

Behavior Intervention Toolkit

Filled with interventions to address 16 of
the most common student deficiencies

Cheats on Assignments, Tests, etc.

1. Be sure to review in class for the test.
2. Put more emphasis on completion/participation grades in homework assignments. The less points that are at stake, the less likely a student is to cheat.
3. Put more emphasis on short answer questions/"essays" in assignments and tests. It's much easier to cheat on fill-in-the-blank and multiple choice.
4. Keep cheaters away from students that might be easy and/or "beneficial" to cheat off of. Be careful said students aren't allowing others to cheat, too.
5. Do not create a "competitive feeling" in the classroom (e.g. curving to the best score). Fear of failure is a large reason many students cheat.
6. Force the student to move anything that is not needed for the test (such as backpacks) to the back of the room for the duration of the test. Search for other common ways to cheat (e.g. cell phone).
7. Do not be overly accusative. If you just preach and punish, the student will not want to change their ways.
8. Do not allow students who are finished with the test to read, talk, etc. That makes it much more difficult to watch for cheaters.
9. Do not do work during tests.
10. Investigate students who appear to be cheating, but don't ever accuse/interrogate.

Doesn't Pay Attention in Class

1. Keep periods in which students have to listen short. Hold back on the lectures/speeches.
2. Make sure to keep the same requirements for listening every time. Rarely, if ever, judge when to act on a "situation-by-situation" basis.
3. Make sure to call the student's attention to the facts that are extremely important to remember (and don't just say, "You need to know this." Students who are already not paying attention won't notice).
4. Divide directions up into small steps. Present each step after the last is finished.
5. Check for signs that the students are paying attention.
6. Every so often, ask that a student paraphrase what you just said, so as to keep them "on their feet."
7. Give the information out in various formats (spoken, written, video, etc.).
8. Get rid of objects around the room that prove to be consistently distracting.
9. Make it so the student cannot start the assignment until directions are completed (e.g. hold onto necessary materials until you're done speaking).
10. If a student has a question dealing with what was already stated, only help them if they can repeat what was already said. If they cannot, suggest that they ask another student and come back later.
11. Group students together, so that if one misses the directions, the others won't.

Swears

1. Do not swear yourself.
2. Keep the student away from other students, situations, competitions, etc. that might make them angry enough to swear.
3. When responding to swearing, act very calm and nonthreatening. Do NOT act angry, surprised, amused, etc.
4. If a student who doesn't normally swear starts to, correct this quickly. Otherwise it'll become a habit.
5. Never ignore a swear, no matter how small. It'll seem like you don't mind.
6. Treat the students with respect, "equality," and interest. They'll be much more likely to listen to you (don't preach).
7. Respond the same to every cursing situation (unless one student has cursed many times, of course). Act appropriately, and don't be too harsh.
8. Try to figure out the reasoning behind the swearing. (e.g. popularity, anger)
9. Never yell at the student, much less in public. Do not make it a battle of "good/evil," either.
10. Be sure to remind students over the course of the year of your "anti-swearing" policy. Be sure to provide a **valid** reason as to why you have a distaste for swears (and "it's the rule" doesn't count). If there's a decent reason not to swear, students will be less likely to.
11. Provide "substitute words" for the student to use instead of swears.

Lies

1. Give the student every reason to succeed. Not only is it harder to make excuses then, but if they do succeed, then why lie?
2. Ask the student to repeat what they said (but don't call it a lie). If it's a lie, they'll be less likely to want to repeat it.
3. Lessen the punishment for forgetting assignments and materials. The student has less reason to lie then.
4. Be sure to be open and respectful with the student. If you understand and care (and they realize that), they will be much more open.
5. Even if the student claims to have had the assignment "stolen," still force them to redo it. Then there's no benefit of lying.
6. Do not accuse the student of something you are sure they have done. If you know they did it, then there's no reason to have them confess the act themselves.
7. Don't take everything at face value or be overly suspicious. Do a "check for verification" (with the parents, for example) every so often.
8. Don't assume everything the student says is a lie or that they're a "liar."
9. Do not punish severely. Support, and help change. Do not be an aggressor, at all costs.
10. Do not get angry at the liar or start to show actual distaste for them. Do not make favorites, either.
11. Do not argue, bicker, or debate over the validity of what the student is saying. It wastes time, puts them on the defensive, and gives them attention they might be looking for.

Puts the Blame on Others

1. Do not allow the student to “get away completely,” even if they had a good excuse. They still didn’t finish the assignment.
2. Make sure that the materials you give the student are in great condition, so they cannot be blamed.
3. Give the student all the help, information, etc. they ask for. Explain precisely what you want completed, along with necessary materials/activities for the next day.
4. Do not create a “competitive feeling,” in which a student who makes a mistake gets left behind or is the center of frustration by other students.
5. Do not create such large punishments for mistakes that the student “needs” to pawn off the blame.
6. Give the student a full list of materials and activities for the next day.
7. Do not accuse, argue, or bicker with the student, especially not in front of the class. It wastes time and just makes things worse. Instead, discuss it privately and don’t say “it’s your fault.”
8. Be respectful/open with the student. The more “equal” you are, the more willing they’ll be to open up.
9. Make it so the student can’t blame others for their mistakes (e.g. keep them out of groups).
10. Do not let excuses slide one time and not the next. Do not waver.
11. Share both some blame and some credit for what your students do.

Is Frequently Late/Absent

1. Keep in contact with parents, guardians, etc. Share information on both ends.
2. Have a sign-in/sign-out sheet for students going on doctor visits, dentist visits, etc. Make sure to have parent/doctor recognition if the student misses some of school.
3. Make sure to keep the class fun/interesting without seeming “child-like” and “unimportant.” Make every day important.
4. Assess whether your class is good for the student, or if it’s too difficult or too easy.
5. Have the student make up any time they missed in class (e.g. they skip 15 minutes, they stay after school/class 15 minutes).
6. Start class as soon as the bell rings. Make it vital to arrive on-time.
7. Be sure that the “transition period” between hours is long enough.
8. Do not get angry or preachy with the student.
9. Make sure to ask the student as to why they were late or absent. Just be prepared for lies and excuses. (do not assume everything said is true). (Don’t do this as an accusation or in front of the class, either)
10. Do not make a scene out of a student’s late arrival/absence or make it a bad experience for them. Instead, give them a seat near the door and have materials ready for them, just in case they decide to show up.
11. Make sure to have make-up work be shorter than the original work. Doing 2+ times the homework upon re-arrival to school is not very encouraging.

Cannot Switch From One Project to the Next

1. If neither project is due the next day, allow the student to choose which assignment they work on.
2. Be sure to clearly explain and repeat the time limits for each project, giving a reminder every so often and warning students when the time limit for a project is up.
3. Be sure to remind the student that they can finish an unfinished project at a different time (e.g. study hall). If they are nearly completed, however, let them finish before moving on to the next project.
4. Give plenty of time for the student to work on their projects.
5. Provide for a five minute or so "bumper period" where the students can wrap up one project and move onto the next.
6. Gather the materials for one project and hand out the materials for the next when switching from one project to the next.
7. Make sure to tell the student (preferably using a handout as well) what the schedule will be for working on projects beforehand. Alert them of any changes as soon as possible.
8. Make sure the student realizes that perfection is not necessary, and that sacrificing a whole project to make the other "flawless" is not a good idea.
9. If the student still cannot switch from one project to the next without finishing the first, make sure that you have the student work on the most important project first.
10. Have the students work in groups, so that if one cannot make the change from one project to the next, the others can help them.

Doesn't Work in Class or Finish Classroom Assignments

1. Clearly explain the directions in the beginning of the class, asking if students have any questions afterward. Use examples, as well (i.e. work out a few problems in class).
2. Give out smaller assignments one-at-a-time (or divide a big assignment into chunks). Give each new assignment after the last is completed and checked off.
3. Be sure to answer any questions as quickly as possible and to provide as many other materials as possible (e.g. written copy of the directions, necessary work materials).
4. Be sure not to be irritated, impatient, etc. when students ask questions.
5. Have students work on in-class assignments in pairs/groups. Pair non-workers with hard workers if necessary.
6. Assign roughly the same amount of work each day, and provide more than enough time to finish an assignment.
7. Give out multiple assignments/formats for the student to work with, and allow them to choose one.
8. Have the student finish what they didn't in class at some other time (e.g. study hall).
9. Be sure to tell the students the "time limit" they have for the assignment, warning them where they should be at various "check points."
10. Make sure the student has their physical needs fulfilled. Commonly, students lack the necessary sleep/food to function efficiently.

***Interrupts/Says
Irrelevant/Inappropriate Things***

1. Make it so it'll be hard to just start talking (e.g. busy the student with assignments, ask questions with regular frequency).
2. Ask the student before they tell the story: is this relevant in any way to the lesson?
3. Do not act overly angry, surprised, amused, etc. when the student says something quite irrelevant. Remain calm, but still correct the student.
4. Do not favor/focus on a few students or tend to ignore a few others.
5. Make sure to explain **why** the student shouldn't be saying what they're saying (e.g. extremely busy day).
6. Do not waver in how you respond. Have a set pattern every time (e.g. ignore first two occurrences, mention third)
7. Consistently check to make sure students are keeping up with you, as so they don't have to interrupt and ask a question explained 30 minutes ago.
8. Keep any break/work time at the end of class. Only allow it if the students have paid proper attention.
9. Be sure to respect the student and always keep their emotions in mind.
10. Promote the "hand raising" rule. If a student does interrupt, ignore it and keep on teaching (unless they do it a few more times – then just correct them and move on).
11. Respond to the situation in private, and do not be strict. This issue is more a problem of habit than "bad behavior."

Has a Short Temper

1. Be sure to always remain calm, quiet, and controlled. Do not criticize or get angry yourself.
2. Be sure to watch the student constantly. If it seems like they are close to "blowing up," intervene immediately and move the student someplace else (do not make a scene, however).
3. Keep the student busy.
4. Be sure to keep an open phone line with the student's parents and other teachers. Be sure to have someone the student can talk to if they get really mad.
5. Never get angry/bossy with the student, but don't act like they're a little kid, either. Be respectful, and give the student space.
6. Make sure that other students aren't intentionally aggravating the one student, and properly deal with any who are.
7. Avoid any topics that would make the student unhappy.
8. Promote mild, relaxing activities for the student to do (e.g. going on a walk) instead of intense, competitive ones.
9. Do not give in to the student's demands if they get angry.
10. Talk to the student about their anger only while they are calm. Ask the student when/how they normally get angry. And don't give them a long talk right away, either. Just start with a comment or two.

Doesn't Get Along Well with Others

1. If the student does not want to talk to/work with certain students, do not make them.
2. Keep competition at a minimum.
3. Help the student find extracurriculars and hobbies that would keep them busy and possibly promote social interaction, as well.
4. Make sure to watch out for other students to make sure they treat the student properly. Do not act like a "mother," however.
5. Make sure to pay proper attention to the student and look for what may be a problem-causer.
6. Do not express anger at a "bully," especially in public. They expect (and probably want) that response.
7. Keep the student busy.
8. Check the student's history to see if there are any home or other problems that might cause them to act a certain way.
9. Promote that the student to spend time with others, but don't go off too strongly. They might wish to be alone.
10. Have the student work in groups with other students they would most likely get along with. Do not force the student to do so, however.

Talks/Texts

1. Be sure to keep the student busy.
2. Be sure to keep a constant watch on the student. Remove the phone if you see them texting.
3. Keep students who talk with each other constantly away from each other, in separate classes if necessary.
4. Give students time to talk before/after/during class.
5. Reward students for remaining quiet during work time (e.g. having the last few minutes free).
6. Give the student a valid reason for why they need to remain quiet.
7. Do not waver in how you respond to talking/texting. Have the same response near every time.
8. Do not be too "soft" or too "hard" on the student. Too "soft," and they won't take you seriously. Too "hard," and they'll just consider you a "rule-follower" and won't trust any logic you have.
9. Be sure to remove the phone from the student's possession as soon as it becomes an issue.
10. Be respectful of the students, and try to make sure they are respectful of you, too.

Does Not Take Part in Class Activities

1. Have the student have a specific role in the group, so they feel like they actually have worth to them.
2. Do not require a student to take part in class activities. Make sure they are at least present, however, and provide an alternative for them to do.
3. Figure out/ask why the student does not do certain activities. Do not take the student's ideas and opinions for granted. Be respectful, and listen for any good ideas.
4. Make sure to keep activities interesting and related to the students' interests.
5. Have the student do the activities with the students that they get along with best and/or students that they would get along with well.
6. Be sure to show care for those who don't take part, and try to establish a relationship with them. The more "equal" you are, the more commonly they'll follow and respect your directions.
7. Don't argue with the student or give them major, embarrassing punishment for not taking part.
8. Be careful – sometimes activities that are "fun" can commonly be mistaken for "childlike."
9. Give the student some leeway if they still have to make up activities not finished in class. Otherwise they'll fall further behind.
10. Encourage participation by all, even those who do not volunteer. Many are just nervous about looking "foolish."

Destroys/Steals Materials

1. Store any materials that are not being used in a secure, hard-to-reach spot.
2. Keep materials used in-class at a minimum.
3. Do not publicly accuse/demean the student. Aggression like this will just heighten resentment.
4. If a student steals a material, make sure to figure out how, so it won't happen again.
5. You break it, you buy it.
6. Investigate the student's history/talk to parents, teachers, and others close to them. Figure out why they do what they do.
7. Do not ignore the student's actions.
8. Do not get angry or "make an enemy" of the student. This is most likely the reason for destruction/theft in the first place.
9. Be sure to tell the administration and parents about the incident. Do not openly accuse a student. Instead, **privately** mention your "concerns."
10. Do not make a big deal to the class about this "injustice" or punish the class for not revealing the culprit.
11. Do not apply a massive punishment to the student, as "just" as it may seem. The student needs to make "friends" with the school, and a massive punishment will just increase the resentment they already probably have.

Will not Read

1. Remember: however acclaimed/brilliant a book might be, it might be completely uninteresting to the average high school student.
2. Ask questions that rely on interpretation of the book, not memorization.
3. Read the spark notes (and other assorted summaries) on reading materials used in class. That way you'll know if a student just used those or not.
4. Allow for some time for students to read in-class.
5. Ask the advice of students of the past year, and see what books were liked and disliked.
6. Ask the students of what sorts of authors/writing styles/books they are interested in, and try to work your readings around that.
7. Do not force the student to read aloud or do anything that might make the reading "embarrassing" for them.
8. Keep most readings short. Do not require reading of an entire book overnight (a chapter is more likely).
9. Discuss the book in-class. It provides a good review/explanation, and it also makes things more interesting.
10. Try readings in various formats (e.g. magazine articles, poetry, modern prose, graphic novels).
11. Read the reading/book yourself, and make sure that it's not too difficult to read.