



# BACK TO SCHOOL:

What My Classroom will Look Like During the  
First Few Weeks of School

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## First Day of School

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## Norms and Rules

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## Building Community

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# First Day of School

- Nothing is more important than building a relationship with the students

- Teachers must create a safe and welcoming environment where students will not be afraid to make mistakes and be vulnerable

- Students will not be ready to learn until they feel that the teacher cares

- Students also need to be encouraged by their teachers

- Teachers should learn each student's name and committed to pronouncing each name correctly

- Students also want to learn about their teachers

- First impressions are very important

- WAIT to go over the syllabus until the second or third day

- Create a fun, engaging activity in which the whole class, including the teacher to meet each other.



What's your favorite place to  
be and why?

Who do you live with? What do  
you like to do with your  
friends/family?

What's something interesting about you—a  
hobby, you're double-jointed, you moved  
here from Portugal?

**One way to provide an opportunity for students to meet  
their peers is to have students bring objects/pictures or  
create a presentation that the students feel represents their  
life, their likes/dislikes, and their hobbies. Then, have the  
students share what they have prepared about themselves in  
small groups or pairs.**

Here are some ideas/topics for pictures/objects/slides:

What name do you like to be  
called (pronunciation and/or  
nickname)?

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A Survey is  
Another Way to  
get to Know  
Students  
First Day Survey

# First Day Schedule



**8:15 am Arrival:** Greet Students at the door and decorate name tags

**8:30 am Teach Quiet Signal:** Play IceBreaker Freeze Game to practice quiet signal

**8:40 am Morning Meeting:**

- Greeting: Teacher greets students at circle/group rug
- Sharing: Invite each student to share his/her favorite animal (relationship building)
- Group Activity: Sing "[The Welcome Song](#)"
- Morning Message: The teacher Reads first, then students repeat

**9:00 am Tour of the Building:**

- Interactive modeling of procedures: Lining up, walking in the halls, bathroom procedures, etc.
- Visit cafeteria

**9:45 am Snack**

**10:00 am Outside Time or indoor energizer (brain dance):**

- Walk the boundaries of the playground
- Teach the 'circling up' procedure
- Practice circling up by racing the clock

**10:20 am Special:** (music, art, P.E., library, or technology)

**11:00 am Math:**

- Explore Counters
- Energizer: Skip Counting

**11:40 am Recess:**

- Teach Freeze Tag
- Review circling up

**12:00 pm Lunch:** (Help with logistics, sit as a class)

**12:30 pm Quiet Time:** Choices: Drawing or using counters

**12:45 pm Read-aloud:** *The Last Stop on Market Street*

- Teach Turn and Talk

**1:15 pm Writing:**

- Interactive Modeling: Getting materials, putting materials away
- Explore pencils and writing journals
- Write/Draw: One thing I like to do

**1:45 pm Reading:**

- Teach "book shopping"
- Activity: Everyone picks three books for book bags
- Independent reading: 5-10 minutes
- Practice "turn and talk" about reading

**2:15 pm Outside Time:**

**2:30 pm Set up First Dismissal:**

- Pass out notes/forms for home
- Pack book bags
- Check on bus numbers/carpool
- Brief cleanup

**2:50 pm Closing Circle:**

- Share: One thing I liked about school today

**3:00 pm Dismissal:**

- Walk students to the bus/car

# Norms/Rules/Consequences



- Rules or classroom norms are critical in the classroom
  - Students desire to know what is coming, have a routine in their schedules and receive consistent instruction
- Teachers should work together throughout the building to set these rules/norms so that the rules can be consistent in the classroom, in the hallways
- Students also need to be aware of the consequences that occur if the students do not follow the rules/norms
- Rules/norms give students a sense of safety and security throughout the school
- Rules help teachers manage their classroom behavior
- Teachers should work with their students to create the norms/rules of the classroom together
- Teachers should also demonstrate the procedures and give students consistent reminders of the rules/norms throughout the day/week/month/year

# Some Areas that Need Rules:

- Restroom procedures
- Homework policy
- Find classroom supplies and what the policy is for using them
- Syllabus
- How to respect peers
- How to respect a teacher
- How teachers should respect students
- How to conduct oneself outside of the classroom (hallway, playground, cafeteria, etc.)
- How to behave during group lessons and independent work

When teachers observe students following the procedures/rules, they should encourage/use affirming language to reinforce their learning and positive behavior. Teachers will also need to discuss what positive affirmations are.

# Procedures

Teachers must outline procedures to students on the first day so that the class may begin to practice routines from day one. If teachers do not take time to establish procedures on the first day, or soon after, the students will create their routines, and it will be difficult to manage the classroom and behaviors. Although there will not be time to practice all of the routines/procedures on the first day, there are certain procedures that will impact daily learning that can be practiced.

# Example Procedures to Learn



- Entering the Classroom/Morning Routine
- Lining Up
- Sharpening Pencils
- Going to the Bathroom
- Walking into the Hallway
- Dismissal
- Cafeteria etiquette
- Classroom Jobs
- Finding a Partner
- Cleaning Up the Classroom

- Most of the procedures will occur naturally throughout the day
- Teachers need to ensure that, as students are learning and practicing these procedures for the first time, there is enough time to practice effectively
- Since the first day is not the only time students will be practicing the procedures, teachers do not have to worry about getting to all of them right away.

# Some Fun Ways to Incorporate Procedures into the Classroom

- Use a “Find Someone Who” Game in which students find peers around the classroom to explain different procedures to:
  - Create a classroom book of procedures
  - Create individual books of procedures
  - Create anchor charts
- Write a story about classroom procedures
- Act out classroom procedures
- Create a classroom procedure ‘foldable’

# Building Community

- Teachers should welcome each student into the classroom, and create a routine in which the students can feel secure as they enter the classroom
- Teachers should also put in the effort to get to know each student and the parents/guardians of each student. If a teacher does not know what the student's home life is like, they will not know how to best support the student
- Teachers can send out newsletters, have conferences, etc. to get to know the families of students
- Teachers can go so far as to have an individual 'lunch time' with each student that is devoted to building a relationship with the student. This will provide teachers with the time to get to know the student as both a learner and a person

# Building Community (contin.)

- Teachers also need to build community among students
  - One way to create this community is to have icebreakers in which the students meet their classmates. One icebreaker is the “Find Someone Who” activities. These activities are a way to get students moving, while also building community. On the first day of school, students will have just experienced an entire summer, so another activity to build that relationship among students on the first day is to give students the chance to share their summer adventures with their peers, such as in their table groups

# Building Community (contin.)

- One important factor of a classroom is whether or not it is an environment that fosters and supports the learning of each student
- Building relationships is a crucial aspect to create a vulnerable environment
- Vulnerable relationships rely on trust, and to build trust in the classroom, teachers must guide students in building these secure attachments to their peers and their teachers
- Having procedures and rules that are consistent will create an environment in which students feel safe to learn, as well as make mistakes

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