

The Midland School uses a variety of proactive techniques to provide a positive environment for learning and to ultimately help students learn to manage their own behaviors. Planning ahead often prevents problems from occurring in the first place and helps all involved know how to handle situations when they do occur. Having clear expectations and allowing students to understand these expectations is a vital piece of an effective behavior management system.

Another element of a successful system is knowing the individual(s) you are working with. It is important to have a good understanding of the person's strengths, needs, interests and learning style. All of this should be incorporated into a program for the student. Establish a trusting relationship with the child by listening, as well as by being consistent in your actions. Knowing that there is a predictable consequence for behaviors is part of this trusting relationship. Not knowing what the response or consequence will be for a specific behavior is often disconcerting for our students and can lead to an increase in inappropriate behaviors as the student tries to "find their way". Knowing your student, establishing a trusting relationship, and having predictable consequences gives both the teacher and the student a frame of reference to engage in a conversation should a problem occur. Sometimes what you see is not what you get and what looks like the cause of a problem is really not the cause at all. It may take a sympathetic ear to diffuse

a situation, letting the student know that you are listening and you are there to help. Other times it may take a reminder of the consequences in place for the behavior. Often times allowing the student some control over their situation and over their environment will help diffuse a situation.

Every first day of school teachers establish their class rules. These rules are developed with student input and posted in the classrooms as a daily reminder of expectations. Rules are always stated positively (what students should do, not what they can't do) and emphasize a spirit of caring for other people.

Established routines and the inherent structure of the program help prevent behavior problems from occurring. The rules, structure, and routines carry over from classrooms to special subject areas and therapies, providing consistency throughout all parts of the program. Learning activities which are appropriate, challenging, motivating and multi-sensory are essential components of an effective program.

Midland's behavioral philosophy is based on a continuum of services. While plans are individualized based on student and class needs, students in the youngest classes are reinforced frequently for direction following and participation, with immediate rewards (trinkets from a prize box, high fives, stickers) as well as with tokens/pennies at the end of each period. These tokens/pennies are counted up weekly and used to buy items in the school store. Reinforcement plans in classes where the

majority of students are 12-14 years old, work to decrease students' needs for immediate reinforcement. For the most part, students are reinforced at the end of each period with tokens for lesson participation, direction following, work completion, and following classroom rules. Students incorporate their math skills as they tally up their weekly totals and keep track in their bank books. As a class, students vote on how they would like to spend their money. Some stay at school and have a special activity period (i.e. a pizza party) while others go out into the community to spend their money (i.e. a trip to the movies or the mall). Students in this age group are also encouraged to behave by reminding them that soon they will be in the "500 wing" and entering the career cluster program. Work related/behavioral expectations are higher here as they learn the skills needed for employment. This encouragement has been found to be very helpful with getting students ready to face their new challenge. There seems to be a new found maturity and an increase in socialization amongst many of the students as they enter the 500 wing.

Formal class plans are faded out as students enter the career cluster program in the 500 wing at the age of 15. Students 15-17 may have a class-wide program where students all work together to earn a class prize. Students are now encouraged to display behaviors that will be appropriate for a work setting, which they will experience when they turn 18. As students turn 18 and begin the work program, class wide

behavior programs are faded out completely. Students are now preparing for graduation and for post-graduate employment.

Ultimately, students will need to be able to manage and monitor their own behavior.

When problems do occur, there are several techniques available to Midland staff. Often, a “staffing” takes place allowing all staff who work with the student experiencing behavior problems an opportunity to discuss the presenting problem, the function of the behavior, and possible solutions. These include, but are not limited to, changes in schedules, an increase in reinforcement, movement breaks, planned ignoring, time out in the classroom, time out in the student support center, positive visits to the support center, natural consequences, in school counseling to address the underlying problem and/or the development of an individualized behavior plan. These plans are written and overseen by the Supervisor of Student Support Programs. Parent input is also an important tool to help address behavior problems at school. Parents can provide information that will help school staff gain additional insight into their student. Occasionally, a home-school behavior plan can help reinforce school behavior at home. Conversely, a student experiencing problems at home may be reinforced for their evening and early morning behavior when they get to school.

School staff work closely with bus drivers in order to promote appropriate student behavior to and from school. When necessary, individual behavior plans are

developed to reinforce appropriate bus behavior.

The Midland School staff pride themselves on providing students with an atmosphere that is conducive to learning, and one in which appropriate social and behavioral skills are practiced and reinforced on a daily basis.



# Behavior Management at Midland



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