple, few in number, positive in expression and using inclusive language where possible ('our', 'us', 'we', 'all', 'together', 'everyone' ... see Rogers, 1995 and 1998). It will aid focus and memory to publish the rules in a large, poster, format with cartoon motif and add (progressively) photos of class members with 'hands up without calling out', 'working co-operatively', 'keeping our classroom tidy', 'using equipment safely' ...

The published classroom agreement

- The published document (the 'agreement' or the 'plan') will have a photo of the teacher and class group on the front cover. If there is one document a parent is likely to read it is one that has their child 'on the front' (with their teacher and their class peers). This 'plan', or 'agreement', would normally be published and sent home to parents by the second week of term one.
- Many primary schools use a similar format for classroom plans (in an age-related way) across all grade-groups in the school. This gives a developmental consistency to the establishment phase of the year.

- A covering letter from the principal should accompany this document to the respective parent(s) / caregivers of each child in the grade / group. This ratifies the document and gives a 'whole-school' sense of commitment about how the school perceives, and practises, behaviour management and discipline. (See attached letter proforma later.)
- It can also help to briefly define what discipline means in any parent 'missive'.

Discipline is, primarily, the way we (as adults and teachers) lead, guide, encourage, support, direct ... students to thoughtful, considerate and responsible behaviour. It is not primarily about punishment, though the concept of *behaviour consequences* is a crucial part of discipline. Discipline has an *educational* focus. Thoughtful discipline is also preventative as well as corrective; it has a protective and preparing function as it relates to teaching students about rights and responsibilities (see Rogers, 1998)

ROGERS, B. (1998) *You Know the Fair Rule and Much More : Strategies for making the hard job of discipline and behaviour management in school easier.*

Camberwell, Victoria : A.C.E.R. Press.

(published in the U.K. by Pittman Press : London).

ROGERS, B. (1995) *Behaviour Management : a whole-school approach.* Sydney : Scholastic Australia.

(published in the U.K. by Paul Chapman : London).

All the best in developing your behaviour agreements with your grade class.

Bill Rogers

February, 2004.