

This list includes the routines, procedures, and policies that I use to organize my training efforts at the beginning of each year. Where appropriate, I have also included methods, strategies, and ideas that have proven to be effective.

Training Routines

Self-Management

- How to sit in a chair

Bottoms on chairs, sitting tall with excellent posture

- How to push in a chair

- How to sit on the rug

Cross sitting or hook sitting with eyes on speaker

- How to raise your hand

Hands up high (so I don't have to guess if they're up)

- How to follow the silent signal

Eyes on teacher, hands empty, hands touching forehead

- How to follow the Acceptable Voice Indicator (AVI)

The AVI is a poster with three sections: Conversational Tone, Whisper, and Complete Silence. By putting a magnet on a given section, I indicate which noise level the class needs to follow.

- When to ask questions during an instructional lesson

I ask the kids to hold their questions until the end of the lesson so the flow of instruction isn't interrupted.

- How to use hand signals

I frequently ask students to use hand signals during a lesson so that I can check their understanding. In response to my statements, kids show thumbs up if they agree with me, thumbs down if they disagree, or thumbs to the side if they're not sure. Their responses help me determine whether I should move on with the lesson or spend more time reviewing key points.

Getting Around

- How to enter and leave class quietly

- How to line up and walk in line

- How to transition quickly and quietly from one activity to the next

- How to carry a chair

I ask my students to use two hands and to carry it in front of them for safety purposes.

- When to use the bathroom

Preferably before and after school and during recess and lunch

- When to use the drinking fountain

Before and after school and during recess and lunch

Materials

- Where to put backpacks, jackets, and lunches

- Where all class materials are stored

- What to keep in your desk

Only books, folders, and pencil boxes that I provide all students on the first day of school. In the pencil boxes I provide two pencils, a large eraser, a glue stick, and box of crayons. I give kids their own materials to teach responsibility and to avoid custody disputes.

- How to hold and care for books

Books should never be left open facedown because it ruins the spines. Instead, students should use bookmarks. Each student has a bookmark that contains a list of reading strategies on it so the kids have easy access to these ideas while they are reading.

- When and how to sharpen pencils

We don't use the electric sharpener during the school day because the noise is disruptive. Instead, the student leader sharpens a bunch after school or in the morning before class starts and puts them in a can labeled "Sharpened." Throughout the day, when a pencil no longer works, the kids trade it for a better one by putting it in the "Unsharpened" can and taking one from the "Sharpened" can. The two cans sit side by side on the counter in the back of the room.

- Tissue policy

- How to pass out and collect materials

- How to put papers into folders

Tuck papers all the way in so they don't become wrinkled or stick out of the top

- Where to turn in homework

Class Work

- How to head your paper

Name and date in the top right-hand corner of the paper and the title of the activity centered on the top line of the paper

- What to do when you finish work early

- How to use journals

I glue a page of writing prompts to the inside cover of student journals to give the kids ideas to write about during free choice journal writing. I also glue a list of writing guidelines to the inside cover of their take-home writing notebooks so they and their parents will both know how to complete homework activities correctly.

- How to use the computer

Policies

- What students are allowed to bring to class (toys? gum? candy? water bottles? food?)
I encourage students to keep water bottles at the foot of their desks in order to remain hydrated throughout the day. The bottles must be filled during their free time.

Dealing With Others

- How to get the teacher's attention
Rather than approach me when they need help, the students raise their hands so I can come to them or call them up to me. This prevents a whole group of kids from coming up to me at once.
- How to work in cooperative groups
- How to greet visitors
- How to act when delivering a message to another class or the office
- How to answer phone or intercom

Subject or Activity-Specific Expectations

- How to record their reading in their reading logs
- How to progress through stages of Writing Workshop
- When it's necessary to skip lines while writing and when it isn't
As a general rule, I ask the kids to skip lines only when we're going to revise their written work. During these times the extra space will be helpful.

General Class Business

- How to take attendance
- How to do the lunch count
- How to perform the various monitor jobs
- How to perform the responsibilities of Student Leader

Safety

- How to use First Aid Kit
- How to handle problems on the yard
Many schools have adopted formal conflict resolution programs to address this need. If yours hasn't, your students will still be able to generate their own list of effective problem solving strategies.

