

Top Tips for Managing Classroom Behaviour

- 1. Agree ground rules.** Write them in consultation with the class as early as possible and make them visible on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Developing them with the group helps build ownership of the standards and a sense of responsibility for maintaining them.
- 2. Use the power of the group.** Most students will be irritated by disruptive behaviour. If you can develop a sense of group identity they are more likely to enforce the shared ground rules and stop behaviour that gets in the way of their learning.
- 3. Be firm, fair and consistent.** If you experience a difficult situation make it clear that you are disappointed in the behaviour rather than the individual. Use positive language to praise good behaviour and reinforce the highest expectations of performance.
- 4. Build in variety.** Within the class there will always be a mix of learning preferences. If you have a range of activities and a clear structure students have less chance to get distracted.
- 5. Experiment with the room layout.** The standard layout for a classroom or lecture theatre provides an opportunity for people to hide from view. Use a horseshoe arrangement for tables or break the room into small groups to create a more inclusive environment.
- 6. Vary groups from week to week.** If you know that certain combinations of students encourage poor behaviour, minimise the chances of it happening by creating different small groups every few lessons.
- 7. Don't get side-tracked by disruptive behaviour.** Stay calm and approach the problem in two parts: use humour (but not sarcasm) to defuse the immediate situation and then deal with the problem outside the class or in a break.
- 8. Be approachable and supportive.** Learn the names of as many of your students as possible, to establish a personal connection. Find out about their interests and show that you care about their success. They are more likely to respect you and to cooperate in class.
- 9. Be friendly but not their friend.** This is a professional relationship and it is more difficult to be firm if first impressions are that you are lenient or over-friendly.
- 10. Think about what might be going on underneath.** Someone's difficult behaviour might be due to problems at home, failure to grasp the subject or worries far away from the classroom. Try to speak to the student privately to determine any support that they might need.

