

RESPONDING TO UNWANTED BEHAVIOURS

Most teachers have to manage a range of low-level behaviours. You must intervene early, quickly and effectively to avoid these behaviours being entrenched or escalating into more significant problems.

Early warning signs

An important part of effective behaviour management is being on the lookout for early warning signs. Be aware of behaviours that may indicate that students are stressed, off-task or seeking your attention. Early warning signs may include:

- Restlessness, twiddling with objects, turning around in his chair;
- Dropping materials, calling out, not having a pencil, a dramatic head-on-the-desk pose, using an overly loud or quiet voice;
- Frequent trips to the toilet, needing a drink, whining about an apparent injury, talking too much, trying to distract other students;
- A sullen look, refusing to make eye contact, glaring at the teacher, shrugging shoulders in response to a question.



Effective teacher responses to early warning signs

- Reminding: Give a general reminder to all students about the task at hand, the required behaviour and the reward or preferred activity following completion.
- Ignoring: You may ignore inappropriate behaviour if the student is unaware that you saw or heard his minor infraction of the rules.
- Praise others: Acknowledge or praise nearby students who are on task to cue those who are not on-task.
- Proximity: Make eye contact with the student, shake your head, stand near the student, say his name quietly or tap his work as a prompt.
- Find a positive: Praise the student for something he is doing well, such as 'I'm glad you have your pencil, do you need help to get started?'

